



# **Handbook 2016-2017**

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Montessori Children's House!

A child's school experience is important. This booklet has been prepared to help you better understand those philosophical, educational, fiscal, and administrative policies necessary to the function of a Montessori school.

Please familiarize yourself with the material in this booklet so that your child's experience at Montessori Children's House will be a pleasant one.

If you have any further questions regarding the handbook or any of our policies, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,  
Heather Davis

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## **Program and Goals:**

In a rapidly changing society, the most important thing that can happen in the education of a child is awakening within him/her a genuine thirst for learning. It is our responsibility to help the child build within himself/herself the foundations for a lifetime of creative learning. It is vital that children be properly introduced to learning -- lest they develop a distaste for independent reading and study.

The activities and environment provided in a Montessori school stimulate and develop a thirst for learning, an abiding curiosity about one's surroundings, and a desire to discover and do things for his or her self.

Our goal for each child is the development of his ability to solve problems using an organized approach, to use freedom wisely, to respect him or her self and others, and above all, to take joy in learning.

Montessori believed that education is really a preparation for life and not simply a mastering of intellectual skills. "The child of three, four, and five has one intuitive aim -- his self-development. He wants to do and see and learn for himself, through his own senses and not through the eyes of an adult. He becomes a full person. He is educated."

## **The Environment:**

The child in a Montessori classroom moves about in an atmosphere based on a sensible balance between freedom and structure. This "prepared environment" is an aesthetic, vital place constructed in proportion to the child. When looking around the room notice the low shelves with accessible activities, the low child-sized furniture -- truly a child oriented room. It's a nourishing place for children designed to meet their needs in "self - construction." "A feeling of warmth, love and respect is found here." An important element of the environment is the provision for order. The child who is engaged in organizing experiences and classifying concepts develops an ordered mind, and is better served by a classroom that provides clarity and order in the child's impressions. Auto education is the aim of a prepared environment. This self-education is carried out by the use of materials. They are carefully selected and sequenced to insure success and self-esteem. The materials are designed to capture the child's attention and foster independence, concentration and provide preparation for future learning.

## **Tuition:**

All tuition payments are due the **FIRST** of each month September through April and are considered delinquent if not received by the **10th**.

All payments not received by the **10th** will be subject to a **late payment charge of \$10.00** for each month the payment is delinquent. A fee of \$20 will be charged on all returned checks. Payments that are not current after 30 days may face dismissal.

If you have any concerns about your payments, please contact us at the school.

Registration fee of \$75 is due the day you register your child.

## **Arrival and Dismissal:**

	<b>A.M.</b>	<b>P.M.</b>
Arrival	8:55 -- 9:05	12:25 - 12:35
Dismissal	11:25 -- 11:35	2:55 - 3:05

**For any child that is picked up AFTER 11:40/3:10 – there will be a \$15 fee charged for late pick up.**

We would like to emphasize the importance to the child of their timely arrival in the classroom.

Dr. Montessori stated that work has a beginning, middle, and an end. It is not an exaggeration to say that a child deprived of the proper beginning, either by too early or too late an arrival in the classroom, is psychologically and objectively deprived of the most important part of his/her school day. Too early an arrival tends to dissipate his enthusiasm before the actual beginning of the day; too late an arrival tends to make a child feel like an “outsider” because work has started before he arrives.

Iowa State Law requires every child to be in a safety seat or booster until age 6. Teachers will not buckle in children without a safety seat. All children must be properly restrained leaving Montessori Children’s House.

## **Required Paperwork:**

Due to state recommendations, we require children to have an annual physical by their health care provider. A form entitled "Preschool Age- Child Health Exam Form", must be filled out completely and signed by a health care provider. The form includes emergency contact information to be completed and signed by a parent. This also must be done annually.

We also require that their immunizations be up to date. The Iowa Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization must be transcribed completely and signed by a health care provider. These two forms must be returned before the first day of school for your child's admission. If they are not returned by the first day of school, you will be charged a \$25 fee.

## **Assessments:**

At Montessori Children's House, we focus on the whole child. We not only just examine a child's academic needs, but also their social, developmental, mental and physical health.

In the first month of school, we will give each child an assessment on their physical, social/emotional, language, self-help, fine motor and practical skills, in addition to their academic assessment. This will give us a complete picture of your child. We can assess present knowledge and skills, and highlight any areas of improvement or future teaching. We can also note any areas where a referral may be needed. We utilize Area 13 for any developmental, speech, social, cognitive, or physical referrals that we may encounter. On occasion, Area 13 professionals will be at school to conduct classroom observations. If they or your child's teacher has concerns, they will do an individual screening with your verbal consent. Area 13 also will visit the school to conduct hearing screens. These will be done annually unless we have a written note to **NOT** administer the hearing test.

## **Health Policy:**

### **Children should be kept home from school for these reasons:**

1. Above normal temperature. The child should be 24 hours free of fever without the use of temperature reduction medications.
2. Any type of contagious disease included on the attached but not limited to.
3. Children should be 24 hours free of symptoms due to vomiting or diarrhea.

If your child is absent, kindly report to the school the cause.

Please make every effort to see that your child attends regularly. The children who benefit the most from this school are those who attend consistently.

It is inevitable when children are together they will come in contact with other children's germs. Unfortunately, symptoms often do not appear until after the whole class has been exposed. In effort to help prevent the spread of illness we will ask each child to wash his hands when arriving at school as well as before and after snacks. Teachers will also practice proper sanitizing procedures to ensure a clean and sanitized environment.

We are providing a communicable disease chart from the State Department of Health. They answer many questions regarding incubation time, symptoms and school exclusion time from school.

**Please read them and keep them for your reference.**

If your child becomes ill or injured while at school we will call parents to notify them and ask that the child be picked up as soon as possible. If the parents cannot be reached we will call the contact person listed as the emergency contact on the pick-form and ask them to pick up the child. If we feel the child needs immediate medical attention we will call 911 and continue trying to reach the parents.

Please help us have a healthy year.

You will receive a snack calendar for your child's class each month. Thank you for helping provide snack and keeping our tuition rates down. We do need to pass along some information to you about the DHS requirements for snack. This includes serving sizes and acceptable foods. We ask that you please do not bring cupcakes, they are extremely messy.

Snack must include two food groups.

Milk and water will be provided by MCH.

We prefer large boxes rather than individual packages for snack. The children like to practice serving when it is their snack day. Please do any possible preparations at home. The time we spend preparing snack takes away from class time. We have the tools to cut fruits and vegetables when needed but please wash fruits and vegetables at home.

Birthdays of course are an exception to the rules. Please to do not send cupckaes and cookies with large amounts of frosting. They are very messy for the students to eat at school.

	<u>Serving Sizes</u>
Bread or Bread Alternate	½ slice
Cereal Cold/Dry	1/3 cup
Cooked cereal, rice, pasta,	¼ cup
Meat or Meat Alternate	½ ounce

Please do not go to a lot of work or expense for snack, some suggestions are below. Choose any two items from different food groups. There are many more, these are just some ideas.

<u>Fruit/Veg.</u>	<u>Meat/Meat Alt.</u>	<u>Bread/Bread Alt.</u>	<u>NOT ACCEPTABLE</u>
Apples	Lunch Meat	Crackers	Pudding
Carrot Sticks	Peanut Butter	Banana bread	Fruit Snacks
Raisins	Hard Boiled Eggs	Tortillas	Jello
Bananas	Yogurt	Cereal	Popcorn
Bananas	Cheese	Granola bar	Chips
Celery	Cottage Cheese	Muffin	

## **Personal Belongings:**

Candy, toys, and gum may not be brought to school. Please check your child's pockets to see what they contain before school. Check especially for small "home"

items, and kindly check for unfamiliar objects when he returns home. These may be part of school equipment. Children may occasionally bring to class very special items that relate to schoolwork, but we strongly discourage the children from bringing toys.

## **Communication:**

Communication between school and parent and parent and school is extremely important.

We will be informing parents of school information through a monthly newsletter. We will also send home a brief note daily of some area your child covered in school that day. This is a good way to start a conversation with your child about school. Instead of saying "What did you do in school today?" Look at this paper and say, "Tell me about this picture, it is so pretty." Or "I see you learned about the letter sound \_\_., Can you tell me some words that begin with that sound? I can think of some." Or "Wow you made a number \_\_., Can you show me how to make one. What other numbers do you know?" These are just a few ways to start a conversation with your child.

Montessori Children's House also has a **Facebook** page, and we post pictures of the children on a regular basis. Just go to your Facebook page and search for Montessori Children's House to view our page.

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the school as soon as possible. Common causes of distress include: Parents being away from home, illness of parent or sibling, hospitalization, accident or death in the family, moving, or a death of a pet.

## **Days Off:** (Vacation, Holidays and Snow days)

**We will observe Lewis Central's snow days.** Please listen to the TV or radio for Lewis Central School cancellations. If they have a late start we will not have A.M. classes. If they dismiss early we will not have P.M. class. If in doubt please call us first before leaving home. The calendar provided states the scheduled days that



we will be off. **School Closing will also be announced via email.** Our calendar does not coincide with Lewis Central's schedule. Occasionally we need to cancel school because of weather on a day that Lewis Central does not have scheduled school.

## **Special Events:**

We have special events in the year that parents are welcome to attend.

We will have a day in October when the children are welcome to wear their Halloween costumes to school. We usually play a few games, carve a pumpkin, sing songs, and listen to stories.

The last day before Christmas break, the children will have a special visitor (please keep this a secret). It is a joy to watch their faces light up.

In February we have a Valentine's Day party and celebrate friendship. The children enjoy exchanging cards and sharing in snacks. (This is one day nutrition is forgotten)

In May we have Family Day/Field Trip. Parents are encouraged to spend that day with their child. More details will come throughout the year.

## **Behavior and Discipline:**

The Montessori Children's House believes that each child is a unique person who deserves to be treated with the same dignity and respect that is given to the adult. We believe that the child should have the freedom to make choices, and to assume the responsibility, which goes with that freedom. Our ultimate goal is the self-discipline and self-control of the individual child, which is achieved through work, concentration, freedom of choice (including the freedom to make mistakes).

Considering these principles, we intervene when:

- 1) the safety of the child or of other children is threatened,
- 2) the child does not respect another child's work or misuses materials,
- 3) the child is not using appropriate language,
- 4) The child is in any way disruptive to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

#### In case of misbehavior,

- 1) First, we express our disapproval of the behavior in a way that invites growth and learning.
- 2) Second, we redirect or refocus the attention of the child, either by leading him/her to another activity or giving him/her a choice.
- 3) If a child has done something for which there are direct consequences he/she is instructed to assume responsibilities (i.e. Clean up, if the child has written on a table),
- 4) If previous attempts at redirection are not successful, the child will be directed to a quiet place in the classroom and allowed to rejoin the group when he is ready.
- 5) We will inform the parents or guardians of any recurrent discipline problems.

#### **Discharge Policy:**

A child shall be dismissed:

- If parents do not comply with Montessori Children's House policies.
- If all forms, including health and immunization card, have not been turned into the center.
- Parents fail to make tuition payments.
- The child's inability to adjust to the group experience (discipline is a consistent problem).
- The child poses a threat to other children, staff or self.

#### **Solicitation**

We have a no solicitation policy. No sales information will be distributed at school. Please to do not distribute any sales information to teachers, parents, or students.

#### **Potty Training Policy**

It is our policy that all children are potty trained to attend preschool. We understand that accidents happen and we will have extra clothes on hand if needed. We do not have the proper facility to change dirty pants. If a child has a stool in their pants a parent will be called to come and pick them up.

## Delivery and Pick-Up Instructions

**PLEASE READ AND OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS!!  
FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAFETY, THEY NEED CAREFUL ATTENTION.**

A consistent routine is essential in order to establish a safe delivery and pick-up pattern for the children. Even returning students, who know the routine, are excited and not thinking about traffic danger during the first days, so we adults must be especially careful on their behalf. If someone drives for you, please instruct him or her carefully about our routine. There are several things we want you to remember for us:

1. When delivering or picking up, please enter the church driveway and drive all the way around to the lower back lot. Stay to your right and make a deep U- turn so that the passenger door faces the sidewalk.
2. Please **do not** let your child get out of your car until you have stopped your vehicle by the sidewalk. We do not want children walking behind or between cars or across the grass. Your child should get out at the sidewalk that leads to the door to the church basement, when it is your turn to unload. During the first weeks, a teacher will meet the children at the car and walk them to the door. This will be our routine until the children are oriented. There after, you may let them out of your car at the sidewalk and a teacher will watch them safely in the door.
3. If for some reason you need to park, please do not use the lower lot. This can cause a traffic jam. There are two other lots nearby where you can park.
4. We will dismiss promptly at 11:25 and 2:55 in an attempt to avoid a long line of traffic. The first arrival for pick-up should park as close to the sidewalk going up to the building in a parallel fashion. Cars arriving thereafter should parallel park in line. Please do not block the entrance/exit to the lot.
5. We will be teaching the children to walk out on the sidewalk to be put into their cars when you pick them up. For their safety while waiting, they will be instructed to stand behind a yellow line on the sidewalk until their car pulls across the sidewalk area and **STOPS!** We realize that sometimes you are in a hurry, but **please** do not ask your child to come and get in the car before it is his turn.
6. During church activities, we may use the other parking areas. When and if the situation arises we will send home a note to explain delivery and pick up during those times.
7. Please remember the drive to the back is narrow and that other cars may be entering or leaving. For your own safety, pay attention to the situation. It is easy to become caught up with our children and others in the car.
8. Also watch your **speed limit** in the neighborhood. We must be very watchful for those children who will be walking to school without the benefit of sidewalks.

With your cooperation, we shall have a safe routine established in a short time. We know that an established routine makes it safer and easier for all of us.