

Montessori  
Children's House

Parent  
Handbook

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# Vision Statement

## **At Montessori Children's House we value a philosophy of education that recognizes:**

- The importance of the Montessori method of education
- Each child's need for respect and a positive self concept
- The importance of developing children's self discipline
- The individuality of each child

## **At Montessori Children's House we value a teaching environment that fosters:**

- An effort to meet each child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs
- A physically and emotionally safe environment for children
- An enthusiasm and love for learning
- Respect for others and the materials
- An appreciation for aesthetics and beauty
- A calm nurturing atmosphere
- A sense of wonder

## **At Montessori Children's House we value parents, faculty and staff who support:**

- Open communication
- A partnership in learning
- Parental involvement
- A respect for parents as the primary teachers of young children
- A respect for staff and the importance of staff development

## **At Montessori Children's House we support a school community that believes in:**

- Integrity
- Respect, thoughtfulness and empathy for others
- A broad diversity of backgrounds
- Working together cooperatively
- An awareness of our role in the larger community

# Program Descriptions

Welcome to Montessori Children's House and congratulations on your decision to provide your child with a quality educational experience. Montessori Children's House is a traditional Montessori school accepting children from Infancy through Elementary. We also offer extended before and after school care. Our goal is to provide the best possible education and child care available. Montessori Children's House began as a preschool in Redmond in 1989. We have been a licensed child care center since 1993. In 2004, we introduced our Elementary and Infant/Toddler Programs.

## **Infant/Toddler**

MCH offers full time care (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) for Infants, ages six weeks to 18 months at La Casa. For Toddlers between 15 months - 36 months, we offer three different schedule options: 1) an extended care option (7:30am to 6:00pm), 2) a 5-day half-day option (8:30am - 11:45am and 3) a 5-day full-day option (8:30am - 3:15 pm). Additional part-time hours can be added to a full day schedule from 8:00-8:30 am and 3:15-6:00 pm at an additional cost.

## **Early Childhood**

We offer both full and part time Early Childhood sessions. All options are 5 days per week. The full time preschool/Kindergarten is from 8:30 am to 3:15 pm (8:30 - 1:00 on Wednesdays). The part time preschool morning session is a five day per week 8:30 am to 12:00 pm program. This part time program is for incoming three year olds only. MCH expects that children move to a full day schedule when they are ready. There is an average of 180 school days in a year.

## **Elementary**

Our Elementary program incorporates students ages 6-10 (first through fourth grades). The Elementary class day begins at 8:15 am and ends at 3:15 pm (8:30 - 1:00 on Wednesdays).

## **Extended Care**

Extended Care in the Early Childhood and Toddler program is available from 7:30-8:30 am and 3:15-6:00 pm. For the Elementary class, extended care is available from 7:30-8:15 am and from 3:15-6:00 pm.

Montessori Children's House offers full time year-round care for children enrolled in an Extended Day schedule. MCH offers care during no-school professional days (approximately six days). MCH closes during six holidays and two weeks of vacation over the year. Extended care offered during closures is billed separately.

## **Summer Program**

Montessori Children's House offers a Summer Session for children enrolled for the school year.

# Admission Requirements & Enrollment Procedures

## Overview of Admission Procedures

- Step 1: Attend a Group Tour or an Open House.
- Step 2: Complete an Application for Admissions form and send in the non-refundable \$50 Application Fee.
- Step 3: Readiness assessments for the Early Childhood Program are primarily done for children between 2 1/2 - 3 years old. MCH will only accept children in this age range if they are exceptionally ready for the Early Childhood Program. Application for Admissions for this age child are accepted and held on a waitlist until an assessment is completed. If a child between 2 1/2 - 3 years old is applying to enter the Early Childhood program in September, a readiness assessment will be done in August. A child between 2 1/2 - 3 who is applying to enter mid-year must be assessed prior to his or her intended enrollment date.

Elementary applicants must spend a morning with the Elementary class in order to assess the student's readiness for admission. This visit is completed in the spring prior to the September start. Assessments of elementary students are arranged individually. For mid-year entrance, the child is assessed prior to the intended start date.

- Step 4: Applications for enrollment are accepted on a first-come, space-available basis. Placement is carefully made by the Enrollment Committee, taking into account requested schedules, the child's needs, the classroom's available space and the current demographics of the class.
- Step 5: The Enrollment Committee considers and evaluates prospective students in light of all information collected and space available in the program. Based on this information, the final admissions decision involves an evaluation of the student's ability to benefit from and thrive in the program. If your family is selected for admission, you will receive a letter of acceptance along with an Application for Enrollment. You will have 2 weeks to complete and return the Application for Enrollment form along with a non-refundable \$100 enrollment fee and a one month Deposit (see terms of deposit under Terms and Conditions). MCH will acknowledge receipt of returned Applications for Enrollment within 2 weeks.
- Step 6: An enrollment package will be sent to all new students in mid-July or prior to enrollment if entering MCH mid-year. Classroom placement notification will be communicated at this time. All paperwork must be completed and returned to the office by August 1st if starting in September or prior to your child's start date if beginning mid-year.
- Step 7: For students beginning MCH in September a New Student Orientation/New Parent Orientation occurs the first day of school. During Student Orientation children will be given a tour of the class and a few introductory lessons. The Parent Orientation is designed to familiarize new parents with the school's policies and procedures.

## Admission Forms

There are several forms you are required to complete prior to your child's attendance:

1. Application for Admissions (\$50 Application Fee)
2. Application for Enrollment (\$100 Enrollment Fee/\$100 Re-enrollment Fee)
3. Parent-School Contract
4. Student Information Sheet
5. Emergency Card

6. Certificate of Immunization
7. Food Allergy Action Plan
8. Child Care Emergency Plan for Allergic Reactions
9. Health Care Provider's Report of Food Allergies
10. Consent Form
11. Nap Guidelines
12. Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization
13. School/Family Alliance Agreement
14. Family History & Heritage Survey
15. Pet Policy
16. Disaster Plan

## **Transition Period and Separation**

Every effort will be made to help the child make a smooth transition into Montessori Children's House. It is important that school be a positive experience. The teachers are dedicated to working with parents to make each child's transition positive. If a parent expects separation anxiety, it is their responsibility to work out a plan with either the Program Head or the Director of Education and their child's teacher to make their child's transition into the classroom as smooth as possible. It is also the parent's responsibility to follow through with the plan.

## **Trial Period**

Each child is accepted into the program based on a one month trial period. This period is used to observe the child's adjustment to the program and to talk about concerns. The first two weeks of the trial period allow time for a child to acclimate to the new classroom environment. If concerns present themselves after the initial two weeks, a teacher-initiated dialogue will begin with parents. Parental concerns must be communicated to the child's teacher. If the child successfully integrates into the program during the trial period, placement will become official. If there are problems which cannot be resolved, placement will be terminated. If placement is terminated immediately following the introductory period the deposit will be refunded.

## **Waitlist**

Fall registration begins in February. If space is unavailable parents will be offered placement on the waitlist. If your child remains on the waitlist, you will be contacted as soon as an opening occurs.

## **Criteria for Readiness**

*Entry for the typically developing 2 ½ - 3 year old child into MCH's Early Childhood Program is dependent on several developmental milestones to ensure their success. This criterion includes:*

### **Toileting**

- child must be able to independently recognize their toileting needs
- child will have experienced successful toileting at home for two full months before starting enrollment
- child must demonstrate the ability and will to remove their own wet clothes, and attempt to redress themselves.

### **Language**

- child must exhibit expressive language skills in their first language such as:
  - identifying self and family members with words
  - can speak a short sentence
- child must show receptive language skills and be able to:
  - follow a one step instruction

**Physical/Social/Emotional**

- child must exhibit impulse control appropriate to their age
- child displays ability to separate from parent without undue stress after an adjustment period

*Entry for a currently enrolled child into an afternoon work period relies on several developments to ensure their success. This criterion includes:*

**Stamina**

- child functions well without a nap both at school and at home
- child shows independence in eating
- child maintains engagement in the classroom for the entire afternoon after an adjustment period

**Social/Emotional**

- child exhibits primarily associative rather than parallel interactions with their peers

*Entry for Kindergarten into MCH's Early Childhood Program criterion includes:*

**Age**

- child must be 5 years old by August 31<sup>st</sup> of enrollment year as per WA State Law

**Experience**

- child must have previous experience in (one to three years) in a Montessori Early Childhood environment.

**Non-discrimination Statement**

Montessori Children's House does not discriminate in enrollment and hiring practices or in the care of children because of race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, religion, differing physical or mental abilities, or communication and learning styles.

When one or more American Indian child receives care at MCH, La Casa or La Escuela, we will consult with the parent and establish a plan to provide social service resources and training designed to meet the social and cultural needs of the child. We will coordinate with tribal authorities, Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs' social service staff, and appropriate urban Indian and Alaskan native consultants.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Child Care**

Passed in 1990, the ADA offers civil rights protection to individuals with visible and *hidden* disabilities. It covers employment, state and local government services, public accommodations (i.e. child care centers and family home providers), and telecommunications for the deaf. The ADA allows children with mental or physical disabilities the opportunity to participate in all the activities and opportunities of community life. Part of community life is the opportunity to benefit from being in a child care setting. Children cannot be excluded from childcare on the basis of a disability.

# Miscellaneous Rate Information

## All Programs

**Automatic Debit of Tuition ("Tuition Express"):** Parents may sign up for automatic debit payment. If the parent opts out of the automatic debit procedure, a 1% administration fee will be charged. Monthly tuition payment amount is debited from the parent's checking account on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month..

### **Late Fees:**

1. Tuition is due on the first of the month and past due after the 5<sup>th</sup>. If payment is not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month, a 10% late fee penalty is assessed. If payment remains unpaid after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child will not be admitted until ALL fees are paid in full.
2. Attendance is tracked by parent sign in. There is a \$1.00/minute charge for late pick-ups. These fees will either be debited from your checking account each month or billed in your monthly statement if tuition is paid by check. All late fees past 6:00 p.m. will be billed at \$3.00/minute. Parents are responsible for signing their child(ren) out. There is a \$5 fee for failing to sign out.
3. The penalty for NSF checks is \$30.00 plus all bank costs incurred. Late payment fees will apply.

**Schedule Change Fee:** There is a \$20.00 schedule change fee after the 30 day trial period.

**Replacement Fees:** Each Early Childhood student receives a sharing tote bag upon enrollment. There is a \$5.00 charge to replace lost Early Childhood tote bags. Each Elementary student receives a large tote bag at the beginning of the school year. There is a \$10.00 charge to replace lost large tote bags. If materials are intentionally destroyed by a child, the child's family must cover 100% replacement cost for the materials.

**Deposit:** A child's placement is reserved upon receipt of a deposit of June's tuition. The Application for Enrollment, followed by receipt of deposit is your contract with Montessori Children's House for the school year. The deposit will be applied to June's tuition. For a child who is continuing in the program for the subsequent school year a new deposit, equivalent to the next year's monthly tuition, will be charged and due in June. Your deposit will be forfeited should enrollment not take place prior to the 30 day trial period or should you withdraw from the program during the school year.

**Vacations/Holiday Policy:** All tuition is calculated on the yearly cost of the program. Three weeks of vacation time are built into the school calendar. There are six teacher paid holidays a year when the school is closed. The MCH Calendar reflects these dates. MCH makes an effort to follow the Lake Washington School District calendar as closely as possible.

# Business Practices

## Arrival and Dismissal

1. Arrival/Dismissal Instructions: Parents must sign their children in upon arrival and out upon departure using their full signatures. All children (with the exception of Elementary Students) must be signed in/out by their parent using a full signature.
  - Elementary students participating in Before/After School Care must be signed in/out by their parent.
  - At the Main Campus, children arriving from 7:30-8:30 are received on the playground.
  - Elementary students arriving from 8:15-8:30 are dropped off at the top of the stairs and walk to their classroom independently.
  - Early Childhood and El Salon Rosa Toddler children arriving 8:30-8:45 am are received directly from their cars and escorted to their classrooms by a teacher. At the beginning of the year, Toddlers from El Salon Rosa may be escorted by their parent to the classroom.
  - Parents of Infants and Toddlers at La Casa & La Escuela walk their children to the building for receiving and to sign them in. These parents pick up their children directly from their classrooms.
  - On the Main Campus, from 3:00-3:15 pm children are dismissed directly from their classrooms and escorted to their cars by teachers. The parent signs the child out and buckles the child into his/her seat. After 3:15, parents will pick up their children in their classrooms and must sign them out before leaving.
  - If someone other than a parent picks up a child, the parent must complete the Permission to Release Form.
2. Parents identify on the Emergency Card who is authorized to pick up a child. No child is released to any person without a Permission to Release Form to be filled out by the parent or guardian (or a confirmed telephone call in the case of an emergency). The person picking up a child must show picture identification.
3. A child will not be released to anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

## Back-up Child Care

Sick children are not admitted to the school. We recommend that families have access to alternative child care if possible. It is always the family's responsibility to find backup child care. For a child care referral, please call:

**Child Care Resources** (425) 865-9350

**Virginia Mason TLC** (206) 583-6521

## La Casa and La Escuela Staffing when provider is absent

Typical staffing plan when provider is absent at La Casa or La Escuela: Sufficient personnel have been hired and trained to run the Infant/Toddler Program at La Casa and La Escuela in the absence of Linda Baker and/or Jennifer Wheelhouse (director/provider).

## Transportation and Field Trips

**Early Childhood & Infant/Toddler:** The Early Childhood classrooms and the Infant/Toddler program do not leave campus for field trips. In order to provide educational enrichment opportunities for these

populations, the MCH Parent Association plans a series of on-site assemblies, special guests, and educational enrichment events. Walks and excursions on the Nature Trail are a part of the curriculum.

**Elementary:** The Elementary takes approximately monthly field trips.

1. Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school.
2. Parents provide transportation for field trips.
3. As per Washington State law, children under 40 pounds must be in a car seat at all times and children who are 40-80 pounds must be in a booster seat. When a child is 8 years old, but is not yet 80 pounds, the parent can choose to have the child transported without a booster seat. Parents must provide a booster or car seat on planned field trip days.
4. Parent drivers must submit a Washington State background check form to the school prior to the field trip.
5. Parent drivers must provide proof of \$300,000 liability insurance.

### **Guidelines for Elementary Field Trip Drivers:**

Parent drivers are also field trip chaperones. They are asked to supervise the group of children in their car, both in the car and while attending the field trip. Please take complete charge of the children assigned to you, unless directed otherwise by a teacher. We have high behavioral expectations of our children on outings and appreciate the help in maintaining this order, preserving safety, and providing a fun and educational trip for all. Driver chaperones are given a list of the children under your care.

1. Please have them in your sight at all times.
2. Give your car rules to the group before you leave. It is reasonable to expect no yelling or hanging out the windows. The children will not view DVDs and TV while traveling a vehicle. Children may only eat/drink the food they bring into the car. Drivers do not provide refreshments.
3. Outside of the vehicle, students must stay with their driver chaperone at all times.
4. Children will behave courteously at all times.
5. Children should be reminded to go to the bathroom before leaving. Please limit bathroom trips to real necessities, not as social occasions.
7. In accordance with the DSHS policy of the State of Washington, there will be no corporal (physical) punishment of children during field trips.
8. Emergency cards will be given to Driver chaperones for every student in their care in case of an emergency. These cards must be returned to the teachers after the field trip.
9. Do not leave students unattended in the classroom if you arrive back at school before the teacher

### **TV/Videos**

Television will not be viewed at any time. Occasionally, the Elementary class may view DVDs or videos for educational purposes.

### **Snow Days**

If the Lake Washington School District is closed there will be no school session. If there are limited closures, MCH follows Alcott Elementary. The administrative team will make a determination by 6 a.m. as to whether our school will be closed due to severe and dangerous weather conditions. This information

will be placed on our answering machine (425) 868-7805 by 6 a.m. La Casa will not offer childcare on snow days. Our Extended Care Program will make every effort to stay open to serve our Extended Care families, based on staff availability and weather permitting. Find out about school closures on television news, 710 KIRO AM radio station, or www.schoolreport.org. On Snow Days, MCH is open from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

### **Pet Policy**

MCH houses and maintains certain animals on campus, including but not limited to: goats, chickens, birds, rodents, frogs, rabbits and fish. Children may be involved in the care of such animals with the exception of the cleaning of cages or living environments. MCH follows a strict hand washing culture after the care of or interaction with animals. As some children are picked up by parents directly from the playground where animals are present, parents are strongly encouraged to have children wash hands upon arrival at home due to possible interaction with animals while on the playground. The La Escuela building houses two golden retrievers that are kept either in a fenced kennel area or on a separate level of the house where care is not provided. Children will not come into contact or have any interactions with the dogs. All of the MCH pets are up to date on immunizations, are in good health, show no evidence of disease and are not aggressive. Staff are always present when children interact with pets.

### **No Smoking Policy**

MCH has a strict no smoking policy on all of our campus locations.

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

We are required by mandatory reporting laws to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social and Health Services and Child Protective Services.

### **Religious Activities**

The School recognizes that our employees and the families we serve have personal religious beliefs and practices. While this school is not affiliated with any particular religious organization, we do celebrate birthdays and some religious holidays. The Lead Teachers use the Family History & Heritage Surveys filled out by each family to design a relevant, careful approach to holidays. Lead Teachers work with classroom families to determine what holidays will be recognized. We encourage all families to share their holiday traditions with the class, as appropriate. We encourage teachers to enrich the classroom by introducing a range of philosophies, moral systems, and religions rather than to omit all religious elements.

### **Termination of Services**

1. Extended Day child care is contracted on a yearly basis and a deposit is collected at the time of application. This deposit is prepaid tuition which is applied to June's tuition when the child withdraws from the program. If the child leaves the program before June this deposit is forfeited.
2. The following are conditions that will cause care to be terminated:
  - a. Tuition past due after the 15th
  - b. Failure to abide by center policies
  - c. Continued unacceptable or harmful behavior by a child (see Behavior Management Guidelines)

## **Arbitration Policy**

If parents have concerns regarding an issue that pertains directly to the classroom they should bring their concerns directly to the Lead Teacher.

If parents are not satisfied with the results after discussing the issue with the lead teachers, then the concern should be addressed with the relevant Program Head. If the results are not satisfactory, parents may take their concern to the Director of Education or the Executive Director of MCH.

School-wide and program related issues should be brought directly to the Executive Director.

# Daily Activities

## Prohibited Items

We ask that children do not bring their toys, candy, weapons or backpacks to school. MCH has a strict NO SUGAR policy.

## Early Childhood Sharing (Show and Tell)

When children share objects and stories from home, they build a bridge between their school and home culture. Children enrolled in MCH's Early Childhood Program receive an MCH Sharing Bag with their printed name. MCH asks that bags be used only for sharing purposes to avoid confusion and wear. Each EC classroom provides guidelines for sharing topics and frequency.

The Infant/Toddler and Elementary programs do not participate in this sharing system and sharing tote bags are not provided.

## Tote Bags

The Montessori Children's House Early Childhood tote bags are for Sharing only. Please do not use them for daily work. Please do not send your Early Childhood child to school with a back pack as the Early Childhood classrooms do not have the room for storing them. Lost tote bags can be replaced for \$5.

Elementary tote bags are for children's personal belongings and should be carried to and from school each day. The Elementary classroom provides storage space for these tote bags, but not for backpacks. Lost Elementary tote bags must be replaced for \$15.

## Extra Clothing

**Early Childhood:** Parents provide an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear) which are left at the school for emergencies. If it is necessary for a child to change into this set of clothing, a replacement set must be sent the following day. All clothing must be labeled; including coat, hat, boots, lunch boxes and backpacks.

**Infant/Toddler:** A full time child needs 7 sets of extra clothing. For part time children, 4 sets of extra cloths are required. This is due to the use of water in activities, toilet learning, learning to eat table foods and drink from a glass.

**Elementary:** Elementary students are encouraged to have extra clothes in the classroom, in case of bathroom accident, gardening or playground needs.

## Birthdays/Holidays

We celebrate birthdays with the traditional Montessori Birthday Circle in which family members are welcome to attend. The birthday circle is designed to celebrate the child's life and provide the child with the loving, nurturing attention of the classroom community. Please coordinate joining this special circle time with the classroom Lead Teacher at least one week in advance. MCH has a strict NO SUGAR policy. Birthday treats are limited to healthy alternatives and according to individual classroom procedures. An alternate option to treats is to give a non-food treat (pencil, sticker, etc.) per child, donate a book to the classroom library or procure a Wish List item in honor of the birthday child. Wish List gifts are tax-deductible through the MCH Parent Association.

Infant, Toddler and Elementary communities celebrate birthdays in different ways. Parents must communicate directly with their child's teacher for information about those celebrations.

We recognize most holidays with a special event, however holidays are not the focus of our curriculum. If a parent wishes to participate in the class appreciation of a particular holiday with baking, field trip, party, etc. please inform a teacher. Please see Religious Observances section for more information.

### **Spirit Day**

Each Friday is Spirit Day at Montessori Children's House. Staff members wear Montessori Children's House logo wear and children are encouraged to do the same. Logo t-shirts and sweatshirts are available from the office.

# Meals & Snacks

## Infant Room Lunch

Parents need to provide infant food, formula or breast milk. We ask parents to do all food introduction at home with their infants. Once a new food has been introduced, parents may send it to school.

## Snack

In the Toddler and Early Childhood classrooms, a nutritious snack is available as part of the classroom shelf activity. We call this snack "food preparation". Children have the opportunity to learn various preparation techniques, (i.e. cutting, spreading, peeling, etc.), as well as having food available during class time. If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions please advise the teacher.

The Elementary students are asked to bring their own nutritious snacks in their lunch boxes. They eat snack when they are hungry.

## Toddler Lunch Guidelines

The following is a list of suggestion and guidelines for preparing your child's lunch at Montessori Children's House.

### **We provide...**

- A peaceful and gracious setting in which manners are modeled and mealtime is a pleasant experience.
- Help opening containers: toddlers are able to open Ziploc bags and lighter Tupperware with little or no assistance
- A positive daily routine that allows the children to serve their own food, pour their milk, and wash their dishes.
- Milk is served at the end of each meal so the child can fill up on food instead of liquids.

### **Families provide...**

- Nutritious and balanced food with no or very little salt, sugar or additives.
- Lunches that include a protein, vegetable, carbohydrate, and fruit.
- Reusable or recyclable packaging
- An ice pack for refrigerated foods. Food that can be served cold, or hot food in a thermos.

### **Please do not send...**

- Liquid yogurts, candy, chips, or sugary juices
- Chocking hazard foods like hotdogs, nuts, raw vegetables or whole grapes

### **Some suggestions...**

- Involve your child in choosing and packing foods. Give your toddler two healthy options "Would you like a banana or raisins in your lunch today".
- Keep portions small. Large amounts of food can be overwhelming and reduce appetites. Send enough food for seconds and the teachers will help with the portions.
- Ziploc bags are great for separating two small portions of the same food so that the child can serve all that they see. Toddlers usually want to do this.
- Cut food into smaller pieces that children can handle
- **Plan for a variety: children get bored with the same foods everyday, and may stop eating them.**

## Early Childhood and Elementary Lunch at MCH

Children bring a boxed lunch from home. Please pack a nutritious lunch. We can provide suggestions for lunch choices based on good nutrition and experience. We ask that parents not send candy, gum or

liquid yogurt to school for lunch. Also do not send red or purple juice, as it stains the carpet. Because the teachers will be very busy during this time please try to send foods that your child can eat with as little assistance as possible. Please label lunch boxes/sacks.

The following is a list of suggestions and guidelines for preparing your child's sack lunch for Montessori Children's House.

We provide . . .

- A peaceful and gracious setting in which manners are modeled and a mealtime that is a pleasant experience
- Assistance with opening and closing packaging
- Education about nutrition

You are encouraged to provide...

- A labeled lunch sack/box
- Reusable and manageable packaging
- An ice pack for refrigerated foods
- Food that can be served cold or hot food in a thermos (we can occasionally reheat food)
- A beverage that is not red or purple (please help us care for our carpets!)
- One food from each food group (Fruit/Veggie, Dairy, Protein, Grains) and no more than ONE food item with sugar (please check packaging as lots of "children's food" has added sugar and several servings are packaged together)

### **General Suggestions for EC Lunch**

Keep portions small - large portions can reduce appetites.

General portions guideline: 1 tablespoon per year of age of one food from each food group. (ex. Serve a 3 year old 3 tbsp. of cereal from the grain group.)

Serve your child one food high in vitamin C every day, and vitamin A every other day.

Involve your child in choosing, preparing, and packing foods.

# Behavior Management Guidelines & Procedures

## **Discipline Philosophy**

Montessori Children's House provides educational settings from infancy through elementary that promote self-discipline and independence within each child. MCH achieves this goal of emotional and social well-being through many means. These include the following: building conflict-resolution skills, nurturing a peaceful community spirit, and providing a balance between personal liberties and boundaries as set by classroom courtesies.

## **Discipline Methods**

All children receive guidelines for the care of their environment and respect for each other. This occurs through meaningful one-on-one interactions with the teacher, peers and during group lessons. The use of external rewards and/or punishments is discouraged or not normally appropriate with children. Rather, teachers utilize respectful communication tools and a variety of management techniques.

Corporal punishment, shaming a child and neglect are unacceptable at MCH. In extreme situations, children may have to be restrained from injuring themselves or others.

### **There are three rules at Montessori Children's House:**

1. Respect yourself.
2. Respect others.
3. Respect our environment.

Children at Montessori Children's House learn how to identify their own emotions, voice their concern to the person they have the conflict with and seek the help of a teacher when needed. Problem solving language is often first "scripted" by a facilitating adult. After actively listening to each other, the children agree upon a resolution.

At Montessori Children's House we follow each child's development and individual needs through repeated observation and documentation, etc. Some behaviors, while not socially appropriate, are none-the-less developmentally typical. For example, Infants may chew on books during teething; Toddlers may bite; Early Childhood students may push each other; Elementary students may fabricate information. These behaviors are addressed at MCH through a variety of positive redirection techniques and with an approach that respects the child's dignity and development.

## **Parent-Teacher Communication**

Montessori Children's House is committed to strong partnerships with parents and actively encourages teachers to initiate and maintain regular communication with parents. Teachers are expected to collaborate with each family to create goals for their

child's behavior and in implementing any behavior modification strategies both at home and school.

During parent-teacher communications, teachers may ask parents many questions. These questions may regard the child's general health and developmental history, sleeping and eating patterns, and other variables that may lead to changes in or causes of behavior. In addition, parents can expect to receive information regarding MCH's Behavior Management Procedures to establish the foundation of parent-teacher partnership.

If a child's behavior involves harming another person either physically or psychologically, an incident report will be filed in the office. Copies will be sent to the parents and the child's Lead Teacher, in accordance with the law. The parents of the injured party also will receive similar communication. The incident report enables the school to track patterns of behavior. If a pattern is identified, the Lead Teacher maintains open and frequent communication with the parents that includes goal setting and intervention techniques for home and school.

### **Severe Behavior**

Occasionally, a child may have difficulties relating within or adjusting to a class structure. In a situation where a child is creating a physically harmful situation (i.e., inappropriate interaction with other children, staff, materials, and/or self) and/or where staff must devote an inordinate amount of exclusive attention to that child, it is Montessori Children's House policy to implement an individualized Behavior Support Plan.

Severe behaviors may include (but are not limited to):

- Deliberate destruction of property
- Repeated non-compliance with basic school/classroom ground rules
- Repeated use of intimidation tactics and/or verbal aggression
- Repeatedly leaving the supervised area without permission or an escort (e.g. climbing over the playground fence, trying to "run away" from the classroom)
- Repeatedly putting self in harm's way (e.g. using a hammer on a classroom window)
- Repeated use of physical aggression towards others or putting others in harm's way
- Inappropriate sexual conduct (depending on age of child and specifics of incident, this type of behavior may result in immediate suspension from school – see below)

There are a handful of behaviors that, for safety reasons, are not to be tolerated at Montessori Children's House. For such behaviors, the child will be sent home from school immediately. Some examples of severe behaviors that result in this type of immediate response include: causing injury to another that results in hospitalization; or repeatedly or severely harming a teacher. At the Elementary level this may constitute suspension or expulsion. An MCH Director will communicate directly with the parents about the conditions upon which the child may return to MCH following such behavior.

## **Behavior Support Plan Procedures**

1. Parents are contacted early and often if a behavioral concern develops.
2. Teaching Team documents consistent undesirable behaviors.
3. Parent and teacher determine 1) if temporary stressors are at play and continue to observe the child, or 2) if a Behavior Support Plan is prudent.
4. Teacher utilizes resources such as MCH Program Heads and Director of Education to develop an individualized Behavior Support Plan (see sample template below). The plan is finalized in collaboration with the parents in a parent-teacher conference. Copies of the plan are distributed to the teaching team and the parents within a week.
5. The written Behavior Support Plan is submitted to the Executive Director and placed in the child's file.
6. The Teaching Team implements the Behavior Support Plan which may include problem solving, a trip to the office, or being sent home. At the Elementary level, being sent home is considered a suspension from school.
7. If the behavior of concern continues, a parent-teacher conference is scheduled.
8. With written parental consent, an outside professional may be arranged to observe and evaluate the child in the school setting. For Elementary students, outside professional assessment might be mandated by the Educational Leadership team within a certain time frame.
9. The Behavior Support Plan may be modified with the information gathered by the teaching team, the parents and any outside professionals.
10. After a predetermined set of time, a follow-up parent-teacher conference is scheduled to monitor progress and/or make modifications to the plan.
11. If the behavioral needs of a child exceed MCH staff capabilities or endangers the health and safety of children or staff, MCH may require children to withdraw from the program. In the Elementary program this is considered expulsion.

## **Sample Behavior Plan**

For each behavioral infraction, the teaching team will respond consistently with the following steps within the same day. This example serves as a template. Each plan may vary slightly according to the needs of the individual child.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Step

- Teacher redirects and/or problem solves with child.

*Recurrence of behavior*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Step

- The child temporarily changes location (supervised quiet space, outside, etc.).

*Recurrence of behavior*

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Step

- Teacher takes child to the office for a more extended period. The parent may be called.

*Recurrence of behavior*

- 4<sup>th</sup> Step

- Child is removed from class. The parent is called to pick up the child within thirty minutes.

*Return to school the next day following parent conversation with Director of Education and/or Executive Director.*

# Medical Procedures

## Medical Emergencies

1. MCH requires all staff to have First Aid, Child CPR, and HIV/Aids Prevention training.
2. Minor cuts, bruises, and scrapes will be treated. Parents will be notified upon arrival. With some minor injuries parents will be called to help decide whether the child should go home.
3. In the event of a serious injury or emergency, we call 911. We then notify the parent immediately and tell the parent where the child is being treated. If we cannot reach a parent, we contact the alternate emergency person.
4. If injury results in medical treatment or hospitalization, we are required to notify Department of Social and Health Services Licensor and to submit an "Injury/Incident Report." The parent is given a copy.
5. Any injury that can potentially leave a mark or bruise will require documentation via an "Injury/Incident Report." The parent is given a copy.
6. An Injury/Incident log is kept on file in the office. The Director of Operations reviews it monthly for trends. This is an administrative/licensing document and is not made available to the public.

## Medicine Management

1. Medication management is handled by the Office.
2. All medications shall be administered only on the written approval of a parent or guardian.
3. Prescription medications shall be administered only as directed on the label or as otherwise authorized by a physician. As needed medication may be given only when the health professional lists specific parameters, such as "give one tablet every four hours".
4. Medications must be stored in the original container. The container must have the patient's name, name of medication, instructions (dosage, frequency, duration) and date of expiration.
5. Doctor's permission is not required for non-prescriptions drugs such as:
  - a. Anti-histamines
  - b. Non-aspirin pain relievers and fever reduce
  - c. Cough medicine (non-narcotic)
  - d. Decongestants
  - e. Anti-itching creams
  - f. Diaper ointments and powders
  - g. Sunscreen

Non-prescription medication not included in the categories listed above; taken differently than indicated on the manufacturer's label; or lacking labeled instructions shall only be given if authorized in writing by a physician.

6. A detailed record will be kept of all medicines given at child care.

## III Children

1. Each child is observed daily for signs of illness.
2. Children who are contagious must stay at home. All parents of children, as well as the Health Department, are notified of communicable diseases.
3. Parents must call if their child misses three or more consecutive days due to illness. If the parent is unsure about whether a child should attend come or not, the parent should call the school. Elementary parents are asked to notify the school by 10:00 am if their child is absent for the day.
4. If a child becomes ill during the day, the parent is notified immediately and is expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. In such event, the child is isolated from the other children until the parent arrives. When children are not picked up after 30 minutes the next person on the emergency list will be called.
5. The parent is responsible for finding substitute care in case of the child's illness. The following symptoms are cause for children to be excluded per instruction of the Department of Public Health:
  1. Fever of 100.4° F (axillary) or higher. Child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
  2. Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within a 24 hour period.
  3. Diarrhea of 3 or more watery stools within a 24 hour period.
  4. Body rash not associated with diapering, heat or allergic reactions, especially with fever or itching.
  5. Eye discharge or pinkeye. Children will be re-admitted after:
    - (a) A medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial infection or
    - (b) 24 hours after beginning of antibiotic treatment.
  6. Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
  7. Unusual appearance/behavior to include pale, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused or irritable.
  8. Sore throat, especially if associated with fever or swollen glands in the neck.
  9. Symptoms of any childhood communicable diseases (i.e.: chicken pox, measles, mumps).
  10. Green nasal discharge.
  11. Ear discharge or excessive ear rubbing or pulling.
  12. Children who have lice may not return to day care until they are louse and nit (egg) free.

**Please read "Keeping Your Ill Child at Home" from the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health.**

# Care of Young Children

## Infant/Toddler Program

### **BOTTLES:**

Infants: It will be the responsibility of the parent to supply enough bottles for their child's schedule. Parents may send either fresh or ready-to-defrost milk or formula. We do not have room to store frozen breast milk. Bottles will be given to infants as needed according to their daily schedule. Children will always be held by an adult during bottle feeding. No bottles will ever be propped during feedings. Weaning generally begins between 9-12 months. The process begins by reducing the amount of formula or breast milk that is given in each bottle. Then the number of bottles are gradually reduced. The use of cups without lids is introduced during this period and milk and formula may be given this way.

Toddlers: When children start in the Toddler program there are no bottles allowed because the children are confidently able to use cups. The children are on their way to being independent and the cup facilitates this much better than a bottle. Additionally, if one child has a bottle in the environment, it becomes something the other children want. Toddlers see familiar objects as belonging to them. Therefore, a bottle could be an object that causes big problems. If a bottle never enters our environment, it will not be associated with the environment.

### **PACIFIERS:**

Infants: Infants are weaned from pacifiers by the age of six months. Infants are developmentally capable of learning to comfort themselves by this age. Our goal is to assist them with this learning process by turning to the adults in their environment to meet their needs rather than an inanimate object.

Toddlers: No pacifiers will be allowed in the Toddler Program. Children will learn to find their own way to comfort themselves rather than relying on inanimate objects or the adults in the environment.

**DIAPERING:** Infants are diapered on a changing table in the Infant Room. Stand-up diapering occurs once an infant or toddler is able to stand up on their own with adequate stability and participate in the process. Our approach regarding stand-up diapering is two-fold. First, it respects the child's need for independence by engaging them in the self-care process. Second, it acts as a transition to the toilet training process. Parents are required to supply their own disposable diapers. Parent must supply diaper cream/ointment. We utilize sanitary measures when changing diapers and assisting with toileting. This includes the use of latex gloves, hand washing of adult and child and disinfecting the changing area after use.

**TOILET LEARNING:** When we see signs that the child is ready for changing over from diapers to underwear, the teacher will initiate a dialogue with the parent. This does not usually happen before the child is two years old. If we miss the window of opportunity with toilet learning it can become a long drawn out process. There is no pressure placed on the child, only opportunities! If they experience being wet in underwear it is a much different sensation than a diaper. Sometimes children might be ready around 18 months to sit on the toilet and we will follow the child's lead.

### **TOILET LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:**

1. As your child becomes more and more ready to independently use the toilet and shows an inclination toward toilet training, Montessori Children's House is uniquely poised to support your child both at home and school. Our experiences have shown that the guidelines outlined below are a respectful and effective method of learning how to use the toilet.

2. Thin underwear allow children to see and feel whether or not they are wet, and make it easier for them to change themselves.
3. Discuss previous efforts with your child's Lead Teacher the first week of school. Develop a plan together that best supports your child's learning and is consistent with the teacher's recommendation. Parents and teachers communicate often regarding child's progress. A determination for readiness is determined the fourth week of the child's 30-day trial period.
4. The child changes his/her wet clothing with adult encouragement and supervision. Adults assist with BM accidents. Wet clothes are sent home in plastic bags (we understand this is a commitment of laundry and consistency) and extra clothes need replenishing daily.
5. At least 3 or 4 extra sets of easily-changed clothing kept in the child's cubby allow for accidents. Suggestions for easy clothes are:
  - sweat pants or other elastic-waisted pants the child can pull on and off with ease.
  - no belts, suspenders, or overalls that inhibit the child from changing independently.
  - short shirts that do not get in the way while on the toilet.
  - easy to manage shoes (velcro, pull-on, etc.).
  - extra socks and/or slippers
6. When the child is dry (i.e., upon arrival at school, before naptime, etc.) encourage him/her to use the toilet (if only to go in the bathroom and look at it!). Asking and encouraging the child to use the toilet approximately every 2 hours will help them begin to listen to their bodily needs.
7. It is of utmost importance to us that your children develop in a positive learning environment. Noticing their successes without praise empowers the child to continue.
8. Please keep the teachers posted about how it is going at home, if you have any concerns, and about your successes! We will try to do the same!

**PULL UPS:** Pull ups are not helpful in the toilet learning process. The child never has the opportunity of feeling wet and everything is warm and contained in a pull up. When a child wears underwear the wet sensation is very different and the child will start to make the connection of needing to sit on the toilet. The process of toilet learning takes time and each child progresses at his/her own pace. Therefore, MCH does not allow the use of pull-ups during the toilet learning process. We strongly encourage parents to partner with MCH and consistently use cotton underwear both at school and home during the toilet learning process.

**SLEEPING EQUIPMENT:** Sleeping mats are provided for toddlers. Napping children should bring a blanket and crib sheet to school Mondays in a pillowcase and take it home to be washed or bring their nap supplies each day from home for nap time. We do not have storage space for more than one child sized blanket.

## **Early Childhood Program**

**TOILETING LEARNING:** Children entering the Early Childhood Program must be toileting independently. It is the parent's responsibility to initiate toilet learning in the months prior to the child's entry into the program in order to ensure his/her success. Some toileting regression is typical during an adjustment period of change. Parents and teachers discuss strategies for nurturing the child's independence.

We utilize sanitary measures when assisting with toileting. This includes the use of latex gloves, hand washing of adult and child and disinfecting the changing area after use.

**NAPS AND REST PERIODS:** Parents and teacher discuss and strategize each child's nap needs. All children who are enrolled in the Early Childhood program and stay for extended care (over 6 hours a day) rest in their classrooms. Those who fall asleep are awoken by 2:45 pm. Sleeping mats are provided and a \$20 nap blanket fee is collected. Nap blankets are sent home on Fridays for laundering.

## **All Programs**

**CLEANLINESS:** Every effort is made to keep the classrooms, playgrounds and grounds clean. Please notify the Director of Operations if a situation exists which could be a safety or health hazard.

**GENERAL HEALTH CARE:** Teachers and children wash their hands: upon entering the classroom, after interacting with animals, after toileting or diapering and before cooking or eating. In the Early Childhood, toys are disinfected at least weekly. In the Infant/Toddler Program, the toys are disinfected daily.

# Communication and Parent Conferences

## Communication Channels

MCH is committed to open and effective communication. Parents may contact their child's Lead Teacher to discuss their child's development. Assistant Teachers and Support staff will redirect parents to discuss child-related business to the Lead Teacher.

**Appointments:** Please contact your lead teacher or an administrator to schedule meetings and conferences.

**Phone:** Want to talk on the phone? Call 425-458-4330, leave a message and a teacher will call you back.

**MCH Whiteboard:** School-wide reminders, important dates, and special events found on the large whiteboard located in the center of the traffic circle. Check it when you drop-off and pick-up.

**MCH Newsletter:** The regular newsletter provides important information and interesting articles ranging from child development milestones to staff profiles to anecdotal stories. The newsletter also covers administrative business and parent news.

**www.mchkids.com:** Teachers post regular classroom web updates to increase the opportunities for class news. Check out our website at [mchkids.com](http://mchkids.com)

**Communication Folder:** Your family's communication folder is sent home every Friday. Parents should empty the folder and read the information over the weekend. The folder must be returned on Monday at receiving/drop-off.

**Notes:** Leave a note in a staff member's cubby located in the office.

**Observe:** Want to know more about what your child is doing in class? Schedule a time to come to the classroom for an observation or a visit. During an hour observation where you watch without interacting, you will learn more about what your child is doing in class than you ever thought possible.

**Visit:** EC and EI parents can arrange visit at least one week in advance, and please, no visitors the first 3-4 weeks of school. Check in at the office to receive a Visitor's Pass. When entering the classroom, speak in a soft, quiet voice and follow the teacher's lead. Allow your child to lead you through their routines, including their choices of work and self-care skills they are mastering.

**Email:** Email!

## Parent Visits

Parents are encouraged to visit their child in his/her school setting. Parents are asked to arrange a time with the teacher or Program Head for an observation.

Elementary parents are required to conduct two one-hour observations during the school year.

When visiting, parents are asked to sit quietly or move quietly around the classroom. A visit or observation is not a time to engage in conversation with the children. Specific observation guidelines are provided. Visiting parents must sign in at the Office prior to arriving in the classroom.

## Parent Participation

Parent involvement in Montessori Children's House is welcome. We offer a series of parent education events. We have an active Parent Association which meets regularly. There are many parent volunteer opportunities, both in-class and outside of class. Montessori Children's House supports the MCH Parent Association requirement of twenty volunteer hours per school year for the first child and ten hours for each additional child. Five of the volunteer hours must go towards fundraising activities. If a family prefers

to make a monetary contribution to the MCH PA in lieu of volunteer hours, they may do so at \$10 per hour.

## **Conferences**

The Infant/Toddler Program conducts home visits once a year to encourage communication and family-school partnership. In the spring, the Toddler Program conducts Parent-Teacher Conferences.

Early Childhood Parent-Teacher (Student Led) Conferences are held twice yearly - once in the fall (student-led) and once in the spring (parent-teacher). The school calendar reflects these dates. This is a time for children to share his/her school experiences and activities with their parents as well as for parents to see the child's progress. Open communication between teacher and parent is crucial to the child success in school. Teachers, Program Heads and Administrators are available to address parent concerns or questions at any time.

The Elementary Program conducts Family Goal-Setting Meetings in the fall, in addition to offering Student-Led and Parent-Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. Elementary parents should reference the "Elementary Conference and Evaluation Schedule" for details.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

It is the parents responsibility to: pay tuition by the 5th of the month; pay all fees and deposits; keep ill children home; follow the contractual educational or care schedule; communicate concerns with teachers and/or administration; maintain extra clothing and clean bedding; keep the school informed of changes in address, home or business telephone numbers, or changes in emergency contacts; give a 30 day notice for withdrawal prior to June 1st. Parents must agree to abide by the communication guidelines: respectful positive attitudes, refrain from inappropriate language, and respect for teachers schedules.

## **Parent Association**

The Parent Association (501(c)3) supports the school in fundraising and volunteer efforts. All parents are automatically members of the PA and are welcome to participate in the PA.

## Checklist of Supplies

<b><i>We Provide</i></b>	<b><i>You Provide</i></b>	<b><i>Item</i></b>	<b><i>Comments</i></b>
	X	Diapers or underwear	For use when child needs them
X		Breakfast – cold or hot cereal	Served at 7:00 am (not served after 7:45 am)
X		Three snacks per day	Morning, early afternoon and late afternoon
	X	Nutritious lunch	Children following Full Day and Extended Day schedules
X		Blanket	For Early Childhood nappers only
	X	Blanket, crib sheet and pillowcase	For Infant and Toddler nappers only
X		Sleeping cots or mats	For nappers only
	X	Car seat or booster seat	For Elementary field trips
	X	1 change of clothes for Early Childhood, 7 changes of clothes for full time Infant/Toddler, 4 changes of clothes for part time Toddlers	To be replaced when necessary

# Parent Handbook Agreement

After reading the MCH Parent Handbook in its entirety please email us from this page or print out this page, sign it and return it to the MCH office.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Parent Handbook. Each parent must read and sign an agreement stating that they have read the handbook and agree to abide by the requirements and practices set forth in the handbook. Many of the items contained in the handbook are required by DSHS to be reported to parents in writing. Other items include necessary information about this school, its business practices, and programs. By emailing MCH from this page or by printing the page, signing it and returning it, you state that you have read the handbook.

I have read the Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the requirements and practices set forth in the handbook.

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Parent Signature & Date