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# PARENT HANDBOOK

5702 Clark Drive Bldg B  
Huntington Beach, California 92649  
email: [mcdcsharks@gmail.com](mailto:mcdcsharks@gmail.com)

714-377-5779  
fax 714-377-2838

## **Welcome to Montessori Child Development Center**

Our Parent Handbook contains information you will need to help make your child's time with Montessori Child Development Center an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

It is in your child's best interest that you read this handbook thoroughly.

The rules and policies outlined in the handbook apply to all families enrolled. Every parent should be aware of the specific do's and don'ts.

The school calendar is attached and should be reviewed on a regular basis so you'll be aware of important dates.

Should you need further clarification on any area in the parent handbook, please see Administration.

The staff at Montessori Child Development Center would like to thank you for your cooperation and support in helping us continue to make this a safe and nurturing educational environment for each and every child.

## **MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY**

Children enter this world with a natural desire to learn and to perfect themselves. The purpose of Montessori education is to nurture this natural desire with liberty, to provide an environment that will meet a child's need for perfection, and to build the habits for lifelong learning.

Dr. Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori method, believed in the importance of education in the early years of a child as well as the inborn powers that a child possesses. "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to age six. For that is the time when human's intelligence is being formed." (Absorbent Mind) Children, she refers to as the "Absorbent Mind", are like sponges. At this stage, brain development is very rapid and all the impressions gathered through their exploration of the environment will become the basis for the development of consciousness and intelligence. In her research, she observed that a young child is seen not only capable of, but motivated toward auto-formation (self-development) and auto-education (self-teaching). She also discovered that children have "sensitive periods", a period where they acquire a skill necessary for their development. However, once this period passes, a child will have to learn the skill with much more difficulty at a subsequent time.

By understanding this, Dr. Montessori then designed the "Prepared Environment." This environment will provide the child the tools necessary for his survival- that is to be independent of adult help and to master the skills that will enable him/her to function in society.

## **OUR MISSION**

Montessori Child Development Center is devoted in carrying out the work of Dr. Montessori and strives to provide the children with academic excellence, utmost care, understanding, guidance, and respect.

The children learn from their environment and learn by direct interaction with the materials and apparatus in their surroundings, as well as from people. The multi-age learning environment provides the means whereby children are free to become independent thinkers and learners. In addition to the academics, children learn how to become a member of the community possessing similar characteristics of a family. Integrity, respect, compassion, and cooperation are key elements that exist throughout the school.

Our certified Montessori teachers are trained to recognize each child's potential and periods of readiness. Children are allowed to learn at their own pace without coercion and flourish in a non-competitive environment. Teachers will facilitate this process through the self-directed activity conducted in a prepared environment.

The uniqueness of this educational approach is manifested in the day-to-day activity of the school. As the basic innate needs are provided for, contentment and joy within are free to multiply.

## OUR PROGRAM

Montessori Child Development Center is a year-round school offering quality education to children from 18 months to 12 years. We offer a Pre-Montessori Program (18 months to 3 years), Primary Program (3 to 6 years), and an Elementary Program (6 to 12years).

We have Music and Art as part of our Montessori Curriculum. Extra-curricular activities are available

## PRE-MONTESSORI PROGRAM

Our Pre-Montessori Program is designed for children from 18 months to 3 years old. The classroom is inviting and prepared to meet the needs of young children at this stage of development. It is a year of self development, learning self-help skills that lead to independence, and preparation to the Primary Program. Activities help in developing gross motor skills, language acquisition, socialization, coordination of movement, care of oneself, and social graces. Children at this age are also offered potty training. The ratio for 18 months to 2 years old is one teacher for six children. The ratio for 2 years old to 3 years old is one teacher for twelve children.

## PRIMARY PROGRAM/KINDERGARTEN

This class is designed for children from three years to six years of age. There is a three-year age span typical of traditional Montessori classrooms. This allows the children to model leadership, mentoring skills, and socialization between different age groups. The class size ratio is one teacher to twelve students.

The Montessori materials in the classroom can be divided into four main groups:

1. **Exercises of Practical Life** are motives of activity which provide for imitating and developing coordination of movement. Practical Life Exercises is the backbone of a successful Montessori class. It enables children to expand their attention span and develop concentration essential for all academic learning to manifest. The child's independence, self-confidence, body consciousness, and self awareness develop steadily through the breakdown of activities of; caring for oneself and the environment, social skills of grace and courtesy and control and refinement of movement.
2. **Sensorial Materials** are organized for developing and refining each sense while isolated from the other senses, thus enabling the utmost refinement. This is essential for the ability to discriminate differences, similarities and identities, and for enhancing the memory, the imagination and consequently the appreciation and interpretation of the fine arts.
3. **Mathematical Materials** provide the means for the child to discover mathematics, acquiring the skills to calculate in the decimal system. Concepts are understood by use of concrete forms before abstracting theories. After understanding has been achieved, memorized learning is meaningful.

4. **Language Materials** are motives of activity by which the child acquires the basic skills for complete writing and reading. As much as possible, three dimensional or concrete forms are used for presenting phonetic information. The keys to the cultural subjects are provided in this area because once the child is versatile in the use of interpretive reading and creative writing, he/she has the necessary tools to explore the world of knowledge. Cultural Subjects are Botany, Zoology, Geography, Art Appreciation, Music Appreciation, History, and Human Values.

## **ELEMENTARY PROGRAM**

At this stage, the child has a great capacity to learn consciously and deliberately to reason and to memorize. Capitalizing on these abilities, it is the time to give the rudiments of advanced disciplines: higher Math, Geometry, Chemistry, Physical and Biological Sciences, Grammar and Syntax. Interactions with friends and the ever-widening horizons of the child's world are very stimulating. Classifications, sequences, consequences and applying knowledge to specific tasks provide these children with wonderful sources of experiential learning. Learning is now done through imaginative intelligence rather than the concrete. The need to know the reason for things is satisfied.

The role of the adult is to direct the child's natural energies, showing the way towards the freedom in expressing one's own blueprint. Under the guidance of trained Montessori teachers, the elementary child has the opportunity for developing personal responsibility in setting learning objectives and the criteria for meeting them.

In the prepared environment, the child acquires that equilibrium which is known at the physical level as good health; at the intellectual level as ability to concentrate; at the moral level as self-control; and at the spiritual level as a sense of conscience and responsibility.

## **ADMISSION**

Children 18 months to 12 years of age may be considered for admission. A preliminary interview is conducted to exchange information relative to a child's welfare. A child's readiness is determined by his ability to follow directions, concentration span, and bathroom independence. Proper placement for the child is decided following the assessment.

New students are given a four- week adjustment period. The purpose of this period is to ensure that the child is in an environment that will be conducive to his/her growth of happiness, confidence, and self-esteem. If your child continues to have a difficult time adjusting after this period, a conference will be scheduled to determine if our program is meeting the needs of your child.

Children enrolled in the Pre-Montessori program are not required to be toilet trained. Children must show social maturity and independent eating habits. This program is designed to help prepare the children for the Montessori environment.

## **ENROLLMENT**

All admission forms and fees, your child's physician report and required immunizations must be completed before the child's first day.

All children ages 18 months through 12 years, regardless of race, national origin, or religion, are eligible for enrollment.

## **TUITION DEPOSIT**

Parents who wish to be placed on the wait list or pre-enroll for a later start date are required to pay the annual registration fee. The deposit will be credited towards registration fees.

## **FEES**

Student registration fees are collected annually for attendance in September through June. This fee will be collected during the registration process and is non-refundable.

Kindergarten and Elementary students are charged materials fee due at the time of registration for the coming year.

Summer registration fees are charged for attendance in July and August.

Monthly Tuition Payments *are due on the 20th of the previous month*. The tuition payment is due on 20<sup>th</sup> of the previous month, or at the time of enrollment. If it is not received by the 25<sup>th</sup>, it is past due and a \$25 late fee will be charged. A 10% late fee will be charged on the 3<sup>rd</sup> late payment. If it is not received by the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month, the child is considered no longer enrolled.

## **FAMILY DISCOUNTS**

There is a sibling discount of 10% off the tuition amount for the second child enrolled. There is a 5% discount off the tuition on the 3<sup>rd</sup> + siblings enrolled. Discounts do not apply on registration fees, extended day care, potty training, or extra curricular fees.

## **PAYMENT POLICY**

The yearly tuition is divided into equal monthly payments. The payments are the same regardless of the number of the days a child attends. There are no reductions in tuition for illness, vacation, or any other reason. Tuition can either be paid in full or into 10 equal payments.

Tuition is pro-rated only if the child is enrolled mid-month. Registration fees and extended day fees are not prorated.

Children may take vacation time off during the summer (July and August). Tuition will be charged based on a weekly attendance during the summer months. A minimum of 4 weeks is required for attendance in the summer. Extended day fees are not prorated.

## **WITHDRAWALS**

A minimum 30 day advance written notice is required for withdrawals or further tuition dues will accrue.

Parents who wish to withdraw their child out prior to our summer months are still required to pay regular tuition to hold their child's place. Failing to pay regular tuition during the extra time off will necessitate re-enrolling your child and placing them on our waiting list, as we cannot hold his or her current position.

## **RETURNED CHECK**

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for all checks returned by the bank. Payments must be made by cash or money order.

## **EXTENDED DAY CARE**

Extended child care programs are available for children year-round. The program is offered from 7:00 to 9:00 am and from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. (Daycare is before and after the Montessori day and offers children informal group play, art projects, free choice of daycare toys, movement and story time. Extra curricular programs are offered during these hours.

Occasional child care is available for an hourly fee, but should be scheduled in advance to ensure proper teacher/child ratios. Payment for occasional child care is due immediately unless other arrangements have been made with the office.

## **ATTENDANCE**

The stability of our classes is very important to the success of each and every child. We hope that you, the parents, have evaluated your child's needs and, in selecting our school, are prepared to make a commitment for at least one year.

The school is open year-round from 7:00 a.m. and closes at 5:00 p.m. with the exception of the holidays listed on the school calendar. Our Montessori day is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The year is divided into two separate programs:

1. The 10 Month Academic Term - September through June
2. The Summer Program- July through August.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Classes promptly begin at 9:00 a.m. Children should arrive between 8:50 - 9:00 a.m.

Children must be picked up within 15 minutes of their scheduled departure time for 12:30 or 3:00 p.m. pick up schedule. Any child picked up after the 15-minute grace period will be charged the per hour occasional care fee. Payment for this extra care is due when you arrive.

One of the cornerstones of our Montessori classrooms is an uninterrupted three hour morning session. Please arrange to arrive on time with your child to avoid interrupting the class once it starts. A brief

and loving good-bye is the beginning step towards independence. Prolonging it only enhances frustration to both parent and child. A positive parental attitude is key to your child's successful adjustment.

Once class has started at 9:00 a.m., parents should refrain from entering the classroom or meeting with the child's teacher. Encourage the child to walk in independently or drop the child at the office if assistance is required.

**All children must be picked up by 5:00 p.m.** If there is an unforeseen emergency which prevents the parent from arriving by 5:00, the child will be attended to and a fee of **\$1.00 per minute per child** will be charged. There is no grace period at the 5:00 pick up time. The fee is payable at the time the child is picked up and must be paid directly to the person who assumed responsibility for the child.

## **PARENT OBSERVATIONS**

We have an open-door policy for parent observers. To avoid classroom disruptions, we limit adult observation to one adult per week. For the first six weeks of school, it is important for the children to settle in and for the teachers to have this time to establish routines. For this reason, we will not schedule observations until after the sixth week of school.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR SUBJECTS**

Various extra curricular subjects are offered each year. Application forms and fees are available in the office. Children must be currently enrolled in the School to attend these elective subjects.

## **DRESS CODE**

Children must come to school with a clean, neat appearance, and be dressed appropriately for the day's activities. For children who are being toilet trained, please do not send them in overalls, jumpsuits, or pants with belts. Clothing must be accessible for dressing and undressing. Children should wear casual, comfortable clothes, and sturdy close-toed shoes to school. Children will get dirty from outdoor play, use of paint, markers, chalk and other art materials. Do not dress your children in special clothing. Flip flops, open toed sandals, or jellies are not allowed and are not safe for running and climbing.

Clothing with that promote violence or are not allowed at School. The School reserves the right to change your child's clothing if it is inappropriate. School logo T-shirt can be worn as an option. Fridays are school spirit days and children can wear their school T-shirt.

## **CHANGE OF CLOTHING**

Each child must bring an extra set of clothing to school for storage in case of emergency. Provide an extra shirt, pants, socks and underwear, each item clearly labeled, in a zip lock bag. Please replace these clothes promptly when used.



Children who are being potty trained should bring a supply of pull-ups with side openings and a box of wipes.

Children who are not toilet trained need a supply of diapers and wipes brought in from home in addition to the change of clothing. There is a fee of \$2.00 per diaper and \$8.00 for a box of wipes should parents forget to replenish their supply.

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT**

Parents are required to sign in and out via ProCare App or daily sign in and out sheets. Each authorized person will receive an invitation for app-based sign in and out. It is the policy of our school that no child will be released to any person less than 18 years of age. People authorized by parents to pick up children should be prepared to show identification. Failure of a parent to properly sign his/her child in and out could lead to a fine by the Department of Social Services (DSS) for up to \$250 for each day your child is not signed in or out. This fine will be passed on to the parent

## **RELEASE AUTHORIZATIONS**

Children will not be released to any person other than a parent, legal guardian, or someone authorized in writing by one of the above. At the time of enrollment, parents are asked to list those people authorized to pick up their children. Parents are required to notify the office in advance and a written release must be provided if you intend to have your child picked up by someone from the authorized list. This person must be able to identify themselves with pictured ID.

In cases such as child custody jurisdiction, it is against the law for the School to prohibit a parent from picking up their child unless the School is provided with legal documentation otherwise.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Any form of discipline or corporal punishment that violates a child's personal rights is not allowed. Corporal punishment or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping, or toileting; or withholding shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning is never allowed at Montessori Child Development Center. All Staff members are required to treat all children under their care with love and understanding. All discipline must be approached in a positive manner by using the established guidelines and being consistent with the children.

Our approach to discipline is communication with mutual respect. Problem behavior is redirected into positive action. Behavior problems are discussed with parents when they are recurring. If further professional help is required, it is done with all parties equally contributing their efforts to help the child. If such a program is entered, the child's enrollment automatically becomes probationary, contingent upon the meeting of predetermined goals within a specific time period.

Biting and consistently hurting another child or Staff is never allowed in our School. The School will work with the parents and child to help resolve this problem. The parents will be given a written report of the incident. A behavioral plan will be discussed when persistent behavior issue arise.

## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES VISITS**

DSS has the authority to inspect our facility at any time. This may include conducting interviews with the children and staff as well as auditing children and our child care center records without prior consent.

## **CHANGES IN PROGRAMS**

Any request to change the child's program or to increase or decrease the number of days a child attends must be in written form and approved by the office.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

During the course of the year we will be taking field trips to enrich learning experiences. Generally, only elementary children go on field trips will be well chaperoned by parents and teachers. All field trips will be announced in advance and all children must have a signed permission slips on file before participating. Parent drivers are asked to provide proof of insurance.

## **NAPPERS**

Nappers must bring one crib sheet and a blanket in a backpack. All items must be labeled. Napping items will be sent home on Fridays for laundry and must be brought back clean to school on Monday.

## **TOYS**

The children **are not allowed** to bring toys to school at any time. Personal items with educational merit may be brought to class with permission from the teacher or during Share days.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Children may celebrate their birthdays at School as long as their teacher is notified in advance. The school holds a special celebration for each child's birthday. We encourage you to select a few pictures of your child from birth to the present to enhance the "walk around the sun" for each year of life. Parents may provide healthy treats such as fruit or muffins. Please do not bring balloons or favors on the day. Birthday decorations are not allowed. Birthday invitations for children's birthday parties will not be passed at our School unless all children in the class are included. This policy is intended to keep any child from being left out.

## **LUNCH BOX**

Lunches must be placed in a lunch box. Pack a cloth placemat, cloth napkin, non-disposable utensils, and a refillable water bottle. Store warm lunches in a thermos. Lunches will not be warmed up.

## **NUTRITION**

Children must bring lunch and a water bottle in a lunch box with their names clearly marked in the space near the handle. Water bottles should be washed daily and filled with water. School will refill water bottles as needed.

We work with the children on the concept of good nutrition. The School observes a low sugar policy. Candy, sugary fruit snacks, cake and other sweets are not allowed at school. We are unable to refrigerate children's lunches. You may purchase an ice pack to keep your child's food from spoiling.

We do not provide breakfast or snacks. Please make sure your child either has had breakfast before arriving at school or bring his/her breakfast to school already prepared. Pack morning and afternoon snacks. Children must be able to feed themselves.

When packing your child's snack and lunch please keep in mind the four basic food groups:

- **Protein:** Chicken, hard-boiled egg, tuna, baked beans, etc.
- **Bread/Cereal:** Whole wheat bread, crackers, tortilla, noodles, etc.
- **Fruit & Vegetable:** Preferably fresh
- **Milk & Dairy:** Cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, milk, etc.
- **To Drink:** 100% fruit juice, milk or chocolate milk
- **Desserts** - (1 small portion) please send only fresh fruit or dried fruit. Do not send chocolate bars, fruit roll ups, pudding, gummy fruits, or yogurt that comes with candy.

We are not allowed to force your child to eat his/her entire lunch; however, we will encourage him/her to eat as much as possible. Food not eaten will be sent home with your child, when possible, so you will know how much has been eaten.

Due to some children having life-threatening allergies to peanuts and other peanut products, *peanut butter is not allowed at School.*

## HEALTH

The Department of Social Services requires that the staff do a daily inspection of each child for illness. To ensure that the health of other children is protected and additional infection does not develop in your child, we ask you to keep him/her home when he/she exhibits one or more of the following:

- A temperature of 99.5 or higher
- Seems nauseated
- An undetermined rash, open wound or oozing/draining sores
- A runny nose (if the mucus is yellowish or green) or irritated eyes (other than allergies)
- A persistent cough, sore throat
- Possible infection
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever related symptoms such sweating, chills, shivering, muscle aches, irritability, dehydration, or general weakness
- Head Lice
- Vomiting, Diarrhea, Stomach ache
- Headache, Earache
- Red or watery eyes, Allergic reactions
- Flu like/ Covid-19 symptoms
- Biting or behavior issues
- Other symptoms

You will be called to pick up your child if any of these symptoms are present while your child is at school. Your child must remain at home, **fever free and symptom free** for at least 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before he/she will be allowed to return to school.

School must be informed if you child has come in contact with a person who has an infectious disease. We are required to report infectious diseases and severe rashes to the Health Department.

If your child has been absent because of illness or has been exposed to a contagious disease we are required to have a doctor's note advising that the child may return and attend school again.

## **COVID -19 SICK POLICY**

See COVID-19 Sick Policy or additional details regarding illnesses relating to COVID-19.

## **ILLNESS**

In order to protect the children from infectious diseases, we are mandated to inform parents of contagious illness. If your child is ill, please call our office to inform the teacher. Please refer to the school's sick policy.

## **EMERGENCY CARE**

In case of illness, accident or injury to a child, the parent will be notified and instructions for the course of action will be obtained from the School or designated hospital.

## **MEDICATION**

All medication must be in a prescribed container with a physician prescription. Medication should be left at the front desk with the School Director and a medication permission form is filled. Do not leave any medications in your child's lunch box. They have to be stored in a locked medicine box. Medication is administered only at 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m. We cannot administer over-the-counter medication, only medication with a written prescription.

Sunscreen permission slip is required to be filled out for application of sunscreen during school hours. Sunscreen may be applied before the afternoon playtime. Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen in the morning.

## **INCIDENTAL MEDICAL SERVICES**

Inhaled medication that are prescribed to the child to control lung-related illnesses, including but not limited to, local held nebulizers are permitted to be administered with written consent from the parent and prescribed by the physician. We also allow administration of EpiPen Jr. or EpiPen, however it must be prescribed by the physician and used in allergic emergencies only. The parent is in charge of training the staff on how to administer the medication. These medications will be held with the trained personnel in the school premises or away from school during school sponsored activities. If the medication is used, the parent or legal guardian will be called and 911 if needed.

Blood-Glucose tests and glucagon administration for diabetic children is permitted with prescription and specific medication instruction from the child's physician and training by the parent or guardian. The parent is in charge of training the staff on how to administer the medication. These medications will be held with the trained personnel in the school premises or away from school during school sponsored activities. If the medication is used, the parent or legal guardian will be called and 911 if needed.

We do not offer services for gastrostomy tube care, nasogastric or nasoenteric feeding tube, and the administration of crushed medications.

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

In the event of a disaster, it is our policy to be prepared to house and care for enrolled children for a period of up to 48 hours. Please read the information provided in our Disaster Preparedness Letter. The school is equipped with first aid, water, food, and other emergency supplies. Children will be supervised at the School until their parents arrive or for a maximum of 48 hours following a major disaster. After this time, children will be taken to the nearest central disaster site where additional assistance and counseling will be available.

The School holds monthly fire and earthquake drills. Lock down drills are held four times a year.

Parents will be informed of any injury that takes place at School in the form of an "Accident Report."

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

Montessori Child Development Center is required by law to report any suspected instance of child abuse to the Child Protective Services. The School reserves the right to question parent(s)/legal guardian(s) regarding cuts, bumps, scratches, bruises, lumps, other physical injuries or sudden emotional distress involving their child to enable the school to comply with the law.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Parent participation is welcomed to support the teachers in preparing for and organizing special events. Parents are encouraged to sign up for the event that best suits their schedule and interests. Parent volunteers must meet with the teacher to discuss classroom rules and expectations.

Parents who intend to volunteer on a regular basis must get a TB clearance, show proof of immunization, and go through a criminal background check through the FBI and Department of Justice. Parent volunteers must meet with teachers to discuss classroom rules and volunteer expectations.

## **PARENT EDUCATION**

It is the School's intention to provide parent support and education throughout the year. There will be resources to familiarize you with the different curriculum areas of the classroom as well as to address various parenting issues. The School has a resource library covering a wide range of topics.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parent conferences are scheduled twice annually in the Fall and Spring. Progress reports will be handed on during the first and second terms.

Teachers are mandated to supervise children at all times. Individual or informal conferences are not allowed during class time or when the teacher is with children. If you have any concerns regarding your child's welfare and require a longer time to discuss with your child's teacher, our teachers would be happy to arrange a conference with you. You can also contact teachers during their preparation time. If a matter is urgent, please contact the School's Director.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

Parents may speak to the director for immediate assistance or call the office any time for questions.

Monthly newsletters are posted in the school's website each month. Important news, signups, and notices are posted in the classroom's bulletin board.

## **CLASSROOM SCHEDULE**

Please see the posted schedule in each classroom.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation.

## **PARKING**

Parking is hectic during drop off and pick up time. We ask parents to be patient, courteous, and careful of small children crossing the street. Do not park in front of driveways.

## **CONCLUSION**

This handbook was designed to give you information on the structure, programs, policies, and operations of our school. We hope it is helpful. It is important for you to know that we take the job of serving you and your child very seriously and we pride ourselves on providing an excellent service. Any suggestions you may have to improve any aspect of our schools will be appreciated, as good education requires full cooperation between parents and the school. Please contact Directors for any concerns or questions. This handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior handbooks, policies, procedures and practices.

Thank you for choosing Montessori Child Development Center.