

Parent Handbook

Montessori in Motion



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THE PURPOSE OF A MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. He must do it himself or it will never be done. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years he spends in the classroom because he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom this objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced; and second, by helping him to perfect all his natural tools for learning, so that his ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations. The Montessori materials have this dual long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.*

* From *A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom* by Aline D. Wolf

PARENTAL GUIDELINES

TUITION

Tuition is due the first school day of the month. Payments made after the fifth are considered late and will be charged a late fee of \$25, unless prior arrangements are made.

Please note on your check what the check is for (i.e. September tuition, material fee, etc.). We ask that you do not pay in cash. If you do not wish to use checks, payment can be made by money order or cashiers check. If there is a problem regarding payment, please contact us before the first school day of the month.

Montessori In Motion is supported entirely by your tuition. For your ease in paying, we divide the yearly tuition into ten equal installments. There are no adjustments for days missed, holidays, or vacations. We do offer a 10% reduction for the second child enrolled. A 30-day notice is required when withdrawing your child from the school.

FIRST DAYS

Entering school is a new experience for most children and often their first regular contact with children and adults outside their family or neighborhood. Apprehension is normal. On your child's first days be enthusiastic and encouraging. Give him/her a hug, tell him/her when you'll return (i.e. after naptime) and bring the child to the teacher. If you and/or your child need more time together in the closure, the teacher will assist you in

this process. Remaining for more than a few minutes often makes separation more difficult. If you show confidence in our ability to handle your child's apprehension, the child will see this and adjust easier.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Children **MUST** be signed in and out. The sign-in sheets are located in the designated classroom. The Montessori school day begins promptly at 9:30 A.M. and ends at 1:00 or 3:00 P.M., depending on your child's schedule. Please try to keep to this schedule as tardy children cannot benefit fully from the program, as well as placing an added strain on the curriculum. Please call before 8:45 if your child is to be absent or late so that his/her teacher can be notified.

When walking into the school, we ask that all children carry their own lunchbox. Please avoid carrying children into school, or hanging up their garments for them - this is the job of the child. Try to say a quick and cheerful good-bye at the door and not linger - a prolonged farewell only makes it more difficult for your child. When parents come to pick up their child, a quiet signal to the teacher will enable the teacher to excuse the child without disruption to the class. Any talking should be done in a quiet voice, with the parent discouraging any screaming or running when the child sees him/her.

SICK CHILDREN

Sick children are not permitted in the classroom (for obvious reasons) and will be sent

home. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call and ask you to come and get him/her. Please have your emergency numbers current at all times. It is here that we must mention the problem of lice. Lice is prevalent in Marin County and especially in nursery school. Prevention is the best solution, so we ask that parents check their child's scalp for lice (lice looks like dandruff, but will not separate from the hair follicle) after hair washing and during combing and brushing. Help us have a healthy year!

ALLERGIES/MEDICINE

Please advise the teachers of any food allergies your child has so we may post this list as soon as possible. Tell your child there will be times when he/she cannot have the snack or birthday treat, so he/she knows to expect this. If your child is well, but needs medication, please bring the original container and a medicine spoon, and ask a staff member to refrigerate it, if necessary. A permission slip, available in the office, must be filled out and signed before we can administer any medication at school.

CLOTHING

Please send a complete change of clothes with your child, regardless of age (even older ones get sick, spill paint, etc.). This clothing includes pants, shirt, socks, and underwear - two sets if your child is prone to accidents. LABEL ALL CLOTHING, especially jackets, slickers, socks, and rainboots. The school cannot be responsible for

unmarked clothing. Do not send your child to school with rubber pants over other underwear, as this inhibits their ability to manage during toileting. Please remember to check your child's cubby daily for any wet or soiled clothing. For safety's sake, avoid sending your child in cowboy boots, thongs, and any other shoes difficult to run or walk in. Avoid clothing that your child cannot manage alone. To avoid "morning overload", help your child select his/her clothing the night before after looking at the weather report. Dressing in layers (i.e., sweatsuit over shorts and a tee shirt) works well during the changing seasons.

LUNCHES

Children's lunchboxes should be clearly marked on the outside, as should the thermos, lid, and tupperware containers. Please try to avoid foods containing concentrated sugar. If a fork or spoon is needed, pack one in the lunchbox, and please include a napkin! While we are always available to help the children with an occasional difficulty, it helps promote independence if the child is able to manage their lunch on their own. As the teachers are very busy at lunch just supervising, please do not ask them to mix juices, cut fruit, or peel eggs, however they are always happy to warm up food in the microwave. Please try to have your child help with the lunch preparation as much as possible. We frequently discuss food groups with the older children and classify lunchbox items accordingly. A balanced lunch includes three of the four food groups.

The children are told they must eat their "muscle" foods before any snacks or desserts. If you must send dessert for the "Littles", please place it underneath the "main course" as they frequently want to eat the first thing they see (especially dessert).

TOYS/SHARING

The primary class will share on Tuesday or Wednesday. If your child brings a sharing on Tuesday, he/she will not share on Wednesday. The sharing should be labeled and in a bag. These objects are only to be shared in circle, and then put away. Things from home must be taken home the same day. We do enforce a "no trading" rule without a note from a parent.

Little's class may share daily, but the above rules still apply. Remember, label everything.

LOST MONTESSORI MATERIAL

It is very common for a child to be attracted to the materials in the classroom and decide to take part of them home. However, when the materials are not complete they must be removed from the shelf until they are once again whole. If you come across anything from the classroom or daycare room in your child's lunchbox or pockets, please return them to the school as promptly as possible. Likewise any clothing which doesn't belong to you.

BIRTHDAYS

Please remind the teachers one week in advance of your child's birthday. Individual treats,

such as fruit kabobs or blueberry muffins, are easiest to serve and the most enjoyed by the children. If you need some ideas, just ask one of the teachers. Send at least one photograph for each year of your child's life for the Montessori Birthday Celebration. Make sure to identify or label the pictures with names of people and places. The pictures will be returned unharmed as only the teachers will be handling them. A short diary written by the parent will further assist the child's understanding of time and history - just a few sentences for every year is fine. Feel free to consult the teachers as to the children who would be best at the home birthday party. Of course, it is always good to get advice from your child, but often the child names the oldest or loudest children rather than his/her playmates. Children should not distribute any invitations at school (as well as valentines, Christmas cards, etc.) unless all the children in his/her class receive them because young children, as well as adults, are easily hurt over this.

NAPS

A king-size pillowcase to cover the mats and a light blanket (clearly labeled please) is requested for all napping children. They will be sent home to launder each Friday. If your child is prone to accidents but you would rather he/she did not wear a diaper at nap time, please bring a rubberized sheet.

SNACKS

We ask each child to provide a snack approximately once a month. We do this to give the children a chance to feel important (a kind of un-birthday party) and also to provide variety. Cut up fruit and crackers, muffins, vegetables and dip, cheeses, yogurt, juices and milk are among the children's favorites. Please keep it healthy!

HOMEWORK

Linda will assign homework on Tuesdays and Thursdays to those children in the Primary class, who request it. When it is returned, new homework will be assigned if the student wants it.

CHILDCARE

Childcare hours are from 7:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. and from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. A late fee of \$15 for every 15 minutes will be charged for any child picked up after 6:00 P.M. This charge will be reflected in your monthly bill. If you pick up your child after 5:00 P.M. it is best to avoid long talks with teachers. Often parents, teachers and especially children are quite tired at this time. If you need to discuss something with the teacher, please set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. Because emergencies do occur, each child staying for childcare will need three telephone numbers of people who can pick him/her up if parents do not arrive by 6:00 P.M. (Parents need to make these arrangements whenever possible.)

MESSAGES/NOTICES

Each child is assigned a file folder in the sign in room. All messages will be found there. Notices will be posted on the bulletin board above the sign-in sheets or on the front door. Please check these areas daily.

NOTES TO THE OFFICE Next to the office door are holders for tuition checks and notes for teachers and office.

COMPLAINTS

We ask that you take all complaints to the source. If you are concerned about something in the classroom, please request a parent conference immediately. If you are a parent in the Little's class and need further assistance, please contact Shelley or Linda.

FUNDRAISING

As you may or maynot already know all schools in Marin are asking for parent participation in their schools. We require a 20 hour per year work contribution program in order to maintain the school properly. You can contribute through a variety of efforts such as rummage sale, graduation and x-mas parties, and parent committees/co-ordinators for field trips, raffles, work parties, etc.

The benefits of volunteering are endless for example you get to know other parents at the school, your child knows that you have taken an active interest in his/her schooling and your child receives the benefits of having a better school environment. However, if you prefer, you may contribute \$10.00 per hour to satisfy your commitment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and earthquake drills will take place on a monthly basis to help accustom the children to the proper procedures in the event of an actual emergency. Following are the procedures which will be practiced.

FIRE

At the sound of the bell, the children will be instructed to walk quietly to the nearest exit. A designated teacher will remain behind to check bathrooms, hallways, etc. Once outside the children will be led to the rear of the building where roll will be taken from the sign-in sheets.

EARTHQUAKE

In the event of an earthquake, children will be instructed to move away from the windows, to crawl under a table and to cover their head with their hands. When the shaking has stopped, the situation will be evaluated by the teacher to determine whether the building needs to be evacuated.

In the event that we should have to evacuate the building we will make every effort to contact you. It is imperative that we have current home and work numbers in your child's folder. If you will be away from your phone for the day, please leave a number where you can be reached on the sign-in sheet.

that we have current home and work numbers in your child's folder. If you will be away from your phone for the day, please leave a number where you can be reached on the sign-in sheet. It is also important that we have at least two alternate people who can pick up your child if we cannot reach you. We cannot release your child to anyone other than those people listed on his/her Emergency and ID form.

DISCIPLINE

Children at our school are disciplined for two reasons:

1. Abusing (verbally or physically) another person or property.
2. Not following directions and/or ground rules which jeopardize the personal safety and/or well being of others.

The staff may use a variety of different techniques to correct a child. These are determined largely by the child's age and development. The methods used at Montessori In Motion are:

- Redirection to another activity or area.
- Verbally suggesting to the child that they need to correct their behavior.
- Discussing the situation with the children involved in order to resolve the problem.
- Discussing the situation with the parents and asking for their cooperation.
- Sending the child to "time out" for a period of 2 to 10 minutes.

Corporal punishment is not used at school despite any parental suggestion or approval, however we will notify you if we feel your child should be sent home.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

We are all concerned with our children's nutrition and well-being. However you can quickly run out of ideas of things to put in a lunchbox. It is for this reason we listed some old ideas and some new ones to help you avoid the lunchbox blahs.

- bagels with cream cheese
- yogurt
- any fresh fruit
- carrot sticks
- cheese
- granola
- whole grain crackers
- tuna salad sandwich
- egg salad sandwich
- raisins
- dried apricots
- cottage cheese with fruit
- trail mix
- hard boiled eggs
- sliced tomatoes
- seasoned cucumbers
- homemade soup (in a thermos)
- chicken
- melon slices
- rice cakes
- leftovers from dinner
- steamed vegetables

Try to avoid concentrated sugars and "junk foods" (food containing empty calories and of no real nutritional value). Also during hot weather,

avoid perishable foods that may spoil before lunch time, especially milk products.

These are just a few ideas, but the list is really limitless. Many of you are very creative cooks and have lots of ideas of your own and if you would be willing to share them we would love to put them in our newsletter.

A MEMORANDUM FROM YOUR CHILD

1. Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all I ask for. I'm only testing you.
2. Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.
3. Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.
4. Don't be inconsistent. That confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything that I can.
5. Don't make promises; you may not be able to keep them. That will discourage my trust in you.
6. Don't fall for my provocations when I say and do things just to upset you. Then I'll try for more such "victories."
7. Don't be too upset when I say, "I hate you." I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you have done to me.
8. Don't make me feel smaller than I am. I will make up for it by behaving like a "big shot."
9. Don't do things for me that I can do for myself. It makes me feel like a baby, and I may continue to put you in my service.
10. Don't let my "bad habits" get me a lot of your attention. It only encourages me to continue them.
11. Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take

much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.

12. Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of the conflict. For some reason, my hearing is not very good at this time and my cooperation is even worse. It is all right to take the action required, but let's not talk about it until later.
13. Don't try to preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what's right and wrong.
14. Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I am no good.
15. Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
16. Don't demand explanations for my wrong behavior. I really don't know why I did it.
17. Don't tax my honesty too much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.
18. Don't forget that I love and use experimenting. I learn from it, so please put up with it.
19. Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn from experience.
20. Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. I may learn to enjoy poor health if it gets me much attention.
21. Don't put me off when I ask HONEST questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and seek my information elsewhere.
22. Don't answer "silly" or meaningless questions. I just want you to keep busy with me.
23. Don't ever think that it is beneath your dignity

to apologize to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm towards you.

24. Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or infallible. It gives me too much to live up to.
25. Don't worry about the little amount of time we spend together. It is how we spend it that counts.
26. Don't let my fears arouse your anxiety. Then I will become more afraid. Show me courage.
27. Don't forget that I can't thrive without lots of understanding and encouragement, but I don't need to tell you that, do I?

**TREAT ME THE WAY YOU TREAT
YOUR FRIENDS, THEN I WILL BE
YOUR FRIEND, TOO. REMEMBER, I
LEARN MORE FROM A MODEL
THAN A CRITIC.***

* Adapted from the King's Business Magazine published by the Bible Institute of California.

Important Numbers

School.....472-5622

Emergency Numbers

School Fax.....472-5647

Shelley.....488-0817

Linda.....461-9219

NOTES