



Independence. Discovery. Nature.

Montessori Children's House Elementary Program Upper Elementary Parent Packet

Let's Eat!

Breakfast

It is essential that your child eat a nutritious, protein-rich breakfast every day before school. Research proves that this enables higher brain functioning and an enhanced ability to concentrate.

Snack

MCH provides a nutritious snack during the morning and afternoon class time. Children serve themselves with a portion of snack, often sharing their meal time with a classmate. We focus on the grace and courtesy of eating together. Children learn to set the table, serve with hospitality, cleanup afterwards including putting food waste in the compost and putting dishes in the dishwasher. The snack menu is posted on our website. We usually have a wide variety of snack choices that meet dietary needs. However, if your child has dietary or nutritional concerns that make it necessary for you to provide snack, please ensure that the snack is clearly labeled in a separate container in the child's lunch.

Lunch

Children bring their own lunches to school. Here are a few key points about lunch time for you to consider:

- We emphasize manners and courtesy.
- We read from a chapter book or other literature every day.
- We eat together in the classrooms.
- We encourage waste-free lunches every day. We are closely monitoring our food waste and garbage. This year we hope to get to zero-waste lunches! You'll be hearing more about our efforts throughout the year.

Make sure to send:

- a cloth napkin that your child can use to stay tidy while eating
- all of the utensils your child needs to eat their lunch
- an icepack to keep foods cold
- a thermos to keep foods warm

Please do not send candy or items with excessive sugar in your child's lunch.

Elementary Attendance

Why does attendance matter so much at the Elementary level?

In the Elementary classrooms, children work together collaboratively. They create different work groups that change according to project and subject. Some groups are formally designed by the teachers for specific learning goals. Other groups are spontaneous and are alternately interest-driven and friendship driven. They are busy together, relying on one another, learning how to cooperate, practicing responsibility and accountability. When children are absent from school, they miss these opportunities which creates stress emotionally, socially and academically for all members of the group.

The arrival window is 8:50-9:00 on the playground. We strongly suggest that you drop your child just after 8:50. This gives children a chance to chat with friends and teachers, get used to being at school, and get excited about going in the classroom.

Elementary teachers frequently give lessons to children in groups. When children are absent, they miss the presentation and are unable to participate with their groups. They feel out of sorts, confused and out of sync with the community. When the absent child later receives the missed lesson, the great wave of interest and activity for that work may have passed. The child then may have to work alone, without best work partners.

According long-time Montessori teacher and nationally renowned expert, Donna Bryant Goertz,

“The teacher, the community, and the child will be called upon to make a great effort to overcome the difficulty. When a child is absent the group is incomplete, and the role played by the absent child leaves a gap. If a child is absent often, the other children may feel they cannot count on that person. They may be inclined to select as work partners other children upon whom they can count to be present. A child who is perceived in this manner may feel disengaged and out of step with his community. Her learning and development can be affected.”

For this reason, we ask that you avoid absences when at all possible.

We are required by law to record school absences, late arrival and early departures. We report these figures on semi-annual Progress Reports. If your child's school attendance is erratic, we will be in touch so that we can work together with your family to find a solution to the problem.

Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In this regard, we specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays
- Schedule appointments with the doctor, dentist, orthodontist, or other professionals outside of classroom hours.

Reading, Literature Circle and Choice Book Projects

Lifelong readers are created through feelings, not skills. When you read with your child, you are sharing your time, modeling a love of books and reading, and helping your child become a lifelong reader. Your child should be reading for 20-30 minutes every night. And then, you should be talking with your child about their book. Ask interesting questions and you'll get interesting answers!

The best advice we have about how to support your independent, fluent reader: talk about their books!

Conversations are the key to true comprehension.

In order to bring alive our community's love of reading, we have weekly literature circle discussions. Small groups of students select a book and read it in short segments. Each group selects their own reading assignment each week, usually resulting in a reading assignment of approximately 30-50 pages. They meet weekly to talk about the book and the different elements of literature. Children do activities in the Lit Journal to prepare for the weekly discussions.

Independently, students select Choice Books to read. This is an independent choice and must happen on a monthly basis. Students are welcome to read more than one Choice Book per month. For each Choice Book, a student follows a specifically organized Choice Book Project system that includes selecting a project from among more than forty options, completing the project at home or at school, presenting the project, evaluating themselves and receiving a teacher evaluation.

Spelling

We use a program called Instructional Level Spelling. We have found it to encourage fun, engaging learning and successful results for our students. Each is assessed during the first week of school and placed in the appropriate spelling level. Words should be challenging enough to be interesting, but not overwhelmingly difficult.

Each Monday, students take a pre-test (as a beginning assessment) on their new words and will have a digital photo of their words Monday on SeeSaw to study throughout the week. Spelling post-tests (as a final assessment) will be held each Friday morning. Students receive their spelling words weekly on Monday (or Tuesday if there is no school on Monday). Consistent at-home spelling practice is essential for the child's success. When a child struggles with spelling post-tests in the Elementary, it is almost always because they haven't been practicing every day.

The spelling curriculum enables children to develop their spelling skills according with a developmental, brain-based approach. It is much more comprehensive than our previous sequence because it is research-based. We are excited about how it's going to enable our students to learn spelling more effectively and help them internalize their spelling skills in a more permanent way.

We measure a child's success in this spelling curriculum by comparing their pre- and post-test scores. This is where we can see growth, development and practice!

Homework

We have a strong commitment to keeping homework minimal, manageable and meaningful. We suggest that parents minimize outside of school academic pursuits, and ensure that

Daily Homework

- Rocket Math practice – 5 minutes using practice pages
- Reading – minimum 20-30 minutes a night of shared or independent reading
- Spelling practice

Weekly Homework

- Student-selected projects (such as Choice Book projects, history projects)
- Customized math review packet (available upon request)
- Wordly Wise Vocabulary: On-going work in workbook with a vocab test every two weeks. This starts this week; first test is on Sept. 22. Children can also work at their own pace in Wordly Wise. We just ask them to communicate directly with a teacher when they have completed a lesson and are ready for the vocab test.

Going Out

Going Out, a Montessori tradition that we're thrilled to embrace at MCH, is all about children learning to interact in the world. It is an independent learning experience and applied practical skills in a real world context.

Students are invited to plan their own modified field trips according to their individual interests. They do their own planning and organizing with the goal of learning something new that they can't learn in the classroom. Going Out experiences are planned by individual children, pairs, and small groups of children. The students themselves must coordinate all aspects of their Going Out experience, with inspiration and guidance provided by the teachers. Example destinations include visiting the library, the Museum of Flight or on a hike.

Opportunities for Leadership

Students from Upper Elementary will be invited, encouraged and supported in many different explorations of leadership and community involvement beyond the classroom.

Some of these opportunities include:

- Green School (3rds)
- Student Ambassadors (3rds)
- Yearbook Club (after school commitment)
- Community Engagement: Hopelink Winter Drive, Aegis Living Trips (all)
- Going Out trips
- Event support like making scarecrows for Harvestfest, planning Kindergarten/Family Night and more

Field Trips

We rely on parent drivers to take us to and from field trips. We have exciting trips planned this year and we need your help to make them happen! Field trips are a wonderful way to join your child in their learning and feel like an integral part of the Elementary community. You'll get to know other parents as well as your child's friends and teachers. We guarantee that you'll have fun!

We recommend that you put these events on your calendar now, and stay alert for Bloomz drivers' sign-up requests. Thanks!

October 9-12	IslandWood
December 14	<i>The Nutcracker</i> at the Pacific Northwest Ballet
January 30	Seattle Children's Theater field trip: <i>The Little Prince</i>
April 24	Seattle Children's Theater field trip: <i>Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed</i>
Mid-June	Low-Tide Beach Day

Elementary Dates to Remember

Early Bird Events Student Presentations

- January 26 9:00-10:00 am – Hands-on Science Day Exhibits
- June 15 9:00-10:00 am – Portfolio Reflections

Conferences

- October 5-6 Goal-Setting Conferences for Students and their Parents
- February 1-2 Parent-Teacher Conferences

Elementary Parent & Family Events

- Sept 15: Back to School BBQ - 6-8 pm
- Sept 18: EI Parent Volunteer Trg (Mandatory trg) - 4:00-5:30 pm
- Oct 18: E1 Curriculum Night - 4-6 pm
- Oct 25: E2 Curriculum Night: Projects, History and Geography - 4-6 pm
- Oct 28: HarvestFest - 10 am –12 pm
- Nov 1: EL PD Coffee Talk - 9:30-10:30 am at Casa
- Nov 17: K/EI Family Night - 6-8 pm
- Dec 8: Pints with PD - 4:00-5:30 pm
- Dec 13: Alumni Panel
- Jan 18 Passion Project Parent Meeting - 4-6
- March 3: MCH Spring Showcase - 10 am – 12 pm
- March 15: Passion Projects Reception - 5-7 pm
- Mar 29: Island Night - 6-8 pm
- April 27: Math Day - 4-5:30 pm
- May 3: Upper EI Medieval and Renaissance Feast (with 3rds) - 6-8 pm
- May 31-June 1 Midsummer Night's Dream performances
- June 16: Graduation and Family Picnic

Volunteer Training

We are always excited about parent volunteers! Volunteering is a great way to get to know the Elementary community, the teachers, meet other parents and get closer to your child's educational experiences. We are always extremely happy for your help! This is especially true when it comes to driving on field trips. You will find several different options on the volunteer form.

All first-time parent volunteers and field trip drivers are asked to:

- Attend Parent Volunteer Training from 4:00-5:30 on September 18.
- Sign a confidentiality agreement
- Submit a background check form and provide proof of vehicle insurance (drivers only)

You must complete the training and the paperwork by Sept. 30 in order to drive and/or volunteer this year. We cannot accept late submissions.

Specialists

We are privileged to have an outstanding group of specialists. Our specialists bring their expertise and passion to our students in a variety of subject areas.

We offer school-day curricular enrichment in the following areas:

- Physical Education –Mr. Shawn
- Chorus – Ms. Amy
- Music and Songwriting – Ms. Amy
- Fine Art – Ms. Michelle
- Spanish – Rosetta Stone

Art

- Ms. Michelle has been our art specialist for many years and this year we're excited that she'll be here even more! She will be here 6 hours a week – from 1:15-3:15 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Art is offered in 5-week sessions that focus on a theme, a particular media or project. Each child will sign up a one-hour class time, and participate in art during that timeframe for the duration of the 5-week session. Each class is limited to 10 students. All students will participate at a time of their own choosing. Each 5-week session includes both focused instruction and free studio time with Ms. Michelle. Most of the classes will be mixed groups of Lower and Upper Elementary students. Ms. Michelle will offer 6 sessions during the school year. Art Studio electives will end at the end of April, when we're turning our attention and our artistic energy to our musical theater production of an original adaption of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream.

Music

- Ms. Amy has been doing music and Chorus for the Elementary ever since we were one class of three first-grade students! This year we are incorporating her expertise in music theory, music history and songwriting with similar elective approach. She will offer two different classes to Turquesa students each week. Each class will be focused on a different theme. Students will sign up for a five-week session and attend their music class every week. Each class with Ms. Amy will be limited to 10 students. Music electives will end at the end of April, when our attention shifts to Midsummer Night's Dream.

Birthdays

We celebrate a birthday with a Birthday Circle. Parents and extended family members are always welcome. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule your child's birthday circle.

In honor of a child's birthday, we invite families to contribute to the classroom through a donation.

Please do not send goody bags or gifts for children.

A book or wish list item is always welcome and deeply appreciated. Material donations can be selected from our Wish List. It's nice to order a book or material in advance, so your donation can be available for your child to present to the class at his/her Birthday Circle.

The Digital World of Turquesa

Student Emails and Cloud Storage

Each Upper Elementary student will receive their own MCH-specific email address. This enables students to save their documents in One Drive, access them from any internet-connected device, collaborate on shared digital presentations and project documents and more. These email accounts will be used primarily for document management, and not necessary as a communication tool. However, we are excited about supporting the 6th Year students during their transition to middle school, and accesses different tools for Island Project Management. The Upper Elementary teachers will be closely monitoring all student email accounts, while also providing specific lessons to support the developmental of digital literacy, grace and courtesy in the digital world, and much more. We encourage parents to explore your child's email with them, helping them to navigate the somewhat complex world of cloud storage and collaborative web-based tools. We will provide you with your child's email password. Parents are vital partners in this process, and we look forward to exploring the opportunities together.

SeeSaw: Digital Learning Journal

Seesaw is an app we're using to help your child share what they're learning at school. Seesaw gives your child a safe space to document their learning and learn how to use technology. Each child gets their own digital journal and will add work to share what they're doing at school. Students can add photos of their work, videos of them describing or teaching their learning, links to things they've done, and notes and drawings they can create right in the app. Students can comment and interact with each other's work that is posted, and we use this as an opportunity to teach them safe and respectful "social media" engagement. When your child adds items, you'll be notified. Your child's journal is safe and secure.

Communication

Parents can expect a weekly school newsletter, weekly classroom updates written specifically for Turquesa parents, frequent Bloomz posts, advance notice for special events via Bloomz and email, and personal contact from teachers about students' individual learning experiences and needs.

We are happy to stay in touch with you via email, phone and meetings. Reach out to us any time!

Upper Elementary Faculty

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Montessori Children's House Elementary Program

Weekly Schedule (subject to change) 2017-2018

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50	Arrival on Playground	Arrival on Playground	Arrival on Playground	Arrival on Playground	Arrival on Playground
9:00	Community Gathering	Community Gathering	Community Gathering	Community Gathering	Community Gathering
9:10	Peace Education / Social Justice	Informal Writing	Class Meeting	Open Class Time	Writers' Showcase
9:20					
9:30	Open Class Time Instruction includes: History lesson Spelling Pretests Math lessons	Open Class Time Instruction includes: Geometry lessons Math lessons	Open Class Time Instruction includes: Geography lessons Math lessons Spanish	Instruction includes: Language Arts lessons, Math lessons History lesson	Open Class Time Instruction includes: Science lesson(s) Spelling post-tests Math lessons Literature Circle
9:40					
9:50					
10:00					
10:10					
10:20					
10:30					
10:40					
10:50					
11:00					
11:10					
11:20					
11:30					
11:40					
11:50					
12:00	Rocket Math	Rocket Math	Lunch with Literature Read-Aloud	Rocket Math	Rocket Math
12:10	Lunch with Literature Read-Aloud	Lunch with Literature Read-Aloud		Lunch with Literature Read-Aloud	Lunch with Literature Read-Aloud
12:20					
12:30	Recess	Recess	Jobs	Recess	Recess
12:40					
12:50			Dismissal		
1:00	Open Class Time and Specialist Electives (Art)	Open Class Time and Specialist Electives (Music and Art)	After Care	Open Class Time and Specialist Electives (Art and Chorus)	PE
1:10					
1:20					
1:30					
1:40					
1:50					
2:00					Open Class Time with Wordly Wise
2:10					
2:20					
2:30					
2:40					
2:50					
3:00					
3:10					
3:20	Jobs	Jobs	Jobs	Jobs	
3:30	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	