



Independence. Discovery. Nurture.

## Montessori Children's House Infant-Toddler Program 2017-2018 Parent Night

- ❖ **Welcome** – Introductions
  - Icebreaker
  - Staff – short bio
- ❖ **Classroom Orientation/Tour**
  - Child's Belongings: bottles/blankets/sheets/clothes/diapers/family photo
  - Soiled clothing; extra clothes; reusable bags
  - Food guidelines
  - Parent Information Board (no Friday folders)
  - Label Everything
- ❖ **Arrival & Dismissal**
  - Extended Day & No school “extended day only”
  - Receiving – daily sign in and out
  - Late arrivals
  - Absences
  - **School Closure Days Coming Up** – Oct 19-20 (Conferences), Nov 10 (Veteran's Day), NOV 22-24 (Thanksgiving)
- ❖ **Daily Schedule:** *FOLLOW THE LEAD OF THE CHILD* (thru observation)
- ❖ **Events** – Birthdays/Celebrations
- ❖ **Home Visits**
- ❖ **Discuss Communication Channels** – Phone/Email/Office Hours/White Board
- ❖ **Volunteer Program**
  - Benefits of bridging home and school events
  - Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet
  - Parent Association Participation
- ❖ **Up Coming Parent Education**
- ❖ **The Wish List**
- ❖ **Parent Association** - (Drop in)
- ❖ **Question and Answer Period**





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## Montessori Children's House Infant-Toddler Program

Dear Parent,

The Montessori Children's House Infant-Toddler Team is dedicated to bringing a fun and learning-rich experience to your child. This Parent Packet provides families with an overview of MCH culture, as well as specific information supporting your child's early education.

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was Italy's first female doctor. She revolutionized educational thought by stressing respect for the child, self-education, and training through movement and the senses. Dr. Montessori created unique materials in a child-centered environment. Through careful observation of each child's development, Dr. Montessori designed environments that stimulate the child's interest and facilitate his/her understanding and learning capacities spontaneously with little or no adult intervention. For over 100 years, the Montessori Method (as her educational approach is termed) has been practiced worldwide and modern scientific research has validated Dr. Montessori's brilliant observations of how children learn.

MCH supports our specially trained and certified Montessori teachers who are dedicated to bringing best practices to their children's communities through ongoing education opportunities. We recognize that a child's parent is his/her first teacher and that open and effective communication supports the child, family, and staff community. Please take every opportunity to nurture your relationship with your child's teaching team through communication and attendance at MCH Parent Education and Community events.

Please carefully read the contents of this information packet to ensure productive and effective communication. Please contact me at [kim@mchkids.com](mailto:kim@mchkids.com) if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Kim Berude  
Infant-Toddler Program Director  
[kim@mchkids.com](mailto:kim@mchkids.com)





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## Montessori Children's House Infant-Toddler Program Communication Channels

MCH is committed to open and effective communication. Parents may contact their child's Lead Teacher to discuss any issues or concerns related to the child's school experience. Assistants and Support staff will redirect parents to discuss child-related business to the child's Lead Teacher.

### We communicate formally with you via:

#### MCH Whiteboard

School-wide reminders, important dates, and special events found on the large whiteboard located in the circle. Check during Receiving and Dismissal.

#### Email

School-wide reminders, important dates, and special events will be communicated via email.

#### mchkids.com

Check out our website at mchkids.com

#### Bloomz

Check out your Bloomz's classroom site for updates, pictures, and more.

#### Classroom Blogs

Each month the Lead Teacher will write a classroom blog sharing information with families about classroom activities that occurred the previous month and what families can anticipate for the upcoming month. These classroom blogs are posted to the MCH website and an email is sent to families with a link to the blog.

#### Formal Conferences

Twice a year, parents and teachers meet together to discuss the child's progress, achievements, and in-class experiences.

### We welcome communication from you via:

#### Appointments

Please contact your Lead Teacher to schedule meetings and conferences.

#### Phone

Want to talk on the phone? Call, leave a message and a teacher will call you back (425-868-7805).

#### Email

Email your child's Lead Teacher with specific classroom- and student-related questions or concerns. You are also welcome to email the Program Director and/or the Head of School.

Fucsia Lead Teacher	Tara Kirschenmann	<a href="mailto:tara@mchkids.com">tara@mchkids.com</a>
Rosa Lead Teacher	Jamey Maclean	<a href="mailto:jamey@mchkids.com">jamey@mchkids.com</a>
Celeste Lead Teacher	Tammia Streuber	<a href="mailto:tammia@mchkids.com">tammia@mchkids.com</a>
Ambarino Lead Teacher	Sara Davies	<a href="mailto:sara@mchkids.com">sara@mchkids.com</a>
I/T Program Director	Kim Berude	<a href="mailto:kim@mchkids.com">kim@mchkids.com</a>
Head of School	Jennifer Wheelhouse	<a href="mailto:jennifer@mchkids.com">jennifer@mchkids.com</a>





## **Montessori Children's House Infant-Toddler Program The Infant Montessori**

The period your child will spend in the Infant Room is one of most importance. It is during this period that the child discovers themselves and the world around them.

It begins with the discovery of their bodies and the ability to control them. By never placing the child in a position they can't get into themselves, they are motivated and never limited, to move freely. Maria Montessori said, "A child who is free to act not only seeks to gather sensible impressions from his environment, but he also shows a love for the exactitude in the carrying out of his actions." This serves as a basis for all further actions. The child feels self-confident and expresses it through further exploration of his environment.

The environment is prepared to meet each child's individual developmental needs. The toys (or as we say "work") are arranged on shelves at the child's level, portraying the feeling "I can" and "I'm capable". They are arranged in a specific order and always returned to that order. This is done to provide for the child's need to develop an already existing internal sense of order. This helps them to feel safe in their environment. Through observation it becomes obvious if a work is not being used, then it is replaced. The works are also periodically rotated.

In caring for your child, the caregiver always includes the child in the process. By explaining to the child what's happening, during feeding, diapering, etc., the child gains a better sense of the world around him/her. This also promotes a sense of trust between the caregiver and the child enabling the child to feel safe and enhancing the bonding process between the child and adult.

Feeding is a large portion of an infant's day. When given a bottle or solids before sitting the child is always held by the caregiver. By the time they are standing up, they are fed at a table and chair (at their level) without constraint. As soon as possible, they are encouraged to feed themselves. At first, just an extra spoon involves them in the process. Eventually they are picking up table foods with their hands, and then with the spoon. They are always given water in a regular cup once they are sitting at a table to eat. By the time they are ready for toddler transition, they are feeding themselves, and drinking from a cup.

Naptime is individualized and follows the child's developmental needs. All of the children sleep on a floor mat. A floor mat is non-constraining and allows the child freedom of movement. With no crib, the barrier between child and caregiver is eliminated. This way, as they become more mobile, they can go to their mat to sleep and leave the mat when they wake up without the help of the caregiver – this is a very independent feeling for the child

It is the basic trust in the child to be a capable individual that benefits the child most. Through the use of his hands, language, freedom of movement, and freedom of choice, the child is able to build upon basic faith in himself, his self-confidence, his sense of independence, autonomy, self-esteem, and social participation.





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## Montessori Children's House Infant/Toddler Program Toddler Diapering and Clothing

### Diapering a Child Standing Up

- Get bag for soiled diaper and wipes.
- Child gets a fresh diaper.
- Adult puts gloves on.
- Child pulls pants down (with adult help, as needed).
- Child pulls tabs on soiled diaper.
- Adult puts diaper in plastic bag.  
Adult uses wipe to clean child (with girls always wipe front to back to avoid bladder and yeast infections. With all children take care to clean out all folds and around openings).
- Place gloves in bag, tie it up and place it in trash.
- Adult washes hands.
- Wipe child's hands with wipe.
- Child opens tabs on the new diaper.
- Adult and child put on new diaper together.
- Child closes tabs.
- Child puts on pants, socks, and slippers.
- Child washes hands at sink.
- Adult washes hands at sink.

### Suggested Toddler Clothing

Tips to encourage independence and comfort:

- Soft
- Breathable
- Weather resistant
- Size appropriate (not too big, or small)
- Elastic waistband so child can begin learning how to dress himself
- Head can easily fit through neck hole
- Natural materials
- Slippers
- Socks
- Shoes that can slip on and off
- Layers, but not too many that child is unable to move
- Weather appropriate

Try to avoid:

- Overalls
- Pants with zippers
- Anything restricting
- Buttons
- Shoes with laces

Some Brands to consider:

- Hanna Anderson
- Gerber
- Mini Boden
- Carters





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## Montessori Children's House Infant/Toddler Program Parent Resources for Materials

These are just a few suggestions for resources that may help your child adjust into the classroom. Please feel free to find substitutions that may work better for your child's needs.

### Labeling

<http://www.labeldaddy.com/>

School Pack: 7 sizes- 132 labels plus 4 zipper tags.  
Everything you'll need to head back to school! Our School Pack is loaded with labels... lots of sizes too! Over 130 labels, 7 different sizes.



**Extra Small Label: 1/2 x 5/16 (75 in each pack).** A Label Daddy favorite, the Extra Small Label was designed to be great for practically all clothing. Like all of our clothing labels, this label is machine washable. The application process is a cinch, peel n' stick only, no ironing necessary, no sewing necessary. These labels are great for school, great for camp, and will be great for you too.

### Slippers

[http://bepebaby.com/category\\_39/Toddler-Slippers-Size-78-2-3yr.htm](http://bepebaby.com/category_39/Toddler-Slippers-Size-78-2-3yr.htm)  
<http://www.padders.com>

Padders and Treaders: Several different colors and styles  
Toddler Slippers: Soft Soled Slipper shoes easy for your child to put on and take off by themselves



### Wet Bags

[http://www.kellyscloset.com/Wet-Bags-Pail-Liners\\_c\\_811.html](http://www.kellyscloset.com/Wet-Bags-Pail-Liners_c_811.html)  
<http://www.mypreciouskid.com/wet-bags.html>

**Wet Bags - Cloth Diaper Accessories:** Wet bags are a great way to travel with wet or dry cloth diapers. They can also be used for swimming, sports and other family activities.



## Naptime (any local store or online shop)

**Labeled Pillowcase:** Any pillow case will work please make sure it is labeled with a permanent marker or a label with your child's name. Nap things can be transported to school in the pillowcase, and will be returned in the pillowcase.



**Crib Sheet:** Please make sure the crib sheet is full sized and fitted.

**Blanket:** Any blanket will work. Take into consideration a favorite of your child's, something they are familiar with, the size and weight they are comfortable with, etc.

## Rain Gear

<http://www.kohls.com/product/prd-1063702/i-play-solid-waterproof-rain-pants-toddler.jsp>

<http://www.rei.com/product/861056/rei-rainwall-rain-pants-toddlers>

**Rain Boots and Rain Coat:** The Pacific Northwest brings rain constantly. The toddlers play outside and explore their environment rain or shine. It's important to have these items available for your child to use every day.

**Rain Pants:** The rain pants offer full-blown waterproof coverage for active little ones. Allows for fewer changes in clothing and a protection from being cold and wet.



## Family Picture

**Information:** Please provide a family photo so that your child can feel more at home in our classroom environment. We will place these on our classroom shelves, so please make sure that they are safe and sturdy for your child to carry around.





## Montessori Children's House Infant/Toddler Program Communicating with the Young Child

Language acquisition transforms a child's world in many ways. With language, a child can:

- Organize her thoughts
- Express what she is thinking
- Elicit responses from others
- Understand what others say
- Defend herself

When a child acquires language she is no longer a helpless baby, but rather has taken a giant step toward independence.

Language is not taught to children. It is absorbed by them. Because it is an adult that children absorb language from, the adult role in language acquisition is a very important, although an indirect, one.

When talking with young children, adults should remember to:

- Speak slowly. Children take longer to process sounds than adults do.
- Speak clearly. This shows respect for the great gift that language is. Language is a part of the culture each child inherits and is an important tool for living in the world.
- Speak simply. Don't use two words when you can use one.
- Speak precisely. Language helps one organize one's thoughts. Clear, precise speech equates to clear, precise thoughts.
- Think before speaking. So what you say will be meaningful.
- Be specific. "Put your feet on the floor," is more specific than "Sit up straight."
- Be positive. The way adults talk to a child will influence the way she talks to herself. If a child is spoken to gently, her inner voice will also talk gently to her.
- Listen! Make the child feel that what she says is important.
- Respect the child. Watch out for nicknames, sarcasm, etc. that might be hurtful. What a child hears can become a self-fulfilling image. (Sam is having a bad day today).

### Language for Lunch

The most ordinary situations can be turned into opportune times to promote language through dialogue – even lunchtime!

- Name things – point to food or utensils and say, "These are beans, this is a fork," etc.
- Name people – "Jake is eating, I think Abby likes corn, Tanya is finished."
- Play "Where is the ..." – "Where are the beans? Where is your fork?"
- Talk about time and amount concepts – "You may eat the beans you have first. Then you may have some more. You may have two crackers."
- Talk about grace and courtesy – say "please" and "thank you" and model proper manners in using utensils, passing food, and conversation.





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# Montessori Children's House Infant/Toddler Program Using Rituals & Routines to Ease Toddler Tug-of-War

By Tracy Hogg

Routine enables children to understand what's coming next and what they can expect, as well as what's expected of them. This familiarity is both reassuring and confirming to young children, regardless of their temperament. Routines structure the way we handle the "givens" in a child's daily life; waking, mealtimes, bath, and bedtime. Most of these daily routines are "unconscious rituals" – we tend to perform them without thinking of their significance. For example, a good-morning hug, a wave bye-bye and a good-night kiss are all rituals of connection. The trick for parents is to become more conscious of these everyday moments and to make them more purposeful.

## **Why do kids need routines and rituals?**

I tend to use the words "ritual" and "routine" interchangeably because the two R's are intertwined. Indeed, whenever you repeat and reinforce an act, you are doing R&R. R&R makes a child's life more stable and predictable – and can even override a child's temperament. For example, a Touchy Toddler who typically acts up at bedtime will be much happier when a quiet and predictable bedtime routine is in place. A Grouchy Toddler, on the other hand, who usually hates waking up will do better when he's familiar with the morning routine and knows what's coming next.

## **R&R provides security.**

A toddler's world is challenging, confusing, and often scary. She is experiencing a time of her life during which the unparalleled rate and breadth of developmental growth is astounding not just to you, but to her as well. R&R gives your child support as she takes her tentative first steps, bolstering her both in the physical sense and in understanding and managing her emotions.

## **R&R helps toddlers deal with separation.**

This is because R&R helps children anticipate events that repeat daily, like goodbye kisses when you leave for work, followed by hello hugs when you return. Research has shown, in fact, that as young as four months old, children develop expectations. We can use this knowledge to teach toddlers that even though mother leaves, she'll return.

## **R&R supports all kinds of learning – physical feats, emotional control, & social behavior.**

Children learn by repetition and imitation. Rather than parents trying to push or prod their child at random moments, by doing the same things day in and day out, learning takes place naturally and organically.

## **R&R avoids problems by helping parents to set clear boundaries & to be consistent.**

Toddlers constantly test parents' limits, and parents often cave under the stress, which only makes their children more manipulative. R&R helps us structure situations and lay out expectations ahead of time – in which case we're less likely to find we have an out-of-control toddler on hand.

## **R&R allows everyone to slow down and to make the most mundane moments into meaningful times of connection.**

What could be more special than bath or story time? And if we parents slow ourselves down and imbue these events with intention (“I will use bedtime to connect with my child”), we are also teaching our children by example how to put greater meaning into everyday moments.

Raising my own daughters, I employed lots of R&R. I kept mostly to a structured routine, even before they were old enough to understand time, so they always knew what came next. For example, when I came in from work, they knew they would have a full hour of my complete attention. Nothing was allowed to cut into *our* time. I didn’t do chores; I didn’t talk on the phone. Because they weren’t old enough to tell time, I set a timer, and they knew that when it rang I had to make dinner and tend to other tasks around the house. They were always willing to let me go because they felt so nourished by the time we’d spent together.

This week, start to develop a more predictable daily routine for your child by trying some of my suggestions below. Take into account your child’s temperament, your own parenting style, and the needs of other family members. Consider your schedule, too, and be realistic. If you can’t eat with your child every night, at least commit to two or three nights a week. Also, rituals are personal; they are most meaningful when they truly reflect the values of the participants. Figure out the most creative ways of making R&R both dependable and fun for your toddler. And know that by repeating it, you’re teaching your child what you expect, which can often prevent problems before they occur.

### **Waking up:**

There are only two ways a toddler wakes up – happy or crying. A happy Toddler may greet the day with a smile and play contentedly on her own, while a Grouchy Toddler may find the transition from sleep to be upsetting and cry until you greet him. To teach your child that bed is a nice place to hang out, make sure your child plays in her crib during the day. Spending fun time in a crib reinforces the idea not only that it’s safe, but also that it’s a great place to play. If your toddler doesn’t yet feel this way, put her in the crib once or twice during the day. Have on hand her favorite toys, and in the beginning, stay by her side, reassuring her with your presence. Gradually walk away and then out of the room for increasingly longer periods.

In the morning, try to gauge how long it takes for your child to go from playing happily on her own to crying, and walk in before she gets to the crying stage. (Ideally, your child should be able to play on her own for anywhere from 20 to 30 minutes.) Go in cheerfully and make a big deal out of greeting a new day. Some parents have a wake-up song, or a special greeting such as, “Good morning pumpkin. I’m sooo glad to see you.” The ritual ends with your taking your toddler out of the crib, with both of you excited to start the day.

### **Mealtimes:**

Toddlers are notoriously fussy eaters, and temperament can complicate mealtimes even more. A Spirited Toddler, for example, may decide that banging her spoon is a more interesting activity than eating her carrots, while a Grumpy Toddler may push the fork away whenever you try to offer him something new. I advise parents to concentrate more on making the mealtime routine consistent than on making your toddler eat. Think of meals as a way of teaching your toddler what it means to sit at a table, use utensils, try new foods, and most important, eat with the family.

To do this, serve meals at approximately the same time every day. Have a special eating chair for your toddler. Hand washing is an ideal pre-meal ritual that lets a child know it’s time to eat. Consider beginning the meal with grace, candle lighting, or by simply saying, “You may begin.” Have conversation, just as you would at dinner with adults. Talk about your day; ask your toddler about hers. Even though she may not be able to answer at first, she’ll begin to understand the give and take of conversation. Consider the meal over when your toddler stops eating. Don’t try to sneak an extra bite into your toddler’s mouth, or coax and cajole her when she turns her head away. End the meal with whatever practice feels right for your family. A suitable ending might simply be the act of taking off your child’s bib and saying, “Dinner’s over. Time to clean up!”

Keep up mealtimes R&R no matter where you go. When you take your child to another house to eat, to a restaurant or if you go on an extended trip away from home, maintain as much of the above as possible. This will make your child feel secure and reinforce everything she’s learning about mealtimes.

**Bath Time:**

As much as infants dread a bath, toddlers often dread getting out of the tub. A consistent bath time ritual can go a long way toward preventing that struggle. Announce to your toddler in a cheery voice, “It’s time for your bath!” or “We’re going to have a bath now!” Run the bath and put cups, squeeze bottles, duckies, and other floating toys into the tub.

Put your child in, or if she’s old enough, let her climb in on her own. I always like to sing a song while bathing. “This is the way we wash our arms, wash our arms, wash our arms...” Because most toddlers hate to see a bath end, don’t lift her straight out of the tub. Instead, start taking the toys out of the tub first. Then pull the plug, let the water out, and say, “Uh-oh, water’s going down the drain. Bath time is over!” End with a good snuggle in a fluffy towel.

**Naps and Bedtime:**

There’s nothing as delicious as book reading and snuggle time before bed. Then comes the moment of getting your child off to sleep. Some children, depending on their temperament, need more support than others – sleep is a skill children must learn. But even if your toddler is a “good sleeper” who goes down for naps and to bed with relative ease, it’s important to maintain consistent bedtime rituals.

First, end stimulating activities, like TV or play, put toys away and announce, “It’s almost time for bed.” Draw the curtains and pull down the shades. To help your child relax physically, incorporate the evening bath as part of the nighttime rituals – as well as massage if your child enjoys it.

After bath and pajamas say, “Let’s go and choose a book.” Decide ahead of time how many books you’re willing to read (or how many times you’ll read the same one) and tell her. Stick to it – otherwise you’re asking for trouble. Tailor this ritual to your child’s taste. Incorporate a blankie or stuffed animal, a soothing tape, a rock in a rocking chair, or waving goodnight to the moon. The bedtime ritual should end when you put your child into her crib. Some parents are able to leave the room immediately; others stick around a few minutes to sing a lullaby, or give a back rub.

Parents who create rituals and routines for their children describe them as an “anchor” for daily life and for their own values. These events and practices stay with the child, even as she takes developmental leaps and becomes increasingly independent. By taking time to perform these rites and thereby slow down the busy pace of life, rituals not only help us connect, they can make any and every moment more special.