



### **Welcome**

The Montessori House of St. Johns extends a warm welcome to you and your family. It is the intention of this community to closely knit the bond between home and school. Parents are recognized as the primary educator and the school as a secondary educator. Together we can aid the child in self-development.

### **Mission Statement**

The Montessori House's mission is to provide a nurturing environment for the holistic development of children, from walking to six years of age. Each child is recognized as a unique individual, as well as an integral part of our community.

### **Philosophy Statement**

The Montessori House strives to guide the child along his/her own individual path of construction while nurturing the social responsibility needed to live within a cooperative community. The Montessori House ensures the inclusion of all children. It is our goal to provide an environment that recognizes the authentic nature of the child and cultivates a respect for the organic order of development. The Montessori teacher (guide) is trained to prepare the environment with activities that match the laws of development of the child and promote the children's needs and desire for independence, language acquisition, social interaction, movement, and cognitive stimulation, as well as personal and environmental care. It is our intention to have a strong, supportive, and vibrant school community. We aim to create lasting relationships with the children and their families that are built on trust and mutual respect.

## **Program Descriptions**

All programs at The Montessori House of St. Johns focus on the development of the whole child. Each environment is uniquely prepared to address the specific developmental needs of the age group it serves. Our Montessori educators (known as “guides”) are specially trained to observe each child and create opportunities to support their development in the most optimal manner. All programs aspire to follow and nurture each child on their natural developmental path and at their own rate, gaining skills and independence along the way. We aim to create a community of trust and respect.

Our environments are each served by an AMI trained lead guide and at least one assistant. Each environment is prepared with authentic Montessori materials. At the Nest, the children are exposed to Spanish through language based activities and conversational Spanish with the Spanish speaking assistant. During the morning work cycle, our Spanish teacher provides small group lessons, focused on Spanish vocabulary for one hour in each primary environment.

Environmental stewardship is important to us! We believe that involving the children in the processes that we take to care and protect for the environment is a big part of our work. This includes involving children in experiences such as gardening, recycling, composting and food preparation. We believe that it is important for children to understand where their food comes from as part of their understanding of our connection to the environment. We source our local, homemade, vegetarian snacks.

Both programs offer a variety of schedules, including for or five day options. Families can choose dismissal times throughout the afternoon (see tuition schedule). We also offer early morning care (7:30-8:30). For students that need to stay after 3:30, the Nest offers aftercare until 4:30 and the primary location offers daily Community Connection Classes from 3:30-4:30.

## **Toddler Community**

The Toddler Community is a mixed-age classroom for children who are walking to 3 years. Montessori trained guides and Spanish speaking assistants are present every day, maintaining an adult/child ratio of 1:4 or lower.

In an effort to follow Maria Montessori’s vision to “give the child a home,” this environment is set up to mimic the four areas of the home, including areas for movement, eating, sleeping, and personal care. Pre-verbal children gain independence in movement, eating, dressing and communicating their individual needs with sign language followed by their first words, typically both in English and Spanish. Each day’s routine includes a morning work cycle that offers activities to enhance students’ continued development of language, movement, and self-help skills. Over half of our environment is focused on practical life activities that allow the children to care for themselves and their environment just as they see the adults around them doing. There is also daily focus on art, music, and outdoor play.

**TIME FRAME****DAILY SCHEDULE FOR THE TODDLER COMMUNITY**

8:30 - 9:15 a.m.	Arrival & outdoor play
9:15 - 9:30 a.m.	Transition to indoors, begin Montessori work cycle
9:20 - 10:25 a.m.	Snack available
10:00 - 11:45 a.m.	Montessori Work cycle continues
12:15 - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30 p.m.	Outdoor play, preparation for napping & dismissal
1:30 p.m.	Departure for half-day students
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Rest time
3:30 p.m.	Departure for extended day students
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.	After school program and afternoon snack
4:30 p.m.	Departure for full-day students

\*The guides will work to learn your child's cues for hunger, sleepiness, and diapering/toileting needs, and these activities will be provided on an as needed basis. At departure time, we will communicate the basics of your child's day in the form of a daily report. Attempts will also be made to share highlights from the day.



## Children's House (Primary/Preschool)

The Children's House environment is specially prepared to meet the developmental needs of children between 3 and 6 years old. We have two classrooms with an adult/child ratio of 1:10 or lower. Both of our Children's House classrooms are led by trained Guides, who hold diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale, and are supported by at least one assistant.

We offer an authentic three-hour Montessori work cycle that includes activities in practical life, sensorial exploration, language, math, and artistic and cultural appreciation. Practical life focuses on care of the environment and the self, as well as social interactions and development of coordinated movement. The children refine their developing senses with all of our beautiful sensorial materials. Language is all around us with the spoken arts of storytelling, poetry, songs, and books, as well as a complete area of hands-on materials for reading, writing, and grammar. Our hands-on math materials offer concrete experiences with number symbols and quantity. Our classrooms are rich in cultural extensions, including geography, music, and art. We spend time each day in our outdoor environment which includes a natural playscape and garden.

We have access to a large indoor space (Clark Hall) for gross motor activity even when the weather keeps us from going outside. Children who stay for extended day benefit from an additional work cycle in the afternoon which generally consists of individual and whole-group lessons and a lower adult/child ratio, as well as additional time in our outdoor environment.

### Daily Schedule

Time	Activity in Eagle Room	Activity in Quetzal Room
7:30 - 8:30	Early Morning Care	Early Morning Care
8:30 - 11:30	Morning Work Cycle: Individual and Group Lessons, Free Choice Activities & Morning Snack and Small Group Spanish Lessons from 10:00 - 11:00	Morning Work Cycle: Individual and Group Lessons, Free Choice Activities & Morning Snack and Small Group Spanish Lessons from 9:00 - 10:00
11:30 - 12:15	Lunch	Recess in Courtyard
12:15 - 1:00	Recess in Courtyard/1:00 Dismissal	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Extended Day Students to Siesta	Extended Day Students to Owls
2:00 - 3:00	Siesta or Afternoon Work Cycle	Siesta or Afternoon Work Cycle
3:00 - 3:30	Recess in Courtyard / 3:30 Dismissal	Recess in Courtyard / 3:30 Dismissal
3:30 - 4:30	Community Connections Workshops	Community Connections Workshops

**The Montessori House of St Johns  
2020-21 School Calendar**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>HOLIDAY</b>	<b>DATES OF CLOSURE</b>
August	Almost Autumn Break	August 27th - September 7th
September	Labor Day	September 7th
October	Professional Development	October 9th - 12th
November	Veteran's Day	November 11th
November	Thanksgiving Holiday & Parent Teacher Conferences	November 23rd- 27th (conferences on 23rd & 24th)
December	Winter Break	December 21st - January 1st
January	New Year's Day (Observed)	January 1st
January	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 18th
February	Presidents' Day	February 15th
March	Spring Break & Parent Teacher Conferences	March 22nd - April 2nd
May	Professional Development	May 28th
May	Memorial Day	May 31st
June	Summer Break	June 26th - July 9th
August	Almost Autumn Break	August 23rd - September 6th

If there is inclement weather, we will follow the decision of Portland Public School District for school closures. Please remember that the annual tuition rates are based on our year round calendar and are broken down into 12 equal installments in an effort to make tuition rates as affordable as possible. The school closures are calculated into the annual rate so the monthly rates are the same regardless of the amount of school closures during each specific month. There is not an option to "opt out" of the Summer Session. Families that do not want to participate in the summer session will need to submit their written 60 day notice and place their child on the wait-list for the following year. They can also change their schedule to a reduced schedule.

Typically, we follow PPS' decisions regarding closures or late starts for inclement weather. With schools already being closed, this will be trickier to navigate. If PPS closes buildings (health and food services), we will also close. Otherwise, if it looks like winter storms are approaching we will likely call a late start (meaning school will start at 10:30 instead of 8:30) while we assess the situation. I will send out an email and we will also send text messages to notify you. Please remember that we do not offer refunds for school closures as all staff is paid as usual when we are closed for things out of our control, such as power outages or inclement weather. We do not typically offer make up days unless we exceed a week of closures. Staff was extremely generous with offering so many make up days when we were closed for the smoke in the beginning of the year. We were anxious to get started and had time to offer but this is not sustainable if we should be hit with a really hard winter. There are only so many days we have to work with in regards to make up days.

In general our plan is: **6-7 school closure days = 2 make up days; 8-9 school closure days = 3 make up days; 10-11 school closure days = 4 make up days.**

We are hopeful that we won't have this many closures but we want to make sure we are all prepared for such an event. Of course, if we go beyond 11 days we will revisit the plan. PGE has warned to be prepared for power outages due to winter weather.

### Monthly Tuition and Fees

Enrollment is secured with a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$150, a tuition deposit and first month's tuition. The tuition deposit may be used toward your child's last month's tuition provided a 60 day written notice is given and all accounts are paid in full. **Tuition Rates 2020-21 (effective 7/1/20)** Please note that these rates are based on an annual tuition amount and then divided into 12 monthly payments. The same tuition is due each month regardless of school closures.

**Our Toddler Program is located at our in-home location, aka,  
"The Nest" 7400 N Jersey St. Portland, OR 97203**

Toddlers 12mos - 3yrs (or until transition)	Early Morning Care 7:30-8:30	1/2 Day w lunch 8:30-12:30	3/4 Day 8:30-3:30	Full Day 8:30-4:30
5 days (M-F)	205	980	1395	1595
4 days (M,T,W,Th)	164	825	1148	1312

*The toddler program eats an earlier lunch and considers mealtimes to be a significant part of the curriculum for this small group so there is not an option of picking up prior to lunch. All students will receive school lunch at the Nest.*

**Our Preschool Program is located at our  
"Primary Location" 7528 N Charleston Ave. Portland, OR 97203**

In the education wing of the Pioneer United Methodist Church, next door to the St Johns Library

Primary 3yrs - 6yrs	Early Morning Care 7:30-8:30	½ Day w lunch 8:30-1:00	3/4 Day 8:30-3:30	Full Day 8:30-4:30
5 days (M-F)	205	837	1120	1288
4 days (M,T,W,Th)	164	720	924	1152

The rates posted are for families that have consistent schedules as listed. Schedules that vary will be billed as drop in care at \$12 an hour. Holidays and closures are reflected into these rates. No refunds are made for missed days, illness, inclement weather, or other reasons.

### Additional Fees

**Drop-In Care** is available at both locations with 24 hour notice and will be billed at \$12/hour on the following month's invoice.

**Community Enrichment fee of \$225** will be billed on your June invoice. For every volunteer hour that families have reported by May 15th, \$15 will be deducted from this fee. **A family that has volunteered the full 15 hours will have the entire fee waived** as they have enriched our community with their time.

### Other Fees

- \$10 daily charge for payments made after the fifth of the month; If late fees total \$50, your child will not be able to attend until tuition is paid in full.
- \$25 charge for all returned checks.
- 5% sibling discount off the lower tuition rate.
- **60 days advance notice is required for change in enrollment and / or schedule.**

Diaper Service Fee: Nest only	1 time payment: due 9.1.20	Monthly: due with tuition
5 days (M-F)	210	24
4 days (M,T,W, Th)	176	15

## Primary Registration and Fee Payment Agreement 2020-21 School Year

This contract is made between The Montessori House of St. Johns (License # CC502469 / CF502193) and \_\_\_\_\_ (parent/guardian) for the care of \_\_\_\_\_ (child).

The first day of childcare will be \_\_\_\_\_. Morning snack, afternoon snack and lunch will be provided. Only the person signed below and those named on the Child Enrollment and Authorization form may take children from the provider's care. There is a non-refundable \$150 enrollment fee to ensure my child's placement and a tuition deposit that can be applied to your last month's tuition after we receive a 60-day written notice of your cancellation of this contract. My child is enrolled for care:

Schedule (for Primary)	Early Morning Care 7:30-8:30	½ Day w/o lunch 8:30-12:00	½ Day w lunch 8:30-1:00	3/4 Day 8:30-3:30	Full Day 8:30-4:30
Full time (M-F)	205	651	837	1120	1288
4 days (M,T,W, R)	164	560	720	924	1152

Drop In care is available before and/or after school pending availability. Drop-In Request Forms must be submitted 24 hours in advance. Drop in care will be billed at \$12 an hour on the following month's invoice.

I agree to pay \$\_\_\_\_\_ on the first school day of every month. Payments are due on the first of the month and considered late on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**Additional Fees include:**

- \$15 /hour for all unreported/unfulfilled 15 volunteer hours not submitted by May15th.
- \$10 daily charge for payments made after the fifth of the month;
- If late fees total \$50, your child will not be able to attend until tuition is paid in full.
- \$25 charge for all returned checks.
- \$10 for each change to your Registration Agreement beyond 2 per year.
- \$1 per minute - late pick up fee beyond 5 minute grace period (pick up by 1:00 or 3:30)

Please initial:

Tuition is calculated for the year and divided into equal payments. I understand there are no refunds for missed days, illness or school closures due to inclement weather, illness outbreaks or other reasons. The tuition rate is the same regardless of school closures due to vacation days, professional development or national holidays. I have viewed the school calendar and I understand when the school closures will occur.

I understand that either party can terminate this contract with a written 60-day notice. I understand that I will be required to pay tuition for 60 days after written cancellation of this Agreement. I understand that my tuition deposit will be used toward the remaining balance of the last month of tuition.

I (parent/guardian) agree to the terms of this contract. Any change to your child's schedule will require an updated agreement. I have received, read and agree to the childcare policies.

## **Children's Records & Assessments**

Before school begins, each child's school file must contain the following completed and updated forms:

- Child Enrollment and Authorization Form
- Parent Questionnaire
- Immunization Record
- Registration and Fee Payment Agreement
- Emergency Consent Form
- Emergency Supply Kit & Contact Form
- Immunization Record

Records for children must be updated annually. Staff will ensure parents receive necessary forms for updating. Should your family situation change in any way, for instance in a separation or divorce, both parents will have to sign necessary forms for contact information and authorization for picking up your child. State law requires that all immunization records be completed and on file when the child starts school and be updated when appropriate thereafter.

## **Assessment and Screenings**

In order to ensure the needs of each child can be met through our learning program, a developmental screening of each child will be completed within 30 days of entry into The Montessori House. Information gained from assessments and screenings will be shared with parents at the Fall Parent/Teacher Conference and placed in the child's file. Children's files are confidential. Research shows that observation and documentation concerning development increases the detection of developmental delays or learning difficulties. Initial screenings of children will give us a baseline and allow us to individualize instruction to support each child, to identify possible special needs or learning difficulties, and to meet program accountability requirements in our state.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

All personal information regarding your child and your family is protected and respected at The Montessori House. HIPAA (the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act) is a federal law that imposes new standards for the protection of individual health information. HIPAA affects the nature of the exchange of information from the student's health care provider TO the school. Previous informal exchanges between health providers and school health staff are no longer permitted; explicit written authorization is required from the parent or guardian in order for information to flow to the school. For example, immunization records require such authorization. Within the school setting, FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) continues to govern the exchange of health care information that is contained in the student's educational record. It is not necessary to obtain a release of information from a parent or guardian in order to share such information with school staff for the purposes of ensuring the best and most appropriate care for a student.

## **Child Pick Up Authorization**

Only people listed on your Enrollment and Authorization form will be allowed to take your child. If staff are unfamiliar with the authorized adult picking up your child, they will need to provide photo identification.

## **Guidance/Discipline Policy**

At The Montessori House of St. Johns, children are told what they CAN do. Using positive statements help the children focus on the positive or desired behavior. For instance, “We walk in our classroom,” is more effective than “Don’t run!” Words like “stop,” “no,” and “don’t” are only used in a situation calling for urgency. Parents are respected as the primary teachers of the children and a relationship of mutual care and concern is expected to exist between parents and the children’s guide for their benefit now and in the future.

Other guidance techniques include:

- Giving choices to the children. It is important that both choices have acceptable outcomes for the adult/group, but the children feel empowered to control their actions.
- Having an orderly environment and consistent routines help the children know what to expect and to feel safe.
- Giving the children advance notice of an expectation, along with enough time to carry it out or make a choice.
- Letting children know that we ALWAYS use our words to make our will known or to solve a problem and then give them the words they can use.
- Speaking to the child in a quiet, calm voice at his or her eye level, and making eye contact.
- Modeling the graceful way to speak and act within the classroom community.

If a child is unable to respond to redirection and/or is consistently unable to maintain control of his or her body, then the guide will contact the parents to discuss observations, the forms of discipline utilized at home, and agree on a plan of action. The physical and emotional safety of all children in the classroom is of utmost importance. Therefore, if unsafe or hurtful behavior threatens that, parents will be called to come pick up their child immediately. Repeated uncontrolled behavior may lead to the need for the child to be withdrawn from The Montessori House of St. Johns.



## Communication

### Written Messages

Writing a note or sending an email is the most reliable method to communicate with us. Verbal messages can be unintentionally forgotten. Letting us know about significant changes or events in family life such as sibling issues, visitors, health or sleep issues, business, or vacation plans, a death, a difficult morning, etc. will help us to better meet your child's needs. There are "Need to Know" notes located outside of each classroom for you to communicate any information to your child's guide in written form. Please call the office or send an email if your child will be absent or late. Please notify us in written form of any changes in address, phone numbers, emergency information, allergies or an adjustment in your child's pick up procedure.

### Newsletters

Each month your child's guide creates a classroom newsletter to share special information about your child's classroom activities at school. You will also receive a monthly school newsletter with updates on school wide events and policies. Please take the time to read the newsletters as you are responsible for the information that our school is sharing with you. Additional e-mails will be sent to communicate policy updates, health alerts and program information. We appreciate your attention and response when requested.

### Notes Specific to Your Child

Students at the Nest receive daily notes at pick up as well as a monthly observation page from the guides. The Children's House classrooms use a secure, on-line record-keeping system called Transparent Classroom to share your child's activities with you. Transparent Classroom allows you to see descriptions of the lessons, what lessons your child has received, get a look at the lessons which are upcoming in his or her future, and what activities they are choosing. You will receive an invitation from your guide, via email at the beginning of the year. For more information, visit their website at [www.transparentclassroom.com](http://www.transparentclassroom.com).

## **Parent Nights & Workshops**

Our staff also offers parent nights throughout the year. We are dedicated to these evenings in an effort to “closely knit the bond between home and school.” Your participation in these events is crucial to the strength of our community. The more invested we all are in our learning community the stronger we will be for our children.

## **Parent / Teacher Conferences**

To provide specific information about your child’s experiences, we hold Parent/Teacher conferences twice a year. The Fall conferences are typically held over Thanksgiving Break, while optional Spring Conferences coincide with Spring Break. Your guide will connect with you as these dates approach to schedule your conference and provide additional information regarding the meetings.

## **Parent Resources**

Sometimes you may have need for various forms, school calendars, program information, or even this handbook! These resources are accessible to you on the Parent Shelf in the entry hallway at the Charleston location, or in the Parent Binder at the Nest.

## **Concerns**

Please address any concerns privately through email or phone calls. We are not available while the children are present to appropriately give you our full attention. Your comments or concerns are very important to us and we will contact you promptly to discuss them.

## **Attendance**

Routines allow children to thrive because they know what to expect on a day-to-day basis. Please assist your child to attend school regularly. Regular attendance along with a timely and consistent arrival and departure is imperative to a child's adaptation to school. If your child will be unavoidably late due to an appointment, or your child is unable to attend, please call or email. School begins at 8:30 and we have a tardy window from 8:45 - 9:00 a.m. Each family will have a free pass to drop off after 9:00 a.m. twice during the school year. The third time you’re tardy, plan to return at 11:30 so your child won’t disrupt the morning work cycle.

## **Parent Involvement**

We ask each family to make a volunteer commitment of 15 hours a year. It is our intention that the volunteer requirement will strengthen our community and we will do our best to create opportunities that allow each family to contribute their talents and time to the school community, through various committees, classroom endeavors, fundraising and projects to support our classrooms. You record your volunteer task and amount of time on the volunteer tracking sheet posted on the wall above the parent shelf. Let us know your skills and

interests and we will find ways for you to contribute and enhance our community! Volunteer opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Participating in Parent Nights (up to 6 hours can be logged for attending the parent workshops; 2 hours per family each night)
- Deep cleaning our environments bi-weekly or monthly
- Participating in work parties
- Material Making for the classroom (sewing / crafting etc.)
- Woodworking for material making or repairing equipment
- Building / modifying furniture
- Volunteer for school events (help plan, set up / clean up)
- Gardening
- Participate or Chair a committee
- Share traditions from various cultural backgrounds
- Volunteering to do classroom laundry (2-3x each month)

## **Community Enrichment Fee**

Your June invoice will include a Community Enrichment Fee of \$225. For every volunteer hour that families report by May 15th, \$15 will be deducted from this fee. A family that has volunteered the full 15 hours will have the entire fee waived as they have enriched our community with their time.

## **Food**

### **Snack & Lunch**

We provide a morning and afternoon vegetarian snacks and a family style lunch. Snacks consist of healthy items from two food groups (any combination of fruits, grains, vegetables or proteins) which meets USDA guidelines. When selecting our foods, we focus on locally sourced, in season, and organic foods. We also pay attention to packaging, buying bulk and avoiding excess plastic when possible. The menu will be posted each Monday morning. The focus of meal times is to enjoy a nutritious, well-balanced meal while relaxing and enjoying time with peers and teachers. Please be sure to communicate any allergies or sensitivities. We may request that you provide substitutions although we are typically able to offer dairy and gluten free alternatives. Due to student allergies, we do not serve any tree nuts.

## **Illness Policy**

The classroom teacher will be responsible for observing signs of illness in each child each school day. For the protection of all students, including your own child, the following guidelines need to be followed. Please keep your child home if any of the following symptoms are observed:

- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in a 24 hour period
- Draining rash
- Eye discharge or pink eye
- Fatigue or irritability that prevents participation in regular activities
- Sore throat

Communicable disease such as head lice, scabies, etc., which require treatment (any kind of rash must be diagnosed by a doctor to determine if it is contagious). Children who are not well enough to

participate in classroom activities or go outside are not well enough to come to school. Parents will be notified if their child is not well enough or too tired to remain at school. Parents are responsible for picking up the child from school soon after notification. Children may return to school when:

- Vomiting, diarrhea, or fever have subsided for 24 hours
- Cold symptoms are decreasing
- They can tolerate full activities
- They have been on medication for at least 24 hours
- There is no discharge from rash

We are committed to include children with special health needs (temporary & ongoing). We are always available to consult and collaborate with health care related services.

### **Medication**

Any and all medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to be administered at school must be accompanied by a Medication Authorization form, signed by the parent. All medication must be in the original container with the expiration date and dosage clearly labeled. Read the labels of over the counter medications. If instructions for your child's age and weight indicate consulting a physician, staff cannot dispense the medication without a doctor's signature. Non-prescription medication, which does not require a prescription, is limited to the following:

- Antihistamines
- Decongestants
- Non-narcotic liquid cough suppressants
- Anti-itching ointments or lotions
- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Hand lotion

Fever reducers will not be administered. Children with a fever need to be at home. Children should never be given aspirin or aspirin containing cold medication as their usage is linked to Reye's Syndrome. Please do not send vitamins, cough drops, and the like. Please deliver your child's medication, along with the Medication Authorization form and the doctor's prescription (if necessary) to classroom staff.

### **Media Free Toys from Home**

Play items from home will be held in the child's locker. The community is richly equipped for your child's developmental needs and it is the hope that eventually your child will want to leave toys at home.

### **Screen Time**

Please avoid any screen time as a part of your child's morning routine. According to the The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), "television and other entertainment media should be avoided

for infants and children under age two. A child's brain develops rapidly during these first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens.” The AAP further states that studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to “attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity”. Please visit the AAP website for more information:

<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx>

## **Sharing**

Children may want to bring items in to share with their teacher or friends. It is best when the idea of bringing a sharing comes spontaneously from the child. Please refrain from allowing your child to bring a toy for sharing. Items appropriate for sharing should be found in the natural environment or handmade by the child. Ideas for an appropriate type of sharing would be autumn leaves, spring flowers, family picture(s), magnifying glass, drawing, painting, etc. Complete a Show & Tell slip along with the item and give to your child's guide.

## **Observation Guidelines**

We welcome parents to observe between 9 and 11 a.m. Ideally, we like to only have one observer at a time so please schedule your observation with the office. (We typically do not have any observations during the first month of school as the students are adjusting to their new environment.) The children do a lot of observing themselves, so they understand that when you come in you are here to watch their work. Please sit in the observation chair and take note of all the different activities taking place in the classroom. If the children come to speak to you, please introduce yourself and explain you are here to observe their work. Please refrain from lengthy conversations with the children during your observation. Please review our Observation Guidelines located in the parent file for further information.

## **Holidays and Religious Activities**

Children at the Montessori House of St. Johns come from diverse religious heritages. Religious education is not part of the curriculum. We do understand the importance of the traditions and customs of our students and welcome families to share their home culture with the rest of the community. That may include bringing in something special to share or coming into the classroom to teach the children a song or share a true story. We welcome the diversity of our families and hope the children can learn about themselves and others as we identify the many different celebrations that take place throughout the year.

### **Notes for specific holidays:**

**Halloween:** The children do not wear costumes to school on Halloween. We do not have sugary treats at school - so please leave any Halloween candy at home.

**Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah:** The religious base of these holidays is shared as a point of information in the terms of “some families believe...” This is a great time of the year to hear a variety of customs shared throughout our community and the rest of the world.

**Valentine’s Day:** The children make Valentines for their classmates at school. No need to bring in commercially prepared Valentine’s Cards.

### **Birthday Traditions**

We recognize the anniversary of your child’s birth as a community. Food and gifts are not part of our celebration. In the toddler community, the adults wish the child happy birthday and will ask the child if he/she would like to be sung to. They respect the child’s wishes. At the primary level we will have a simple birthday gathering. The guide will share some milestones or events of your child’s life each year, and photos demonstrating their growth. We will send you an information-gathering sheet in the month prior to their birthday. Food and gifts are not part of our celebration.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

Oregon state law mandates that workers in certain professions must make reports if they have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect. These people are called mandatory reporters and they are a crucial link in the system to protect Oregon’s most vulnerable citizens. By law, mandatory reporters must report suspected abuse or neglect of a child regardless of whether or not the knowledge of the abuse was gained in the reporter’s official capacity. Additionally, staff members cannot release children to parents or caregivers who appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Should that situation arise, we would delay departure while we arrange another authorized person to pick up your child in order to avoid calling local police & Child Protective Services. Mandatory reporting of abuse or neglect of children is a 24-hour a day obligation. Mandatory reporters include teachers, school personnel, directors and staff of day care centers and preschools.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

No child will be refused admission because of race, creed, color, religion, or disabled or handicapped condition. Program participation by children with diverse cultures and needs contribute to the richness and social development of the classroom. The Montessori House believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on each child’s capabilities and needs. The Montessori House will work with health care and related professionals to meet a child’s special health care needs.



## Emergency Preparedness

We have an Emergency Preparedness Policy and each month we practice one fire drill and an additional natural disaster or security drill. Our staff is trained and equipped to respond appropriately in the event of a real emergency. Each family will have an emergency out-of-area contact in case phone lines are down. The out-of-area contact number for the Montessori House is: Jeff 785.766.5754.

To conduct a hazard hunt of your home and for other Emergency Preparedness information:

<http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/earthquake/pdf/fema-240.pdf>

<http://www.naccrra.org/disaster/docs/ParentBroch.pdf>

## Emergency Supplies Kit

In the event of an emergency such as earthquake or ice storm that could cause your child to be at school for an extended period of time, we are requesting that you provide an emergency kit. The Montessori House will provide a large zip-loc bag to contain the following items:

- 2 or 3 boxed drinks or a quart of water (whichever your child would prefer)
- 2 jars or 2 cans with a pull top lid of high protein food that your child will eat
- 2 plastic forks/spoons
- 2 pre-packaged "treat" items (granola bar, candy bar, fruit snacks, etc.)
- 1 small pre-packaged packet of diaper wipes & small pkg. of kleenex
- 1 plastic poncho or 2 3-gallon trash bags that can be used as rain gear in case we need to leave the building (sold in the camping section at Fred Meyer or other out-door type store)
- 1 space blanket (a shiny foil blanket also sold in the camping section at Fred Meyer or other out-door type store)
- 1 Emergency light stick (sold at hardware & outdoor stores)
- A picture of your family
- A note from you with encouraging thoughts
- Any special medical supplies or medications (and instructions) for a 24-48 period
- Change of clothes and underwear
- 10 disposable diapers (Infants only)
- 2 pull-ups if needed for overnight (Toddlers & Preschoolers)

## **NEST PROGRAM AND POLICIES**

### **Arrival and Departure – Attachment and Separation**

Our goal is that your child feel comfortable and secure with their teachers and that The Montessori House becomes their second home. Montessori educators recognize that for a child to become functionally independent they must begin with a loving and responsive base for attachment. From this foundation they are able to separate and grow into confident individuals.

Prior to your child's first day at school, you are encouraged to attend the Back to School Night. During this visit, you are encouraged to take a picture of the classroom and the teacher's face so that a couple of days prior to your child's first day of school you can look at the pictures together and name what you see in them. You can also schedule a home visit by contacting the guide. A home visit's purpose is for your child to see the guide in your home, confirming that she is a safe person.

We recognize that emotions for both parent and child can be strong as this transition is often the child's first major separation from the home. It is important that, as parents, you feel confident and convey this with your actions upon leaving. Think of it this way – if you child is picking up on your anxiety about leaving them, they will wonder why you are leaving them in a place you do not trust! It is important to establish a routine for arriving and departing. The first step is punctuality, as arrivals and departures can be stressful, and tardiness can add to this stress. We know that it can be difficult to leave you child when he/she is crying out for you, but know that they will receive lots of love and support to help them feel comfortable. Please do not return as this is confusing and produces anxiety not only for your child, but often all of the children. If your child is inconsolable after a reasonable period of time, we will call you to come get your child.

As a general rule, children who attend full time will transition smoothly at drop off time within three weeks; children with part-time schedules may take longer. Your guide is open to discussing various ways in which your child can be supported as he/she becomes comfortable being at school, and working together, a plan can be made.

Before departure, children will be changed into a home diaper or underpants. For 1:30 dismissal, a guide will be with the children in the garden area. Your promptness is appreciated as the teacher(s) are needed to assist with the children attending for the remainder of the day as soon as possible. Extended day students will be in the school and ready for dismissal at 3:30. Children staying for aftercare need to be picked up by 4:30. There is a five minute grace period for dismissal; the charge is \$1 for each minute you are late beyond you scheduled pickup time.

### **Mealtimes – Process of Weaning & Food Preparation**

Snacks for toddlers are provided by the school, and lunch is packed and brought from home. Be sure that foods are packed in resealable containers and marked with your child's name. Use an ice pack in the lunch sack as appropriate. We do have a refrigerator for milk and bottles as needed and can warm bottles if your child prefers. We do our best to return uneaten food home, allowing you to see how much and what your child ate that day.

We treat mealtimes as a lesson, covering many aspects of our culture and care of oneself. Mealtimes include hand and face washing. Food will be served off a plate while children sit at a communal table, and children will be introduced to forks and drinking from a glass. The children will also assist with cleanup once they are finished with their meal.

Breakfast is not served at school, and special snack times cannot be accommodated. Please do not bring food into the school at drop-off or pickup times.

### **Diapering and Toileting**

Our aim is to provide your child with clear, true information about the natural process of elimination of bodily wastes. There are no rewards, punishments, or celebrations surrounding the use of the toilet. The goal is to show your child how to take care of these processes, and how to understand this function of his/her body.

A great aid to this education is the proper information. Cloth diapers give the child immediate feedback (the feeling of wetness) in response to the feeling of release. **Your child will be checked every 45-60 minutes for urine and feces. Non-potty trained children will be invited to the toilet every 45-60 minutes.** We have seen firsthand that very young children are able to recognize their need to eliminate, so we offer the toilet to all children while changing diapers. In time, with the aid of training pants (cloth underwear with multiple layers to minimize leakage) and a patient and attentive adult, the child teaches him or herself how to use the toilet on their own schedule.

The progress your child makes in this area toward his/her independence will be communicated to you along with any guidance we have to offer to support your child's efforts at home. We employ professional diapering service from *Tidee Didee* to ensure that the diapers and training pants are properly laundered and maintained for your child.

### **Clothing**

Your child's clothing should be labeled with his/her name. If it is not, know that we will mark clothing as needed. The children spend time outside every day and it is up to you to be sure they have the appropriate clothing for outdoor time. Rain pants, a rain shell, a warm jacket, and rain boots can be kept at school if you prefer to avoid bringing them back and forth from home. We do have a shoe-free indoor environment, please feel free to provide indoor shoes (Croc-style) which will remain at school.

It is important to provide your child with shoes and clothing that fit properly. This is important for regulation of body temperature, proper digestion, and removing obstacles for the child who is working on gaining mobility. It is especially important in the case of shoes and boots; shoes that fall off your child's feet can be dangerous and are a frustration and to both your child and their teachers, often resulting in your child having cold, wet feet.

## **Nap Time – Sleep and Rest**

An important aspect of functional independence includes the ability to sooth oneself to sleep. This is not a requirement or expectation of any child who is new to our community. The teachers will comfort your child so they can feel secure as they fall asleep, but will be mindful not to create dependence on the presence of a specific person or object to be able to fall sleep. To ensure a comfortable nap, please provide your child with a favorite blanket. Stuffed toys or other objects are not necessary. If your child uses pacifiers at the start of school, please know that they will be used on a limited basis as the goal is to move any child who uses them away from dependence upon them.

We transition gently into rest time, with a routine of bathroom breaks and quiet activities. Each child has their own mat provided by the school; we ask that you provide a sheet and blanket at the start of every week, which will be sent home at the end of the week for laundering. Our naps are generally peaceful, and very much needed.

### **NEST Supply List**

Please note our media free policy that applies to clothes, toys, lunch boxes, etc. We encourage clothing and items that are vibrant, but ask that cartoon characters, super heros and toy themes be kept at home and all supplies sent to school should be void of any characters/commercials. Please label each article of clothing and napping items with your child's initials or first or last name; or know that teachers may do so at their discretion.

Change of seasonally appropriate clothes: 2 complete sets, including socks & underwear

Water Bottle

Crocs - 1 pair of sturdy, slip on shoes to remain at school

Boots - 1 pair of pull on rain boots

A supply of diapers for your child to go home in

Seasonal items which can be left at school:

Mittens or gloves

Sun hat

Winter hat

If your child stays for rest time, takes a nap during his/her scheduled day, please send the following for nap / rest time:

A bag

Optional:  Small Pillow

Blanket

Small Stuffed Toy

## **Primary Program and Policies**

### **Arrival**

A teacher will be in the atrium in the morning to greet you and your child. Please say your good-byes in the foyer and send your child (through the gate) to the atrium to put away their belongings and enter the classroom. School starts at 8:30. It is expected that all children will be with their class and ready to enter the classroom at 8:45. Please be on time. If you are running late and arrive after 8:45 a.m., please drop your child off with the office staff and they will assist your child.

If your child is requesting you come in, please explain that you could come back and observe at another time but in the morning only teachers and students come in to start the school day. (Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule but we have found that the children adjust faster if the parents do not come inside. This typically just prolongs the anxiety of your departure. The anxiety of starting a new school usually dissipates faster if the child follows the usual routine from the first day of school.)

### **Departure**

1:00 dismissal happens from our back playground. Some students lay down to rest immediately after the 1:00 departure. Please be mindful of their need for a quiet environment at this time. All other dismissals take place from our courtyard playground.

- Please do your best to be on time, of course plans snag and issues arise from time to time. Pick-up adults are asked to call the school if they are running late. We offer a five minute grace period followed by a charge of \$1 per minute. We will waive the late fee once. If parents run late more than three times, we will charge \$5 per minute. Any late fee charges will be billed on our next month's invoice.

## **Clothing**

Please make sure that clothing are free of media or characters. These images are a large part of our culture, but we would like our time at school to nurture the development meant to take place under the laws of nature. Images from television are a distraction to the children's natural internal drives to development. If a child wears a shirt that has characters on it, we may ask them to change to a shirt from their extra clothing bag that is image free. Jewelry, tiaras, etc. are also unnecessary distractions to the children. It is best if these items are left at home and will be kept in the child's cubby if brought to school. The children are developing gross motor skills and spend much of their day moving their bodies and doing activities on the floor. Please ensure that your child's clothing allows them freedom of movement. The children should also be able to use the bathroom independently so please make sure they are able to fasten and remove clothing. Your child's clothing should be labeled with his / her name. If not, please know that his / her teacher may label as needed.

## **Inside Shoes/Outside Shoes**

Children and staff spend a lot of time on the floor. We want our community to be as sanitary and comfortable as possible. Children, staff and authorized persons entering the environment will need to remove their shoes. Please provide your child with a pair of crocs (or similar style of slip on shoe with a hard sole) to be worn in the classroom. Please be sure they are free of animal-heads, lights or super heroes and fit properly. Children should also have a pair of rain boots that live at school to be worn outside.

## **Primary Supply List**

Please note our media free policy that applies to clothes, toys, lunch boxes, etc. We encourage clothing and items that are vibrant, but ask that cartoon characters, super heroes and toy themes be kept at home and all supplies sent to school should be void of any characters/commercials. Please label each article of clothing and napping items with your child's initials or first or last name; or know that teachers may do so at their discretion.

\_\_\_ Change of seasonally appropriate clothes: 2 complete sets, including socks & underwear

\_\_\_ Sweater or sweatshirt to remain at school

\_\_\_ Water Bottle

\_\_\_ Boots - 1 pair of pull on rain boots (to be left at school)

\_\_\_ Crocs (or similar) for classroom; please ensure appropriate fit as they are worn outside for fire drills so cloth soles are less desirable; cros are preferred

\_\_\_ 2 labeled tupperware containers (carrots & hummus, chips & salsa, apples and sunbutter, etc.

Seasonal items:

\_\_\_ Mittens or gloves

\_\_\_ Sun hat

\_\_\_ Winter hat

\_\_\_ Rain suit

If your child stays for rest time, please send the following for nap / rest Time:

\_\_\_ A bag

Optional: \_\_\_ Pillow

\_\_\_ Blanket

\_\_\_ Small Stuffed Toy

\_\_\_ Crib Sheet

### **The Montessori House of St. Johns**

7528 N Charleston Ave (Primary Preschool location)

and 7400 N Jersey Street (Toddler Program location)

Portland, OR 97203

503.719.5818

Our website: [www.themontessorihouse.org](http://www.themontessorihouse.org)

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