

Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove

Parent Handbook

8121 Braddock Place, San Diego, CA 92114

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MONTESSORI METHOD OF EDUCATION

Maria Montessori lived from 1870 to 1952, and she was the first female Doctor of Medicine in Italy. Through her work with children, she developed her unique educational method, known as the Montessori Method. This system of education is both a philosophy of child development and a rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on the child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, as well as a carefully prepared environment, which guarantees exposure to materials and experiences.

The main premises of Montessori education are:

- Children are to be respected as different from adults and as individuals who differ from each other.
- Children possess unusual sensitivity and intellectual ability to absorb and learn from their environments that are unlike those of the adult both in quality and capacity.
- The most important years of a child's growth are the first six years of life when unconscious learning is gradually brought to the conscious level.

Dr. Montessori has had an impact on the field of education and the way we understand and teach children today. Her influence can be seen not only in the number of schools that bear her name, but throughout the fields of child care, education, and child development. Many of her ideas are now part of our common knowledge, language, and thinking about children. She was an innovator in the field of education and ideas that were once met with great resistance in her day now are accepted as natural aspects of childhood. Modern kindergarten classrooms use the child-sized furniture and didactic materials first introduced by Montessori. Such current concepts as individualized learning and readiness programs, manipulative learning, ungraded classes, combined age groups, team teaching, and open classrooms reflect many of her early insights.

MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

The Montessori classroom is a "living room" for children. Children choose their activities from open shelves with self-correcting materials and work in distinct work areas – on tables or rugs on the floor. Over time, the children develop into a "normalized community" working with high concentration and few interruptions.

The classroom includes the following components:

- The practical life exercises enhance the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and refinement of physical movement and coordination.
- The sensorial materials enable the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation, length, width, temperature, mass, color, etc.
- The Montessori math materials, through concrete manipulative materials, allow the child to internalize the concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- The language work includes oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters (loose alphabet letters),

and various presentations allowing children to effortlessly link sounds and symbols and to express their thoughts in writing.

The child is also presented with geography, history, life sciences, music, art, and movement education. Virtually every classroom will also have an elliptical line on the floor. This is generally used for “walking on the line” activities that help children develop gracefulness. The line is also where the class meets as a whole. An opening meeting is preceded by an individualized work period, and other meetings will serve as a closing or transitional group time. (i.e. time outdoors, lunch, dismissal, etc.)

The children have a deep love and need for purposeful work. They work, however, not as an adult for the completion of a job, but for the sake of an activity itself. It is this activity, which enables them to accomplish their most important goal: the development of them. The items found on the shelves in the classroom are “materials” rather than “toys”. The children “work with the materials” rather than “play with the toys”. This allows the children to gain the most benefit from the environment by giving them a sense of worth, the same sense of worth adults experience as they go to their jobs and do their work.

The classroom incorporates:

- The Whole Child Approach: The primary goal of a Montessori program is to help all children reach their full potential in all areas of life. Activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation for future intellectual academic endeavors. The holistic curriculum, under the direction of a specifically prepared teacher, allows the children to experience the joy of learning, the time to enjoy the process, and ensures the development of self-esteem. It provides the experiences from which children create their knowledge.
- The Prepared Environment: For self-directed learning to take place, the whole learning environment – classroom, materials, and social setting/atmosphere - must be supportive of the children. The teacher provides the necessary resources, including opportunities for children to function in a safe and positive environment. Together, the teacher and children form a relationship based on trust and respect that fosters self-confidence and a willingness to try new things.
- The Montessori Materials: Dr. Montessori’s observations of the kinds of things that children enjoy, and go back to repeatedly, led her to design many multi-sensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to facilitate learning.
- The Teacher: Originally called a “directress”, the Montessori teacher functions as a designer of the environment, resource person, role model, demonstrator, record-keeper, and meticulous observer of each child’s behavior and growth. Extensive training is required for a full Montessori credential, including a minimum of a college degree and a year’s student teaching which is supervised by a Montessori teacher and is specialized for the age group with which a teacher will work, i.e. infant and toddler, pre-primary, or elementary level.

In a Montessori Classroom, most of the learning activities are individualized, i.e. the children engage in a learning task that particularly appeals to them because they find the activities

geared to their needs and level of readiness. They work at their own pace, repeating the task as often as they like. Children learn at different paces and this allows that growth to take place.

Tasks are designed so that each new step is built upon what the children have already mastered. A carefully planned series of successes builds inner confidence in the children.

By surrounding the children with appealing materials and learning activities geared to their inner needs, they become accustomed to engaging in activities on their own. Gradually, this results in a habit of taking the initiative – an essential quality of leadership. “Ground rules” call for completing a task once begun and gradually results in a habit of persistence and perseverance for replacing materials after the task is accomplished.

An essential part of the learning environment is the other children in it. The three-year age span of children within the classroom enables older children to provide leadership, guidance, and act as models for the younger children. This multi-age grouping gives the classroom a heritage.

Self-corrective materials within the environment allow the children to learn through their errors to make the correct decision versus having the teacher point it out to them.

There is an emphasis on concrete learning rather than on abstract learning where children experience concepts in concrete “hands-on” ways.

The teacher plays a very unobtrusive role in the classroom in that the children are not motivated by the teacher, but by the need for self-development.

This overview has been compiled from the educational website MontessoriConnections.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Provider’s Responsibilities

- Operate Montessori Children’s House of Lemon Grove following state licensing regulations for a Family Care Center and provide instruction according to the principles of Montessori education.
- Provide a safe, healthy, nurturing environment.
- Focus on meeting the needs of the child first.
- Protect the well-being of all the children in care by enforcing health care policies.
- As required by State Law, providers are mandated to report all types of suspected child abuse (physical, mental, sexual, neglect) to the proper authorities.

Parent’s Responsibilities

- Have the child dressed and ready for the day upon arrival to school.
- Provide at least one clothing change to keep at school.
- Provide a nutritious lunch.
- Have backup care available for occasions when school is not available due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Promptly pay all fees set and agreed.
- Immediately inform the Director of any changes in address or telephone numbers.

- Keep immunizations and health records current.
- Contact the school by 8:00 am if the child will be absent or late.
- Support and adhere to the health care policies.

Shared Responsibilities

- Communicate regularly regarding the skills, interests, and needs of the child.
- Treat each other, and the children with courtesy and respect.
- Give at least one month notice of any contractual changes.

MONTESSORI CHILDREN’S HOUSE OF LEMON GROVE

Montessori Children’s House of Lemon Grove was established to provide 2 through 5-year-old children with a preschool learning experience in a comfortable, home-like environment utilizing the Montessori Philosophy and Methods of Education.

The preschool is located at a residence and is licensed as a Large Family Child Care from the State of California Department of Social Services, license #376614702. The preschool classroom is independent of the residence. It has a separate and dedicated entrance that leads only to the classroom and playground.

Preschools operating under a Child Care Center license have a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:12. However, under our license, the classroom has space available for only 12 students a day, for a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:6. This works to make our small classroom cozy and home-like. It is wonderful for our toddlers who may be experiencing their first school setting and enables our older children to provide leadership and guidance as they continue their individualized learning. Our license also allows for children who are not yet using the toilet and still require the use of diapers or pull-ups, and we help with transitioning to bathroom independence when they are ready.

OWNER AND DIRECTOR

Owner and Director, Mary Denise Duppée has been teaching in San Diego since 1992 and received her Montessori Certification in 1994. Ms. Denise opened the Montessori Children’s House of Lemon Grove in September 2003. Along with her Montessori Certification, she has 30 units of Montessori Philosophy and Methods of Child Development through the Extended Studies Program at UCSD, and 12 units of Early Childhood Education. She holds a degree in Photography from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.

CHILDREN’S WORK

Your child’s work is a source of pride and accomplishment. Montessori classrooms are comprised of many manipulative, hands-on materials. Most times the activities your child has done throughout the day are not “take-home” work. This does not diminish the importance or pride your child feels about their daily work. Talk to your child and understand that what may seem simple or unimportant to an adult may represent huge work and accomplishment to your child.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Admission to the school is based upon space availability, with priority given to continuing students and their siblings. Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove admits students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin.

If space is not available, applicants can fill out paperwork to be placed on a waiting list. There is no charge to be placed on the waiting list.

Open Enrollment for new students begins in April for the upcoming year (example: April 2018 for the upcoming 2018-2019 School Year.) To secure a space for new students for the upcoming school year, a non-refundable registration and insurance fee of \$150 is required.

Tuition, Emergency Contact Information, Documentation of Up-To-Date Immunizations, and all other Licensing Forms are required before the child begins attending school.

Returning students (those currently attending) will be allowed to re-enroll before the new student open-enrollment. The re-enrollment fee for returning students is an insurance fee of \$75.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Refer to the Hours and Tuition Rates Page to view current rates for the current year.

Tuition payment is based on a yearly school rate, which for your convenience is broken into 10 equal monthly payments. The school year is from the last week of August through the 4th week of June. Days that the school is closed have been factored into the cost of operating the school and in determining the yearly school rate. No credit or reduction of monthly tuition payments will be made for the school closure days listed on the school calendar.

Tuition is due at the beginning of the month. After the 5th day of the month, a late fee of \$5 a day will be charged. If payment and subsequent late fees are not settled by the 10th day of the month, your child will not be permitted to return to school.

A fee of \$20 plus any bank charges will be charged for any checks returned for insufficient funds.

SCHOOL HOURS

School hours are 8:00 am until 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Refer to the Calendar Page to view the current School Year Calendar.

A school calendar will be provided upon admission. School is not open on the following holidays:

Labor Day

Veteran's Day

Thanksgiving Day and following Friday

Winter Break (10 school days, which include Christmas and New Year's Day)

Martin Luther King Day

President's Day

Spring Break (5 school days)
Memorial Day

AFTERSCHOOL CARE

Afterschool care is available from 3:00-4:00 at \$12 an hour. Advanced notice of care is needed.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY and ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

Enrollment is for the school year is from the last week of August through the 4th week of June. If you find it necessary to withdraw, a one-month written notice is required.

Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove reserves the right after the initial four-week start period to review the readiness of the student for the school program. The Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove also reserves the right to permanently dismiss children from the program if at any time their behavior becomes aggressive towards another child or teacher or becomes unduly disruptive to the classroom.

SNACKS AND LUNCHESES

Parents are responsible for providing a nutritious snack and lunch. Independence is one of our main goals at school. Please pack a snack and lunch that allows your child as much independence as possible in opening and unpacking. Suggestions are:

- Fruits-peeled and cut if needed
- Vegetables
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Whole grain crackers
- Breads-whole grain, fruit, berry, nut
- Yogurt
- Granola
- Cheese

We ask that you keep sweets and special treats at home or kept in the car for after school.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Each day, parents or authorized persons are required to sign (legal signature) "in" upon arrival and "out" upon removal from the school.

We cannot release the child to anyone under the age of 16 or to any person who is not listed as an authorized pickup. Please notify the Director of any complications surrounding the custody of your child.

If there is a change in who will need to pick up your child, please notify the school. It will need to be determined if this is a "one-time" change or if this person is to be added to the authorized pickup list. I.D. will be required from anyone unknown to the staff. Please remember this is for your child's protection.

OBSERVERS

Parents with children enrolled in the school are welcome to enter the school at any time.

If you would like to come for an observation to better understand the Montessori Methods and see your child's progress, please call to make an appointment for a time that will work best for you and optimize your time in the classroom. Observers to the classroom are asked to allow the children to continue their work undisturbed. This is the best way for you to see how the classroom works.

Observers who do not have children enrolled in the school, such as prospective parents, are also welcome, however they must call the school in advance for an appointment and will not be allowed to observe without an appointment. This is for the safety and best interests of the children enrolled in our school.

GROUND RULES

The ground rules of the Montessori classroom are to protect the right of the individual. Students have the right to concentrate without interruption, and children in the classroom observe the following classroom ground rules:

- Walking in the classroom will help encourage careful movement across the room.
- Children are not required to share their work or space with another child.
- Students select a material to use from the shelf and takes it to a suitable table, floor, and/or other designated workspace.
- Students are free to use the material as long as they like as long as it is treated with respect.
- After using the material, students return it to its place on the shelf, in the same condition in which it was found, for the next student to use.
- The children restore the environment, clean up spills and messes, put rugs away, and push in chairs, etc. after each activity.
- We do not do for a child what they can do for themselves.
- Quiet voices, "inside voices", help everyone concentrate without disturbance.

To maintain an atmosphere that is most conducive to learning and to respect each child's right to work free from interruption, these ground rules need to be followed by all of the children, teachers, and visitors to our classroom.

ABSENCES

Please call before school if your child will be absent or late. This courtesy will help the staff in preparing the classroom for the day.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We believe all children should feel safe at school, and children are taught that they cannot engage in actions that hurt themselves, others, or the school. Safety is always our priority, especially for our outside play. We use positive, proactive statements such as "Please walk safely to get your lunch." instead of "Stop running!"

We encourage the children to work out their differences with each other. When needed we will help mediate their disagreements, showing them how to talk to each other to resolve their problem. Children are discouraged from "tattling" and encouraged to give their friend a chance

to right the situation. Many disagreements and hurt feelings come from misunderstood intentions. Disagreements are *not* settled by forcing a child to say “I’m sorry.”

Here is an example of a disagreement and how it would be handled.

Situation: When putting away his work, Aaron unknowingly hits Beatrice with his mat. Beatrice becomes upset and tells a teacher Aaron hit her.

If the teacher only comforts Beatrice, Beatrice is not learning how to handle future problems. If the teacher decides to jump in and prematurely punish Aaron, then that resolution is unfair to him.

Instead, the teacher can work with Beatrice to help her talk with Aaron. Beatrice could start with the statement “Aaron, you hit me with your mat.” Since Aaron did not realize this at the time, he may become defensive and upset, “No I didn’t!” This is an important teaching moment. By helping Aaron understand that he did accidentally hit Beatrice, his response to Beatrice can change to “I’m sorry Beatrice. I didn’t know I hit you with my mat. Are you alright?” He may offer a hug or a tissue for her tears. Beatrice has learned to speak up for herself and knows how she can handle a future problem with a friend. She has been shown how to give a friend the opportunity to right a situation and by doing that has had her injury acknowledged. Beatrice can now thank Aaron for his *sincere* apology, and move on with her day.

At some time, all children exhibit behavior that needs correcting. However, not all children can be disciplined the same way due to age, the frequency of the behavior, length of time spent in the environment, and child’s personality. The main points used in disciplining a child at Montessori Children’s House of Lemon Grove are:

- A child must have an understanding of what behavior is acceptable before being expected to follow that behavior.
The school rules are explained to the children, many times with the reasoning for that rule, as they learn the school expectations and rules.
- A child must be able to follow the rules.
As they grow in age, the children also grow in their ability to follow the school rules.
- Behavioral choices lead to consequences.
The goal for giving consequences is to teach a lesson that leads to positive choices.
- It encourages self-examination, accepting responsibility for ones’ actions, the ability to learn from mistakes, and the development of an inner voice of self-control.
- Consequences give children the message that they are capable of taking responsibility for problems and can handle them.

Spanking, hitting, slapping, shaking, verbal or emotional abuse are **not** permitted in this school.

Working for a child's success is an important part of classroom management, and that includes anticipating a child's behavior. For instance, a teacher could make sure that a child who pokes others during circle-time sits closer to her, so she can simply put a hand on the child’s knee as a reminder to correct their behavior. Or a teacher could quietly have the children who are

waiting in line follow her actions like hands-on head, touching toes, arms up in the air. The children are occupied with something fun while they wait their turn and will be less likely to bother each other. Moving children closer to a teacher, reminding children of the rules before starting an activity, helping them express themselves with their words to voice their feelings, and acknowledging improved behavior are some ways we discipline the children.

If a child continues a hurtful or dangerous behavior, they will be separated from the group until they can control their actions. A teacher will sit near them, and when they feel they are ready, the teacher will help them return to the group after first talking about the situation and reminding them of the rules. The teachers will help them make amends (if needed) to any friend they might have hurt with their actions or words. We do not use the term “time out.”

HEALTH CARE POLICIES

Covid-19: The health policies listed will be adjusted as needed at the direction of the CDC, State of California, and San Diego County Health. Since the regulations for Covid-19 change frequently, the specifics will not be detailed here. Parents will be informed of Covid-19 policies and procedures changes.

Please do not send your child to school if they are sick!

A child with the following symptoms will NOT be admitted to the school until:

- Fever: temperature normal for at least 24 hours without medication
- Vomiting: symptom-free for at least 24 hours
- Diarrhea: symptom-free for at least 24 hours
- Open sores: draining stops, or scab forms

These symptoms may require a doctor’s visit before the child returns:

- Earache: with medication if appropriate
- Sore throat: with medication if appropriate or if no infection
- Rash: with medication if appropriate or Doctor approval
- Red, watery, draining eyes: with medication if appropriate or if no infection
- Severe cough: when symptoms subside or Doctor approval

Montessori Children’s House of Lemon Grove reserves the right to exclude a child from the school for additional symptoms. If an illness develops during the day, a parent will be called to pick up the child early. This is in the best interest of the child and/or the other children in the school.

Please report contagious diseases immediately so that we can send notice of exposure to parents of your child’s classmates. Common childhood illnesses that require notification and isolation from school are:

- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Head Lice

MEDICATIONS

Occasionally medications need to be administered at school. To protect all parties involved, the following procedures MUST be completed before any medications will be administered to your child:

1. Completed Medical Release Form.
2. Medication must be in an original, childproof pharmacy container, clearly labeled with the child's name and appropriate dosage required.
3. Medication and Medical Release Form must be handed to a staff member.

Medications will be stored in the medication box in the refrigerator and must be taken home at the end of each day.

TELEPHONE CALLS and COMMUNICATIONS

When class is in session, we will not be able to answer a phone call. Enrolled parents will be provided with Ms. Denise's cell phone number to use for texts. We will return phone calls as soon as possible.

Notices, newsletters, and reminders for parents will be posted and/or placed in the child's cubby.

Parents should bring any concerning matters to our attention through verbal communication, notes, emails, or telephone calls or messages.

Sometimes a complicated or private matter may require more involvement from the staff or parents than classroom management and work schedule time allows. A meeting may be requested or a telephone call made to resolve or inform staff or parents of these matters.

EMERGENCIES

Our staff has made every effort to ensure your child's safety. All staff members have CPR and First Aid training. Safety checks of the school and equipment are made on an ongoing basis. The playground and classroom are continuously monitored. However, accidents do occur.

- Minor accidents will receive prompt attention from staff members.
You will receive an accident report if the accident caused injury to your child.
- In case of a serious injury, parents will be called after the child receives first aid. If necessary, the parents may need to pick up the child.
- In an emergency, paramedics will be called first, then the parents or emergency contacts.

ADDRESS and TELEPHONE CHANGES

Please notify the school immediately of any changes of address and/or phone numbers.

TOYS and SHARING

Please do not bring toys to school as they are often a distraction and may be lost or damaged.

Items reinforcing a particular unit of study or reflecting a special time in a child's life are welcomed for sharing.

CLOTHING

Your child's clothing should be easy to put on and take off to allow them independence when going to the bathroom. Children will be playing & running outside, doing art projects, and eating snacks and lunch while at school. Every effort is made to help keep your child clean, but accidents happen. Please do not send your child in their best clothes. In case of accidents, an extra set of clothing will be kept at school.

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL

Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove is not affiliated with any religious organization. All faiths are respected and welcomed. Discussion of any religious matters will be from an educational point of view, usually stemming from different holiday celebrations.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Holidays are celebrated from a cultural point of view. If your child comes from a cultural background that has a different holiday celebration, please contact the Director so your child will be able to share the event with the class. Some holidays celebrated are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukah, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter.

DISASTER DRILLS

Fire and earthquake drills are conducted 4 times a year to familiarize your child with emergency procedures. If a crisis should ever happen that requires us to move to a safe location, our temporary relocation site will be Monterey Heights Elementary School at 7550 Canton Drive.

ADDITIONS

This parent handbook has been made to present the policies of Montessori Children's House of Lemon Grove. Every effort has been made to be as thorough as possible so that the policies of the school are clear and understood by all. However, all situations cannot be foreseen and addressed in this handbook. Any additions, deletions, or clarifications will be made at the discretion of the Director and, if needed, corrected in the handbook for the following year.