

# About Our School

## Welcome

Welcome to Children's House Montessori School! We understand how much time and effort went into selecting a school for your child and we are grateful and honored that you have selected us. We are committed to providing a nurturing learning environment for your child; one that welcomes and supports the whole family. You are joining a vibrant community of teachers, parents, and children who enjoy learning, exploring, and growing together.

This handbook is provided to acquaint you and others involved in your child's school life with the procedures needed to help our school run smoothly, and some basic philosophy and practices underlying our Montessori program. I hope it increases your comfort level at this beginning point, and serves to help you throughout the year when a question arises regarding an aspect of your child's school experience. Please become acquainted with the contents of this handbook and keep it handy for easy reference.

## Mission Statement

*We dedicate ourselves to the joyful task of helping children develop independence, self-discipline, and a respect for self, for others, and for the Earth. In partnership with parents, we strive to plant the seeds for a lifelong love of learning.*

## School History

Children's House Montessori School opened its doors in September 2003 with twelve students and two teachers. We quickly grew to eighteen students and three teachers before the end of the first year. Our location in the lower level of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston proved to be ideal for growing a small, nature-loving, close-knit school family. The second year brought changes as we grew to our full capacity of two classrooms. Since then we have maintained our two classrooms with

a full school capacity of forty students. Our program has developed over the years to include gardening in our National Wildlife Federation certified School Yard Habitat, regular nature hikes through the beautiful forest trails around our property, and special programs like Spanish and music. We have adopted The Virtues Project as a focal point of our Peace Curriculum and enjoy sharing this program with parents as part of our Parent Education Program. Over the years we have developed our playground into the natural “playscape” that it is today. We have completed the American Montessori Society consultation process, confirming that we are offering an authentic Montessori program. We continue to enjoy our small, close-knit community and are proud of all that we offer our students and their families.

## **Our Vision of the Human Potential**

At the heart of the Montessori philosophy is the teacher’s understanding of the nature of the child. Maria Montessori knew that the groundwork for intellectual, spiritual and moral development is laid in the first six years of life. The potential in each child to become an adult of peace and understanding was foremost in her mind; this is especially evident in the writings of her later years. Here at Children’s House, we too have a vision of the Montessori child, what we want children who spend three years in our caring environment to grow up to *be*. Collectively, we have developed our own Vision of the Human Potential:

*“If help and salvation are to come, they can only come from children, for children are the makers of men...”*

-Maria Montessori

We strive to assist the **children** to become the **adults** who...

...feel empowered to reach their fullest potential

...lead with strength and follow with respect

...tolerate difference and respect diversity

...appreciate all cultures

...preserve our environment

...think independently

...experience wonder

...promote peace

...care for others

...love to learn.

*May they know how to let their spirit sing!*

## Educational Philosophy

The Montessori philosophy is more than the materials in the classroom or the teacher giving lessons. It is an attitude towards children, a way of understanding their unique nature and allowing them to grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Although Dr. Maria Montessori is best known as an educator, she was a medical pioneer as well, having become, in 1896, the first female doctor in Italy. She began her work with children in psychiatric institutions in the poorest parts of Rome, but soon came to believe that the educational principles she was developing applied to all children. In 1907 she was approached by the owner of a tenement in San Lorenzo, Italy and asked to do something with unruly gangs of young children who would roam the neighborhood, destroying property and getting into trouble while their working parents weren't home. She was given a space for the children to gather and a few supplies. By 1910 her "Casa dei Bambini," or "Children's House," was known worldwide. The Montessori Method came to the United States in 1912 but grew slowly, hindered by two world wars and the stubbornness of Maria Montessori herself! However, rapid growth began in the early 1950's, largely through the efforts of Nancy McCormick Rambusch, who was moved by an increasing concern over the quality of American education.

### The Child

Like many other educational philosophers, Dr. Montessori believed that human beings pass through stages in their development. She called the first stage of life, from birth to six years, the stage of the *absorbent mind*. This is when children literally absorb impressions from their environment through the "pores" of all their senses as a sponge absorbs water. During this period, for example, children can learn their mother tongue easily, while an adult struggles to learn a foreign language. The opportunities available in the environment during the *absorbent mind* stage will therefore be major factors in determining the child's intellectual potential.

Dr. Montessori believed that during these early years of development, the child passes through *sensitive periods*, or times when he becomes attuned to acquiring particular knowledge or skills. He will work on gaining that knowledge or skill with an interest and concentration he can never again display for that particular kind of work. For example, a 3-year-old's desire for order in his environment and need for a daily routine is his sensitive period for Order manifesting itself. Because the child learns more easily during these sensitive periods, Dr. Montessori developed specific *didactic* (learning) *materials* designed to correspond to these *sensitive periods* and to meet their needs.

Recent advances in child development have taught us the importance of respecting each child as an individual. *Respect for the child* was key to Dr. Montessori's philosophy a century ago, and still is today. She advocated respect for the child's individuality by allowing freedom of choice of activity within a specially *prepared*

*environment*, a natural and beautiful environment created to suit the nature of the child. The prepared environment allows each child the freedom to learn and develop at his own pace, according to his own capacities. Since the child chooses his own work, he is never pushed into something for which he is not ready or bored by something too elementary for him. In our classroom, we attempt to create a non-competitive environment where the child feels at home and can work according to his own tempo and unique nature. The teacher prepares the environment to meet the specific and ever-changing needs of the children in it. We respect the child's inner rhythm when we allow *repetition* of activities and give him the time to work at his own pace. Only the child knows when he has satisfied his need for that activity, or has absorbed it. When we "follow the child," as Dr. Montessori urged, we have the best chance of nurturing the child's natural curiosity and love for knowledge.

*Independence* is another cornerstone in a Montessori classroom. Independence is encouraged at every turn, whether it is putting on one's own coat, choosing one's own work, or cleaning up after oneself at the snack table. Each small step towards independence builds confidence, self-esteem, and a positive self-concept.

## **The Environment**

Dr. Montessori believed that learning is accomplished by the individual himself. The child learns by means of the materials and his own active experience with them. He also learns from others in the environment. Each Montessori classroom has an age range of three years, which allows older children to teach the younger ones and provides the younger ones with a model for future learning. The teacher prepares the environment and gives the child lessons on how the materials are used, guiding the child through a progression of the activities in each curriculum area of the environment. Given the minimum necessary stimulation to inspire interest in the materials, the child begins to manipulate, discover, and learn for himself.

Exposure to the physically and mentally prepared environment causes balanced behavior to develop. As the child becomes absorbed in meaningful work that he chooses himself and which thus meets his needs, he works with continued concentration and inner satisfaction. When we see this in a single child, we call it *inner discipline*. When we see it in a whole classroom, we call it *normalization*. It is truly an impressive sight to see children working together peacefully, helping each other, sharing and caring for one another.

"The hand is the chief teacher of the child," said Dr. Montessori. Montessori classrooms are the epitome of the "hands-on" experience for the child. Children learn best by doing, and Dr. Montessori's *didactic materials* are designed to achieve sensory, motor, and intellectual development through a graduated system of learning in which children master simple, concrete concepts before progressing to the abstract. This can be seen in the classroom in several ways. Within the curriculum areas of the environment, children begin in the concrete areas of Practical Life and Sensorial, and progress to the more abstract areas of Math and Language; within each curriculum area of the classroom, the children begin with the most simple lessons, and progress to the most difficult; and for each piece of material, there often

is a simple and a more complex version of use. Many of the materials isolate one fundamental quality, such as color or dimension, so that the child learns to discern individual qualities in an object. Many of the materials are self-correcting, which lets the child see his mistakes and correct them without fear of making an error. Many of the materials are for self-discovery and do not require a lesson from the teacher; this encourages children to become independent of adults in seeking knowledge. Children have the freedom to choose and repeat any lesson they have been given, which allows them to satisfy their own desire to learn.

### **The Teacher**

The role of the teacher in the classroom is manifold. Her most important job is to foster a kind of learning that satisfies the child's need to learn for its own sake, not to please others or receive praise. She is trained to observe carefully, to know the different needs of her children and to provide a properly prepared environment for the children's maximum growth. She demonstrates the correct use of the materials and guides the child without interfering with his experience. She ensures that each child progresses through the activities of each curriculum area in the classroom. She sets limits, encourages the hesitant child, diverts the child who has chosen work too difficult, and keeps enthusiasm alive. She is there when needed, but "invisible" when not needed. In other words, she follows the child.

Dr. Montessori believed that learning is individual -- each child is encouraged to learn for himself -- and that children are motivated to learn by a natural curiosity and a love for knowledge. Therefore, early childhood education should cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn -- to teach him *how* to learn. The Montessori Method develops a lifelong love of learning in each and every child.

### **Religious Affiliation**

Children's House Montessori School is not affiliated with a religion; we do not teach any religious concepts in our curriculum. Holidays, religious or otherwise, are celebrated in a nonsectarian way, with the usual "American" flair, such as Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. We also might light a menorah and play the dreidel game at Hanukkah, and learn about Chinese New Year with a dragon dance. We discuss the fact that people in our country celebrate certain holidays one way, and people in other countries have holidays different from ours that they celebrate as well. Families that have traditional or cultural holidays from other countries are welcome to share them with the class, too. It is our way of honoring the diversity of our families, and a chance to show the children that all people are alike, and different, in many ways.

Each classroom enjoys a peace ceremony on occasion: lighting a candle, singing a song, or sharing ideas about peaceful ways to live with one another. In 2014 we installed a Peace Pole on our playground. Peace Poles are visual reminders of

peace that can be found all over the world. We enjoy using the amphitheater-like space for peace ceremonies and other activities. We feel this helps the children learn to take care of each other in a loving way. A further explanation of our peace curriculum can be found in Chapter 3.

## General Information and Licensing

Children's House Montessori School is a proprietary school operated by Children's House Montessori School of Reston, Inc. The corporation is owned by Keturah and Henry Collins. The corporation's responsibility is to ensure that Children's House Montessori School provides the highest quality Montessori experience for children of the local community between the ages of three to six years. We offer a half-day, school-day, and a full-day Montessori program, and are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30.

Children's House is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. The *Code of Virginia* requires the Child Day-Care Council to adopt standards for certain child day centers. The purpose of the Licensing Standards is to protect children who are separated from their parents or guardians during a part of the day by ensuring that the activities, services, and facilities of centers are conducive to the well-being of children, and by reducing risks in the child-care environment. Where "Licensing Standards" are mentioned throughout this document, they are the standards put forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Questions or comments regarding licensing can be sent to:

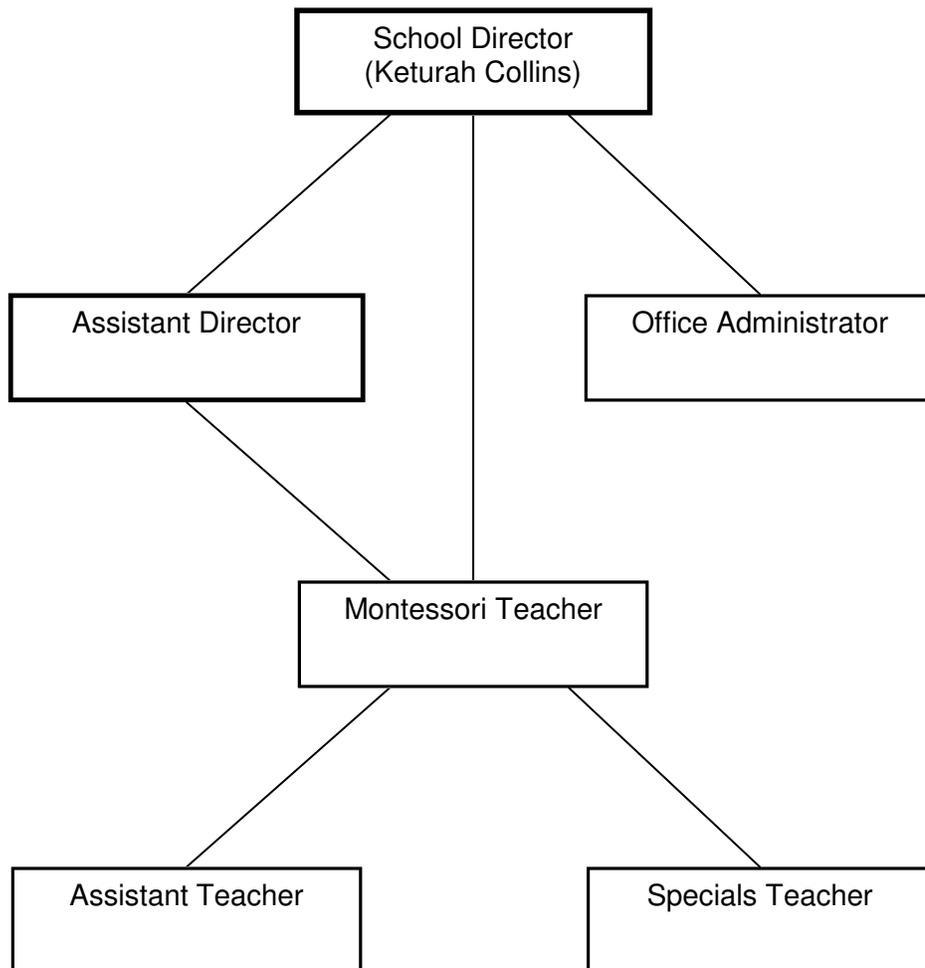
Virginia Department of Social Services  
Division of Licensing Programs  
3701 Pender Dr., Suite 125  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 934-1505 1-800-543-7545

Children's House is a full member of The American Montessori Society, and is a member of The National Association for the Education of Young Children and The Virginia Council for Private Education.

## Children's House Organizational Chart

Corporation: Children's House Montessori School of Reston, Inc.

Owners: Keturah and Henry Collins





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# Enrollment and Financial Information

## Admissions Procedure

Children's House Montessori School encourages diversity in its school community by admitting students of any race, religion, nationality and ethnic origin. Acceptance into our program is based on the child's readiness and willingness to receive instruction and to learn. Children must be toilet-trained.

We maintain a waiting pool of applicants whose admission is based on the proper age and gender needed for class balance. Siblings of current or former CHMS students and Montessori transfer students have priority in our waiting pool.

## Tuition and Fees

In addition to the Montessori instruction, our monthly tuition payment includes all special classes, materials, field trips, in-house performances and other activities that come up during the year.

**Tuition Payments** - Contracts are signed and payments are based on a ten-month school year from September to June. For the convenience of our families, payments can be made in the Annual Payment Plan (1 payment), or a Monthly Payment Plan (10 installments). If the monthly option is chosen, each month's tuition is the same amount.

**Application Fee / Reapplication Fee** - a \$50 non-refundable annual fee is assessed for new students and when new contracts are signed by current parents for the next year.

**Enrollment Fee / Reenrollment Fee** - a non-refundable fee of \$250 is due annually upon acceptance of each new and returning student and reserves your child's place in the classroom.

**Returned Check Fee** - \$25 fee for each returned check.

**Late Pick-up Fee** - \$1 per minute, calculated by the clock at the sign-in desk, for each minute that you are late picking up your child. At the discretion of the lead staff on duty and under reasonable circumstances we will extend a grace period of five to ten minutes. Please pay the staff on duty at the time of your arrival.

**Withdrawals** - Under exceptional circumstances, the withdrawal of your child will be accepted under the following procedure: a) Written notice of not less than 30 days will be submitted to the School. b) A termination fee equal to one month's tuition will be paid prior to the child's last day of school. c) All fees paid upon acceptance of the enrollment contract will be forfeited.

**Temporary Withdrawals** - If your child does not attend school for illness, vacation, or any other reason, tuition payments are still required to hold your child's space in the classroom.

## Children's Records

According to the Virginia Department of Social Services, the following documents must be on file at the school before your child can attend:

- Application
- Transportation Form
- Emergency Information Form
- Physical and Immunization Form with Physical Exam and Immunization Information Sheet attached
- Sick Child Compliance/Identity Verification Form
- Infection Control Policy
- Permissions and Agreements Form
- Enrollment Contract
- Annual Update of Important Information

All school records pertaining to children will be kept confidential and viewed by school personnel on a need-to-know basis. Parents have the right to review, comment, and release information from their child's records at any time.

An annual update of important information will be conducted each year. It is the parents' responsibility to keep all forms updated with home and work phone numbers, addresses for work and home, and emergency contacts and other medical information. These forms are necessary to meet licensing requirements from the Virginia Department of Social Services. If you move, change jobs, change phone numbers, change emails, change insurance companies, or your child receives vaccinations or other health updates, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate corrections or give you a new form to fill out as

necessary. The Virginia Department of Health requires that all kindergarteners be up to date with their booster shots and immunizations by their sixth birthday. The office will copy your child's immunization form to keep on file and provide you with the original to be updated by the doctor. Please return the original as soon as possible so our records will be current.

When filling out emergency and transportation forms, please list as many emergency numbers and pick-up people as needed to cover all potential situations. Include your emergency contacts on your transportation form.

The law requires persons enrolling a child in a school program to provide information regarding the child's previous childcare and school attendance and to present proof of the child's identity and age. This proof may include a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, notification of birth (hospital, physician or midwife record) baptismal record, school record from a public school in Virginia, or certification by a principal or designee of a public school in the U. S. that a certified copy of the child's birth record was previously presented.

## **Federal Tax I. D. Number**

The School's Federal Tax I. D. Number is 65-1169584.





# Your Child at School

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## Our Program

At Children’s House Montessori School, our program is based on the philosophy of Maria Montessori, who felt that the purpose of formal education was to “learn how to learn.” This means that we:

- Allow your child to make choices for his own learning, thus encouraging independence and self-initiative.
- Respect each child’s uniqueness and in turn inspire each child to develop in his own way, to his fullest potential.
- Provide an atmosphere that nurtures an early enthusiasm for learning and promotes your child’s work ethic.
- Allow plenty of uninterrupted time for the children to work with the materials in their own unique way, independently or in small groups.
- Foster each child’s curiosity and creativity by empowering him to ask questions, try new ideas, and think for himself.

Children begin at the age of three and remain in the same class, with the same peers and teachers, for three years. A sense of “family” is quickly formed in this safe and nurturing environment. As children progress through the three-year cycle, younger children aspire to imitate the older ones in their work and play, while older children have the opportunity to teach their well-learned skills to the younger ones. The third year, the kindergarten year, brings together all that the children have learned in this unique cycle of learning.

Our dynamic learning environment addresses all your child’s developmental needs: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Children participate in “group time” activities each day, fostering a feeling of community and encouraging cooperation. They receive individual instruction on the materials in the classroom throughout the extended work period. They spend time outside each day, and younger children spend part of their afternoon in peaceful rest. We create a non-competitive environment where children are always encouraged to do their best. Each child is measured only against his own progress. We encourage children to complete their activities rather than compete with others.

We understand that children are motivated from within by a natural curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. Our joyful atmosphere encourages that natural curiosity to develop into a lifelong love of learning.

## The Montessori Curriculum

The Montessori classroom is divided into areas of study; some of them are traditional, such as language and math, and some are uniquely Montessori, such as practical life and sensorial. Each curriculum area has a wide range of activities available to meet the needs of the very young to the oldest. It is carefully prepared each day to be orderly, complete, and beautiful. It is arranged from easiest to hardest in a left-to-right order, helping children begin to take a left-to-right orientation for later reading. Each activity invites the child to learn what he or she is ready to learn at that moment. Some activities will be used by the youngest in a concrete, sensorial way, with the child comparing and contrasting objects, and will be used again in a more abstract way by the older children. The activity is worked on a rug on the floor, or on a table, and again is laid out in a left-to-right orientation.

**Practical Life** · Skills learned in this area of the classroom lay a foundation for the rest of the curriculum. Socialization skills and the work cycle are introduced, and fine and gross motor skills are practiced. The lessons teach responsibility for oneself, others, and the environment. They encourage independence and promote the development of a sense of order. Some examples of these lessons are: spooning and pouring, scrubbing, polishing, sewing, food preparation, and grace and courtesy lessons.

**Sensorial** · Sharpening the senses by comparing and contrasting activities is the main objective of these lessons. This is done through matching, grading, and sequencing objects. These lessons form the foundation for mathematical, musical and scientific studies. Examples in the Sensorial area are: matching sounds or smells, matching or grading colors, grading by size, and learning plane and solid shapes.

**Math** · Lessons in this area begin with the very concrete and move to the more abstract. A variety of objects are manipulated to learn basic number concepts. Some examples are: sandpaper numerals for learning the symbols 1 – 9, the spindle box for understanding the concept of 0, the teens board and tens board for matching quantity and symbol, and the golden beads for understanding the decimal system, learning place value, and performing mathematical operations.

**Language** · Our language materials are phonetically based and will help your child develop the skills needed for verbal communication, reading and writing. Examples in this area include games that provide opportunities for speaking, sandpaper letters for learning the sounds of the alphabet, movable alphabet for constructing words and sentences, many opportunities for reading, and metal insets of design for perfecting pencil grip.

**Cultural** · These areas of the classroom connect your child to the outside world. Topics are explored through games, songs, stories, and hands-on activities. We use our five senses for discovering the wonders of the earth and the diversity of its people.

- **Geography** · We study the world's seven continents by using globes, puzzle maps, and cultural items from the continents, and by providing opportunities to taste foods, to dance to music, and to enjoy folk tales. We try to understand the similarities and the differences in the way plants, animals, and people adapt to the ecosystem in which they live.
- **Science** · Through observation, experimentation, and research, we explore the worlds of physical and natural science. In zoology we study the five classes of vertebrate animals and the invertebrate world's insects and arachnids. In botany we learn about trees, seeds, and flowers with gardening activities and observations on our playground. Our location at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Reston, an accredited Backyard Wildlife Habitat as certified by the National Wildlife Federation, is a perfect place for our weekly walks by the stream to explore nature.
- **Art** · The world of art is opened to the children through a comprehensive, process-oriented program. The easel is always available for mixing colors and self-expression. Concepts such as primary, secondary, complementary, and cool and warm colors are taught with a variety of media available to the children. Art from different lands is shared and displayed so children can appreciate other cultures. Works from the world's famous artists are shared each month, along with the opportunity to reproduce some of their best known pieces.
- **Peace** · We understand that there is peace and goodness in every child, but not all children have the words and deeds to give outward expression to their inner peace. We feel it is the responsibility of all the adults in our environment to encourage peaceful thoughts and actions. Each classroom has a peace corner, a place where children can go to experience peace by smelling a flower, holding a beautiful smooth stone, or looking in a mirror to find their inner peace. We help the children appreciate the diversity of the world with stories and activities that allow children to compare their skin, hair, and eye colors to each other and to things in nature. Our children's garden is planted and maintained by the children. Here we can watch the cycles of life from seed to flower or chrysalis to butterfly. We can truly get in touch with the earth as we turn the compost bin, till the garden for planting, and discover the benefits of worms for healthy soil. And finally, the children look forward to our circle time Peace Ceremony. We sing, move, and listen to peaceful music. Sometimes we use our calming stones to help our bodies lay very quiet and still. We practice walking carefully, touching gently, and feeling with our heart. At Children's House, we feel genuine peace comes from within, and starts with the children. We must nurture that peace through word and deed, every day.

## Our Outdoor Space

We lovingly refer to our playground as a Natural Playscape. It was designed by Natural Resources Design, an ecologically focused landscape design firm, along with collaboration from our landlord, UUCR, and the children attending Children's House at the time of the design. We have spent several years adding natural elements to the playground, such as a wet and dry sand pit, a tree house inspired deck, and a peace pole and amphitheater. The children love building with the tree cookies, putting on performances on the tree house deck, dancing around the peace pole, and making water and mulch concoctions in their buckets.

In 2004, we worked with the National Wildlife Federation to turn our playground space into a Schoolyard Habitat. We worked hard to make sure our playground had all the essentials of a habitat for wildlife that live in our deciduous forest. Food, shelter, water, and a place to raise young were added, and are maintained through our gardening work. Both classrooms have a garden they maintain outside their classroom door. We work in the fall and the spring to clean up the garden, plant flowers, mulch and compost to learn about the cycles of life, both plant and animal. The children love watering the garden when playing on the playground.

Our Earthkeepers program helps the children learn about the earth and about being responsible for the earth in our everyday lives. We talk with the children about what the earth gives to us, and how we can give back and take care of the earth. The four areas of concentration are Respect, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. We sing songs and read stories, say our Earthkeeper Promise, discover the wonders of the earth on our nature hikes, and of course feed the birds and squirrels on our playground. It fits in nicely with our gardening program, whereby we maintain the gardens outside our classroom doors by weeding, mulching, and watering the flowers and plants we have planted there.

## The Virtues

For many years now we have been using a program called *The Virtues Project*, founded in 1991 by three concerned individuals who made a commitment to do something to counteract the rising violence among families and youth. Linda Kavelin-Popov, her husband Dr. Dan Popov and her brother, John Kavelin researched the world's diverse sacred traditions and they discovered something simple and profound. At the heart of all spiritual traditions are 360 virtues, described as the essence of the human spirit and the content of our character. A guide containing fifty-two of these universal virtues was published to help parents bring out the best in their children and in themselves.

The Virtues Project is not about the practices or beliefs of any one religion. It is sourced in the teachings about virtues found in the sacred traditions of all cultures. Its purpose is to support all people, both those who are religious and those who are not, to awaken the virtues of their character. Respect, purposefulness, joyfulness,

determination, enthusiasm, and tact are but a few of the virtues we share with the children every day by reading about a chosen virtue, discussing its meaning with examples and stories, and repeating the affirmation. The children look forward to the daily "Virtue Pick" and are quite knowledgeable about the different Virtues, which are discussed daily at circle time. It is quite exciting to see young children able to talk at length about concepts like compassion, gentleness, patience, and perseverance and actually know what they're talking about! We are so happy that these qualities have become "real" to the children and that they are able to understand and, better yet, *use* these Virtues on a daily basis. The books *The Family Virtues Guide* and *The Virtues Project: Educator's Guide* are available for parents to borrow through our Parent Resources Library.

## The Kindergarten Year

An enormous amount of learning can take place in the kindergarten year in an environment as rich and varied as ours. Kindergarteners are sophisticated. They deserve a sophisticated learning environment where they can blossom and grow to their fullest potential. During the first two years your child is at Children's House, he develops the beginnings of an understanding of mathematical and language concepts presented to him. But it is the third year, the kindergarten year, when these concrete experiences become internalized. This is when it all comes together.

Because our classroom has the traditional 3-year grouping of a true Montessori school, the kindergarten children become leaders in the classroom. They take on responsibilities of helping younger children, leading discussions, and in many ways running the classroom. Their self-esteem soars as their confidence in themselves increases. Everything they learned in their first two years with us falls into place.

Montessori kindergarteners are highly motivated. They are learning to be organized, to focus, and to begin to develop a work ethic that will last their whole life. They are self-directed, independent learners, discovering how to learn while developing a love of learning.

Our kindergarten curriculum includes many concepts not taught in other kindergarten classrooms. The children pursue an understanding of art appreciation with a simple overview of the history of art, and study of individual artists and their work. The children enjoy learning about many famous artists through activities such as painting HUGE flowers like O'Keeffe or creating their own "cutouts" like Matisse. Their studies culminate in a field trip to The National Gallery of Art to see the "real thing." Additional math topics of fractions, measurement, money, temperature, and time are also introduced.

Our kindergarten curriculum includes handwriting practice, poetry and short story writing, sewing lessons, and lengthy nature hikes complete with sketchbooks and pencils. We take three field trips each year to compliment our work in the classroom. The highlight of the year is our Kindergarten Art Show, where the children display the

artwork they have created while learning about famous artists from history. Our weekly art class is a favorite for children and teachers alike.

## Your Commitment

The Montessori program, whether at our school or any other true Montessori school, is most successful when there is a three-year commitment from families whose children begin as three-year olds. The program simply depends upon the three-year age span to achieve the optimum learning experience. While we do not require parents to sign a contract for three years, we do expect families to choose Children's House because they believe in the Montessori philosophy, understand the advantages of staying through the kindergarten year, and are willing to commit to a partnership with us to provide their child the best possible beginning to their school career.

## The Work Cycle

Being a scientist, Dr. Montessori spent much time observing children in their activity in the classroom. As she began to know the children in her first Casa dei Bambini, she noticed a pattern, or cycle of work the children developed for themselves. If the children were allowed to work through this cycle, she noticed that they were capable of concentrating on a specific activity for long periods of time. The work cycle went something like this:

- The children began their day by choosing something familiar and relatively simple, reconnecting themselves with the environment and confirming their competencies.
- The next piece of work chosen was more difficult, and the child was able to concentrate for a longer period of time.
- This was followed by a period of restlessness, or "false fatigue" when the child had difficulty choosing work and settling down.
- After the "false fatigue" came the most productive period, when the child chose his most difficult piece of work, was able to concentrate the longest, and learned the most from the task. Montessori called this the "great work period."
- After the "great work period" the children again chose familiar, often relaxing work to finish the work cycle.

Children today move through this same work cycle. An uninterrupted span of time, at least two hours, is needed for the work cycle to complete itself. This is why arriving on time is so important and why we try to minimize interruptions as much as possible. There are some days when it is obvious that the children are in the middle of the

“great work period” and we try very hard not to interrupt that time, even if it means altering the schedule a little for that day. Children who arrive after the others have begun this work cycle sometimes have difficulty settling into the work cycle themselves.

## Adjustment to School

Most students adjust to school with ease. For others, it takes a little more time. Here are some hints to make the adjustment easier for you and for your child:

1. Parents should be positive about the new school and the transition you expect your child to make. Comments should be upbeat. Please avoid remarks such as “Mommy will miss you all day long,” or “I know you will be frightened, but you’ll be ok.” Children pick up on your attitude and feelings very quickly.
2. The week before school begins, we host an “Ice-Cream Social” that everyone is invited to attend. This is a fun, casual opportunity for you and your child to stop in, meet all of the teachers, take a look around the classrooms, and find your child’s cubby and backpack hook. We eat ice-cream, play on the playground, and meet new friends.
3. It is not necessary to carry your child into school, even if he or she is only three years old. Allowing your child to walk from the car into the school shows your child you know he can be independent, that you are confident he will be fine.
4. After signing your child in, say good-bye to your child by the doorway, and allow your child to enter the classroom independently. We encourage the children to shake the teacher’s hand, giving a boost to their confidence and self esteem. Some parents think they need to hand their child off to an adult in the classroom. When you do that, you say to your child that they are too little and cannot handle this situation alone. Some days are harder than others, especially at first, and occasionally extra hugs and kisses will be necessary, but we hope that most days your child feels comfortable enough to enter the room on their own, happy and confident, ready to start their day. It’s a good idea to make eye contact with a teacher in case there is something they wish to quickly discuss with you.
5. If your child has difficulty separating from you, you should still say good-bye, assure him you will be back at the designated time, smile and then leave. You may call to confirm that everything is OK. If it is not, we will call you. Some children just need a few minutes to get adjusted each day; if so, we will hold and comfort them, if that seems to be what they need. If there is a consistent problem with your child separating from you, we will work together to make the transition easier.

6. When you pick up your child, again be positive with comments that let your child know you did not worry about him. Tell the teacher when you expect to pick up your child, and then please be on time.

## Daily Schedule

We understand the importance of maintaining a fairly consistent schedule for the health and emotional well-being of your child. We use the schedule below every day, with changes occurring on special days such as holidays and in-house program days.

<p><b>8:00 – 11:00</b></p>	<p><b>Great Work Period</b> – Children spend this time working on individual activities at a table or on a rug on the floor. Snack is available until 10:30. There is something on every shelf for every child. Many activities require a lesson from the teacher before a child can use them. Others, such as puzzles, can be used without a lesson. A child who chooses an activity that is too difficult for him is offered something that better matches his ability.</p>
<p><b>11:00 – 1:00</b></p>	<p><b>Transition Activities</b></p> <p><b>Circle Time</b> – This group activity includes grace and courtesy lessons, songs, games, stories, or a lesson on something new in the classroom. Occasionally a Peace Ceremony will be held. Children help set the tables for lunch, tidy the classroom, water the plants and perform other chores.</p> <p><b>Outside Play</b> – Climbing on the play apparatus, sand play, and watering the garden are a few of the activities available on the playground. Part-Day Preschoolers are dismissed at 11:45.</p> <p><b>Lunch Time</b> – The children wash their hands, wait until all are seated before beginning, concentrate on manners and pleasant conversations at the table, take a taste of everything, pack up leftovers, throw away trash, and remain seated until everyone is finished and excused. After lunch, children help clean the tables and sweep the floor.</p> <p><b>Outside Play</b> – A second outdoor playtime usually occurs after lunch. In the event of rain or severe weather, we offer a combination of videos, movement activities, and games.</p>

<p><b>1:00 – 3:00</b></p>	<p><b>Separate Afternoon Activities Depending on Age</b></p> <p><b>Preschool</b> – Children go to the bathroom, find their “sleepy toy,” lie down on a mat, and listen to a story. Then we turn off the light, play soft music, and allow the children to rest, or fall asleep if their body dictates. They will return to their classroom by 2:30.</p> <p><b>Pre-kindergarten</b> – Children who are not yet five years old will rest quietly for 30 minutes, and then join the pre-kindergarten class to continue work begun in the morning. Children who are already five will begin work in the classroom. Children return to their classroom at 2:30.</p> <p><b>Kindergarten</b> – Children who are five years old by Sept. 30th, and are ready for the kindergarten experience, continue to work on the lessons that were begun in the morning; they also have lessons in geography, science, art appreciation, writing, and music. Children return to their classroom at 2:30.</p> <p>Afternoon circle takes place in each classroom at the end of this period, from 2:30 to 3:00.</p> <p>Children who are School-Day will be picked up in their classroom at 3:00.</p>
<p><b>3:00 - 5:30</b></p>	<p><b>After-School Fun</b> – Activities at this time can include outside play, snack, art activities, blocks, cars, and other traditional toys, and cooking.</p>
<p><b>5:30</b></p>	<p><b>End of Day</b> – All children should be picked up by this time.</p>

## Special Programs

Special classes are held once a week, from October through May, free of charge and during the regular school hours. These classes vary from year to year. In past years we have offered music, Spanish, nature hikes, movement and yoga. Children participate in the special classes on a rotating basis, all on the same day so as not to disrupt “the great work period” discussed earlier in this chapter. A current Specials Calendar will be provided at the start of each school year.

## Calendar

We use the Fairfax County Public Schools calendar during the academic year as a guideline for setting our holidays and teacher workdays. Student holidays are used for Parent/Teacher conferences, teacher training and workdays. In addition, school will be closed several afternoons during the year at 1:00 for staff meetings and

training. We offer a summer camp for 6 weeks, the dates to be determined each year in relation to the school year calendar. Please see the calendar on our website, [www.chmsreston.com](http://www.chmsreston.com), for these dates. We plan our calendar very carefully; however, unforeseen circumstances may require changes. We will attempt to give you as much advance notice as possible when a change is necessary.



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# Policies and Procedures

## Arrivals, Departures, and Transportation

**Arrival** · School begins at 8:30, with Full Day children arriving as early as 8:00. In order for your child to benefit fully from the program, have time for extended concentration during the “great work period,” and feel a part of the classroom environment and activities, he or she must be at school no later than 9:00. Those who arrive late can disrupt the classroom atmosphere, distract children already engaged in work, and can give your child the impression that what we do here at school is not important. Please make every effort to be at school by 9:00.

We strive to make our classrooms as peaceful and conducive to learning as possible. One of the ways we do this is by respecting the children’s need for concentration and quiet activity. You can help by acknowledging that the classroom is the children’s space, not a space intended for lots of adults. Children may already be involved in work when you arrive, and we would like to respect their need for a calm space in which to concentrate. Keeping “goodbyes” outside the classroom limits the amount of interruption that the children experience.

Lines at the entrance to the classrooms indicate the start of children’s space. When dropping-off please say goodbye to your child outside the classroom space (line) and let your child enter the classroom on his or her own. This procedure also encourages independence and builds a child’s self-esteem and feeling that “I’m big now!” as they enter the classroom, greet the teachers, shake their hand, and then get started on their day. We also ask that you encourage your child to shake a teacher’s hand upon arrival. This helps us keep track of who is in our care.

The first week or two may be difficult, and we will be glad to assist with the transition if necessary, but we prefer that children enter the classroom on their own and mom or dad say goodbye at the door. This reaffirms the independence we hope the children learn while at school.

Keep your goodbyes brief. If your child is hesitant to enter the classroom it is best to make the drop-off short, sweet, and to the point. Get a teacher’s attention if you think you’ll need a hand, then give your child a quick hug and a kiss, reassure them that you’ll be back to get them, and leave. When a parent lingers during an emotional drop-off or hands their child off to a teacher, it sends the message to the child that they are unsure about their decision to send them to school and that they (the child) have every reason to be worried. A quick goodbye tells the child that you are

confident in your choice and you know they'll be fine. You are welcome to call and check in on how they are doing if the drop-off was stressful or emotional, but rest assured that we will call you if we think there is a problem.

In an effort to keep our school community as healthy as possible, we ask that you have your child wash his or her hands upon arrival at school and before entering the classroom. They can do this after hanging up coats and backpacks and while you sign them in. We also encourage you to have them wash their hands before leaving, if they have not already done so. In addition, we have the children wash before lunch, after lunch if needed, after playing on the playground, after going to the bathroom, sneezing or coughing.

Please remember that one of the primary goals of Montessori education is to allow children to achieve independence. One of the ways you can do this is to refrain from carrying children into or out of school. Children should be walking in every day, preferably carrying their own lunch bag and cubby bag, and should be encouraged to do as much on their own as is possible. By not carrying your child you are sending the message that you trust them and respect their growing need for independence.

**Absence** - Please call us by 9:00 and let us know if your child will not be in school that day. If your child or anyone in your family is confirmed to be ill with a communicable disease, such as strep throat, pink eye, or the flu, please let us know immediately so that we can inform other parents and hopefully stop the spread of the disease.

**Sign-In and Sign-Out** - State regulations require parents to sign their child in and out of the school each time you enter or leave the building. This includes if you take your child out for lunch or a doctor's appointment. If someone other than a parent is picking-up or dropping-off, please tell them of our sign-in and sign-out procedures. In addition, children must be accompanied into the school by a parent; it is not considered a legal transfer of custody to drop them off without signing in.

**Access** - Our building is locked at all times, with parental access granted through your use of the door located on the west side of the building. A key pad is used to gain entrance, and a code will be provided at the beginning of each school year. We ask you to please not allow others to enter the building with you unless you know they are part of the school.

**Transportation** - Transportation of your child to and from school is the parent's responsibility. A transportation form, stating who is authorized to pick-up or drop-off your child, must be signed and in your child's file.

**Parking** - To ensure the safety of all those coming and going in the parking lot, we require that you park only in designated parking spaces. Please do not park in spaces designated for UUCR personnel or in front of the sidewalk by the dumpsters. Do not leave your car running or leave children unattended in your car while you are inside the school. Keeping your speed low and using extreme care when entering and exiting the parking lot is the safest practice for everyone. For safety reasons, please note that as you leave the parking area, we recommend that you do not make

a left turn onto Wiehle Avenue, but rather turn right and make a U-turn at Inlet Court or North Shore Drive.

**Departure** - Again, we ask the children to shake hands with the staff members present before they depart. This helps the staff keep track of the children, teaches politeness, and fosters self-esteem.

If someone other than the designated drivers on your transportation form will be transporting your child, you must write this information in the daily message book located on the sign-in desk. Other messages for any of the staff should be written in this book as well. These messages could include plans to pick up a child at a different time than normal or bring a child in late the next day, vacation plans and doctor's appointments. Please warn those picking up your child that they will be carded the first, and perhaps the second time (in case a different teacher is there) they come to the school. They should bring a piece of identification into the school with them. If, in an emergency, a parent calls and says someone not listed on the transportation form will be picking up their child, if we do not recognize that parent's voice, we will make a return call to the parent to confirm these arrangements. If no contact can be made to inform us of the change, we will not release the child.

**Part-Day Pick-up:** If your pick-up time is 11:45, please try and pick up a few minutes beforehand to avoid congestion in the hallway as the children come inside to wash hands. If you are past 11:45, your child will be waiting for you in front of the fish tank. There is a \$1 a minute fee after 12:00.

**Part-Day with Lunch Pick-up:** The best time to pick-up your child after lunch is 12:45 to avoid congestion as the children come in for their afternoon activities. If you are later than 1:00 your child will be waiting for you in front of the fish tank. A \$1 a minute fee will be charged after 1:00.

**School-Day Pick-up:** Children who stay for the School Day can be picked up in their own classroom between 2:45 and 3:00. If you are past 3:00, your child will be waiting for you in front of the fish tank. There is a \$1 a minute fee after 3:15.

**Full-Day Pick-up:** Pick-up time for Full-Day children is 5:30. The children and staff will either be playing on the playground or reading a story in the classroom. They will have already washed their hands and gathered their belongings from their cubbies. There is a \$1 a minute late fee after 5:30.

We really appreciate your efforts to be here on time. Our teachers, and your children, have had a long day and are ready to go home. There is an envelope on the wall inside the office door for late fees. If you do not have cash on hand at the time you pick your child up, please remember to pay the late fee the next day. We appreciate your courtesy in promptly paying late fees either at the time you arrive or the following day.

**Late Departure** -If you know you will be late, please call the school. This way, the staff can reassure your child as he or she waits. In the event that a child is not picked

up by ½ hour after closing, at 6:00, and an emergency contact cannot be made, in accordance with Department of Social Services regulations, we will notify DSS.

## Snow Policy

Children's House Montessori School follows Fairfax County Public Schools' (FCPS) lead for closures due to inclement weather or other emergencies. Occasionally we will alter our closing plans if it seems FCPS's closure does not apply to our situation.

- If FCPS opens 1 or 2 hours late – we will open at 10:00.
- If FCPS closes 1 or 2 hours early – we will close at 1:00.
- If FCPS cancels after-school activities – we will close at 3:00.
- If FCPS closes for the full day – we will be closed for the full day.

When a weather-related closing or delay occurs, we will post the information on our website, update the voicemail message, and send out an email to inform you of the plan. When an early closing is necessary, parents will be contacted by email and telephone where needed. Once an early closing has been announced, we expect everyone to make every effort to arrive at school as soon as possible.

## Birthdays

All birthdays are celebrated during our regular morning circle time (approximately 10:45). This ensures that all of the children in a class are included in a child's celebration as some children leave before lunch and cannot be included in afternoon celebrations. We ask parents to send in a birthday snack that will be eaten during the morning work period in lieu of the usual fruit and crackers that the school provides. Snacks should be healthy, low-sugar, and prepared in a way that makes it possible for children to serve themselves: for example, cheese and crackers, cups of yogurt, or fruit kabobs. We will send your child home with a piece of poster board a few days before his or her birthday. With your help, we ask that the children decorate a poster for their birthday that has a picture for each year of life and a few personal touches. The poster will be out for the rest of the class to see during the morning. At our circle time we will share the poster, the child will walk around a wooden sun for as many times as they are old, and we will sing "Happy Birthday." We keep the celebration simple and ask that you not send in balloons, party favors, or sugary snacks.

Although parents are invited to attend, we want to warn you that this will be a *short* event at the end of our regular circle time. If you are unable to attend, you can leave a camera with us and we'll take a picture or two! To ensure that your child's birthday snack is available to the children who arrive early in the day, we'll ask that you bring it in either the day before or by 8:30 on the day of the celebration. We cannot accept snacks with nuts, and there is a possibility other allergies exist in the classroom. Please talk to your child's teacher to select a snack that all of the children can enjoy.

We have put together a notebook of ideas for snacks that accommodate a variety of allergies. Please ask for it in the office.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, we ask the children not to discuss their own birthday plans at school, and we ask parents not to use the cubbies as a means of passing out invitations to private parties. You may obtain a class list from the office for mailing invitations.

## Field Trips

Field trips are a wonderful way to enrich your child's learning experience. Our calendar has a Family Field Trip scheduled for a Saturday or Sunday in the fall. These events are designed for families to meet together at a certain location to enjoy an activity together, such as apple picking or touring the zoo. In addition, we schedule bus trips to The National Gallery of Art, George Mason University Center for the Performing Arts, and Montgomery County Recycling Center for our kindergarten students as circumstances allow. A Permissions and Agreements Form must be on file before your child can attend a field trip. Children not permitted to go on a field trip must be kept at home that day. More information will be forthcoming as these events approach. On field trips scheduled during school hours, the staff will carry emergency information for each child and a First Aid kit, and will maintain the same level of supervision as in the classroom. All staff members carry cell phone for emergencies. Kindergarten parents are encouraged to attend field trips with their child as a chaperone. This is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your child outside of your normal daily activities. Children whose parents cannot attend will be paired up with another child's parent or a teacher for the duration of the field trip. Chaperoning a field trip is a serious commitment to the safety of all the children on the trip, and specific information about chaperone duties will be shared before we leave. The school carries liability insurance covering school activities. We appreciate your willingness to help as a chaperone on Kindergarten field trips.

In addition to off-site field trips for Kindergarteners, we will have in-house activities throughout the year such as puppet shows, Reptiles Alive, The Bat Lady, and a visit from Walker Nature Center. We plan our in-house activities around our curriculum calendar to compliment what we are already learning in the classroom. A unit of study on fish and oceans might be supplemented with a visit from Under the Sea, an educational outreach group that brings tanks with sea stars, seahorses, and even a puffer fish into our classroom for a closer look. And a performance by an African drummer and storyteller is in order when we study the continent of Africa.

## Clothing

While we have no uniform policy, we do insist that children wear clothing appropriate to school activities. We discourage fancy clothes and shoes that are impractical and could be soiled with paint or dirt from outside play. We do not allow holiday costumes, and discourage shirts with Spiderman or other cartoon characters as these distract the children and often cause inappropriate fantasy play in the classroom and on the playground. Practical clothing appropriate for the weather is important. We will be playing outside every day, so some dirt and sand are likely. Water accidents of all kinds can take place, and not just with the very young. Your child should be able to get in and out of his or her clothing independently. Belts and buckles are often difficult even for five-year-olds. Please have plenty of changes of clothes in your child's backpack so he or she will be comfortable throughout the day. A sweater or sweatshirt is a good idea during all kinds of weather as the classrooms can sometimes feel chilly. *Please* mark all clothing with your child's name, including underwear, shoes and the backpack itself.

Our playground has been expanded and enhanced to include more natural play features. The nature of the play space necessitates close-toed shoes at all time. Tennis shoes or leather shoes that either tie or Velcro are best. Children may not wear sandals, jellies or crocs as these types of shoes do not protect the feet nor give proper support for running and climbing.

In order to help your child become independent, help him pick out his clothes the night before. Allow plenty of time for dressing in the morning, and then check to see that all necessary items have been gathered before going out the door. This would include backpacks, mittens and hats, coats or sweaters. You can further encourage independence by expecting your child to carry his own backpack into school, and by allowing him to walk into school on his own.

We strongly discourage children from bringing "distracting stuff" to school. When items such as toys and jewelry are brought in, they can create a disturbance in the classroom. Children spend time at their cubbies looking at them, they bring their friends to their cubby to see them, and the possibility of losing them on the playground can be devastating. Please use your best judgment when you see random toys and stuff making their way out the door to school. If they don't fit the "Bringing in Items to Share" criteria, they are probably best left at home.

## Cubbies and Cubby Bags

Each child has a cubby located near the classroom entrance. This is where your child can store his personal belongings as well as work done during the day. You will also receive a cubby bag to transport lunch bags and work from the classroom to and from school. Checking them each day will give you a chance to look at their work and talk about their day. There will be many days that nothing comes home, especially for younger children, because much of what they do does not produce a result on a piece of paper.

## Outdoor Play

Children love to play outside. We feel running on the playground is one of the best gross-motor activities for children. Please be sure your child is properly dressed for the weather. We cannot honor requests to keep a child inside for playtime as there is not enough staff to watch children outdoor and indoors. If your child is ill and cannot play outside, he or she needs to be kept at home.

Our natural playground offers a wealth of opportunities for play and exploration. It offers a large sand pit for digging, logs for climbing on, rocks and tree cookies for carrying, stacking, and building with, a pump for incorporating water into play, and small trails for exploring. The old favorites are still there: water table, cups and bowls for making mulch pies, and buckets and shovels for digging. Teachers will be stationed at various points around the playground to ensure that the children are using the space safely. Please be sure to send your child to school in tennis shoes, sneakers, or all-terrain type shoes as these will help your child find his or her proper footing when climbing over logs or up onto stumps. The lower area is mostly cleared, but left purposefully 'rough' so as to allow for adventurous play and exploration

**Play Equipment Rules:** We have worked hard for several years to devise a set of rules for the play equipment that meet state licensing requirements, and allow for independence while maintaining safety. As you can imagine, these are difficult to balance at times! Please note the following rules. Returning children already know them and new children will learn them before long.

1. Only children 5 years and older are permitted to use the monkey bars.
2. Only kindergarten children are permitted to play on the higher portion of the "older half" of the play equipment.
3. Children who can climb on the lower level of the "older half" of the equipment unassisted can play there, but cannot go up the steps.
4. Children are not permitted to climb up the straight ladder, coil ladder, or either slide.
5. Children must sit down on the slides with feet first.
6. Children are not permitted to run up or down the slides.

These rules apply AT ALL TIMES even when a child's parent is present. There are several reasons for this decision. First of all, it is confusing to have two sets of rules: things you can't do when mom isn't around and things you can do when she is here. Second, there is often confusion amongst staff members as to whose responsibility it is to watch children when parents are around. Third, children develop new levels of confidence when their parents arrive. They become braver and bolder and if a parent is not watching closely this can be dangerous. For these reasons, the school rules will apply even when parents are present.

## Nap Procedures

Children under the age of five are required by state law to be provided a rest period for at least 30 minutes a day. We find that most young children under the age of four need at least one hour of sleep that will leave them refreshed and ready for the remainder of the day. Therefore, children who are in our Preschool program are required to nap, or rest, in the afternoons. Children who are in Pre-kindergarten, between four and five years old, must rest for at least 30 minutes. If they do not fall asleep after 30 minutes, they are allowed to join the class in progress. This is our pre-kindergarten program option, and is not a substitute for kindergarten. Children who are five by September 30<sup>th</sup> are considered to be in our kindergarten program. This is consistent with the Fairfax County Public School policies.

Napping and resting children will be provided a rest mat and fitted sheet for nap time. Preschoolers should bring a small light blanket for comfort and a “sleepy toy” for making the transition easier. We prefer the blanket and toy be ones that stay at school all week, but understand that some children are quite particular about what they will and won’t sleep with. Blankets and toys for preschoolers go in the basket located in the Sunshine Room. All blankets must be *small*, and toys must be small, soft, and “noiseless,” and both must be labeled with your child’s name in permanent marker on the tag, or initial’s at least. No hard action-figure type toys or noise-makers as they do not invoke restfulness.

If your child is in pre-kindergarten and rests (children who are four at the beginning of the year and will turn five), a blanket and toy are not necessary. Cubbies are small, and they are resting for such a short time, that we hope they will be able to forego the toys and blankets due to space and time restrictions.

Children’s sheets will be washed once a week by the school. If a child has a bathroom accident during nap, the sheets will be sent home that night for you to wash. Please return them the next day. Blankets should be taken home and washed each week.

## Food and Nutrition

Nutrition is very important in the early years for healthy development. In class, we talk about what foods are healthy and activities are available on the shelf daily for understanding what foods are good for our body. Sugary snacks can cause hyperactivity in some children, and therefore should not be brought to school. Foods with a high sugar content that come to school will be sent home uneaten.

## Snacks

Morning snack is available to the children on an individual basis, as they are ready, from 8:00 until 10:30. Snacks consist of fresh fruit and crackers, such as pretzels, graham crackers, wheat thins or other cracker items. Afternoon snack is served in conjunction with our after-school program and is usually a cracker item and a piece of fruit. In addition, children are encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout the day. A snack schedule is posted on the parent bulletin board. Our snack is not meant to be breakfast, so please be sure your child eats a healthy breakfast before coming to school.

Some children enjoy bringing in a special snack to share with their classmates. This snack might be served individually in the morning, at lunch, or in the afternoon, depending on how it fits into the daily schedule. If you would like to bring in a snack, please discuss with the classroom teacher a good day to do this, and what might be appropriate. We encourage you to take this opportunity to discuss this with your child, spend time together in the preparation, and perhaps give it an international flair. Again, you can ask the classroom teacher what topics are being studied at the time, and have fun being creative! **IMPORTANT:** Please avoid nuts in any snack, and check with the teacher about allergies before bringing peanut butter, chocolate, or exclusively milk items. In addition, state law requires that children under the age of six cannot be served raisins, uncut grapes, popcorn, or uncut hotdogs in a childcare environment.

## Lunch

Lunch begins at approximately 12:00 and lasts for 30 minutes. Children who stay at school through lunchtime should bring a packed lunch in the insulated lunch bag provided by the school. We also provide a plastic plate, cup, and plastic ware with the lunch bag. Please help us teach the children about environmental awareness by making sure these items are in the lunch bag each day. This will cut down significantly on the amount of paper and plastic we put in the garbage, and ultimately in the landfills. State regulations require that each container be labeled with the child's name and with the current date, the latter so that old food is not served to children. Therefore, please label your child's lunch bag at home each day with the current date. We will have masking tape and a marker available for you to write the current date on your child's lunch if you forget to do so.

Because nutrition is so important in these growing years, we encourage parents to send a well-balanced lunch with items such as a sandwich, fresh fruit, yogurt or cheese stick, or crackers. We caution you not to pack too much as it can be overwhelming. Easy to open container allow for independence. Low sugar content is best and no candy please. For various reasons, yogurt in a cup is preferred over yogurt in a tube or go-gurt. Leftovers from dinner can be packed in an insulated container. The food that is left over from lunch will be sent home so that you will know what your child has eaten that day. To encourage the children to learn to drink water, we place a pitcher of cold water on each table for drinking at lunch. We hope

you will join us in encouraging this healthy habit by saving the juice boxes for home. Regrettably, we do not have the ability to refrigerate or heat food for children.

## Videos

When there is inclement weather, the children may occasionally watch a video if we are unable to play on the playground. We have a collection of videos appropriate for young children. All videos are pre-approved by the director, and no videos may be brought from home unless they have been approved by the director.

## Items from Home

Children should not bring money, candy, or gum to school. In addition, toys and jewelry cause distractions and hurt feelings when they are lost or broken. Please leave all toys at home, except for children who bring a soft toy for naptime. Appropriate jewelry can be worn, but if it causes a distraction the child will be asked to put it in their backpack.

Sharing is done once a week, with the day staying consistent for the year. We choose a topic related to our geography, science, and art curricula and encourage children to bring items in to share at circle time. For example, if we are learning about primary colors, we might ask the children to bring in something that is red, yellow, or blue. If we are studying Antarctica, they could bring in a book about penguins, a stuffed penguin or orca whale, or an atlas, booked marked to a map of Antarctica.

If your family has a connection to a continent we are studying, we would love to have you join us for circle time to share your knowledge with us. We have had families from Japan, India, Cambodia, Egypt and Iran share traditional dress, folktales, artifacts, and special snacks with us over the years. It is so much fun to learn about these cultures from our families!

Sometimes items from school end up going home in a pocket or backpack (oops!). If you find something that does not belong to your child, please return it to the classroom teacher. The loss of one individual item from an activity can mean that the activity is no longer complete and has to be removed from the shelf until the piece is replaced.

## Discipline

Peace education is an important part of Dr. Montessori's philosophy. It is at the heart of the classroom dynamics and something we address on a daily basis with songs,

stories, and games. We have developed a Peace Curriculum that you can read about in Chapter 3, Your Child at School.

Respect is an important concept we teach in the classroom each day. Adults model and children are taught, through word and deed, respect for themselves, each other, and the world around them.

- *Respect for themselves* through learning about our bodies and how they work, good health and nutrition habits, and a chance to exercise our bodies every day.
- *Respect for others* through simple rules to follow in the classroom and outdoors such as “be kind to others,” “be responsible for yourself,” and “do your best.”
- *Respect for the environment* through lessons in science and geography that focus on the people, plants and animals of the world, and a recycling program.

We attempt to solve conflicts among children with an interactive process that engages all parties involved to try to come up with solutions to the problem. Children discuss what happened, how it made each of them feel, and what they can do the next time to avoid or solve the disagreement. Ending with a handshake or a hug is usually enough to send the children off hand-in-hand towards their next adventure together. In group-time activities, we help the children think of a variety of words to express their feelings, and role-play appropriate ways to interact with others. When a child obviously needs a little time alone to gain self-control, he is offered a quiet place in the classroom where he can calm down, and come back to the group when he is ready.

Children learn behavior from other children and from adult guidance and modeling. They learn at school and at home. They deserve an environment that is calm and peaceful for concentration, fun and exciting for learning, and safe for everyone. A discipline approach that is consistent between home and school is essential in helping children develop appropriate social skills and a healthy self-concept. Please feel free to talk with the teachers and director about how we can work together for the best development for your child.

## Dismissal

At Children's House we view each child as an individual, and try very hard to work with each child and his or her particular needs. There are times, however, when we feel it is necessary to dismiss a child who is not suited to our program, not benefiting from our environment, needs more than the occasional reminder to be able to function in a productive and appropriate way at school, or presents an ongoing discipline problem. We define a child who has an ongoing discipline problem as one who exhibits any of the following: chronic biting (outside of developmental expectations), hitting or otherwise hurting others, abusive language or excessive

teasing, disregard for and lack of respect towards teachers, or an unwillingness to follow school rules. Steps to handle these situations may include any of the following:

1. Email notifications of incident with suggestions for how to remedy the problem.
2. Parent/teacher conferences to discuss solutions to the problem and to create a time-frame for implementing the plan. Solutions may include outside professional intervention.
3. Child is sent home or suspended for a determined amount of time.
4. Child is asked to leave school within a specific timeframe which will never be less than two weeks from the date of notification.

The child's enrollment may be immediately terminated if at any time it is thought that sufficient endangerment to the child or others or sufficient disruption of the learning environment cannot be resolved.

## **Child Abuse**

Virginia law requires teachers, directors, and other staff of all educational institutions to report suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the local Department of Social Services. Each staff member has had training in how to detect and report child abuse to the proper authorities.



# Medical and Safety Information

## Illness

Exposure to viruses and bacterial contamination is a reality in any school setting. We try very hard to keep illness at bay, and therefore ask you not to bring your child to school if he has had signs of illness within 24 hours of coming to school. This means that if he has a fever on Sunday afternoon, he may not come to school on Monday morning. Please respect the rights of all children and staff to work in a healthy environment.

When we have cases of certain highly contagious illnesses (pink eye, strep throat, Fifth disease) we will put up a notice alerting parents and cautioning you to be on the lookout for symptoms in your own child. The Department of Social Services also requires that parents “will inform the center within 24 hours or the next business day after his child *or any member of the immediate household* has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the state Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.” Please help us abide by this licensing regulation and inform us of any contagious illnesses in your family.

All teachers receive Health Screening Training to prepare them for assessing the health and well-being of the children in their care. They will be performing a health assessment of your child when he enters the classroom. If your child is assessed as ill at that time, you will be asked to take him home. If a child becomes ill while at school, he will be isolated and parents will be called and are expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. Please keep your emergency form up to date with phone numbers so that we can easily find you. If you cannot be reached within one hour, we will call the emergency contacts that you have provided on your emergency form. Your child must be free of symptoms of illness for 24 hours before returning to school. This means, for example, that if you pick your child up at noon with diarrhea, he may not return to school the next day, even if the symptoms are gone in the morning. If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, they may come back to school after they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours.

Following is a list of symptoms and illnesses that require you to keep your child at home until he is free of the symptoms for the time stated below.

- Appearance/Behavior – Child looks or acts differently within the last 24 hours; unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, and difficult to awaken or just not “themselves.”

- Chicken Pox – Until all blisters have dried into scabs, or about six days after rash onset.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) – Bacterial – until 24 hours after treatment begins. Viral – until a letter from a physician is provided to verify that the child does not have bacterial conjunctivitis. In both situations, the child should be well enough to participate in normal daily activities.
- Diarrhea – An increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24 hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting.
- Eye/Nose Drainage – Thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose within the last 24 hours.
- Fever – Temperature of 100°F or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck or undiagnosed rash. The child should be fever free, without the aid of fever reducing medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin), for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Head Lice – No-nits policy: Child must be treated with medications, all lice killed, all eggs or nits removed and no sign of a re-infestation. There are forms that are required to be completed before returning to school.
- Respiratory Illness – Until child is without fever for 24 hours and is well enough to participate in normal daily activities.
- Respiratory Symptoms – Difficult or rapid breathing or severe coughing; child makes high-pitched croup-y or whooping sounds after he coughs; child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough.
- Skin Problems – skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious.
- Sore Throat – Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present within the last 24 hours.
- Streptococcal Sore Throat/Scarlet Fever (with rash) – until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins and the child is without fever for 24 hours.
- Vomiting – One or more episodes of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.
- Antibiotics – Children on antibiotics should be kept home for at least 24 hours after the first dose is given to allow the medication to take effect.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness is to wash hands, and to do it often. We require the children to wash hands before eating, after toileting, sneezing or other contact with bodily fluids, and after playing outside. We also request that you have your child wash his or her hands at school before entering the classroom, and encourage you to do the same when you pick your child up from school. Proper washing requires vigorous scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, about as long as it takes to sing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or “The ABC Song.” Help us teach your child good hygiene and enjoy a song or two together!

## Allergies

Allergies should be indicated on the application form, and an allergy form must be filled out with details about how we can best handle your child's allergy issues. Please inform the office and the classroom teacher if your child develops allergies during the year. If your child has a milk or food allergy, it may be necessary for you to provide an appropriate alternative snack. Allergy medications must be submitted to the office for dispensing. Do not leave any medications in your child's backpack. See "medications" for details on providing the appropriate medication form.

## First Aid

Every two years we recertify in First Aid and CPR, ensuring that at least one staff member is on duty at all times who is trained and certified to administer first aid in the case of an injury. First Aid kits are located in the office and in the Sunset Room. If a child is injured, the scrape will be washed with soap and water, and covered with a bandage if needed. Ice will be applied to bruises and bumps. An accident report will be filled out so that you are aware of the situation. The form will be left at the sign-in book for you to read and sign. We are required to keep a copy of these forms on file, so if you would like a copy we can make one for you. If your child sustains an injury to the head or mouth, we will call you immediately.

## Serious Injury Requiring Emergency Procedures

When a serious injury or illness occurs, the rescue squad and the parents will be called immediately and a staff member certified in CPR and First Aid will administer life-saving measures until the ambulance arrives. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. If they are unreachable, the child's doctor will be called. It is essential that all phone numbers for yourself, your three local emergency contacts, and your doctor be kept up to date.

## Medications

### Medicines

Children's House is not required to administer medications, and we prefer you arrange your dosages so that they can be administered at home. We understand, however, that sometimes this is not possible. Therefore, we will administer medications at school under the following guidelines:

1. A Medication Form must be obtained from the office, filled out, and signed by the parent before the medicine can be given. The form asks for the name of the drug, the dosage and time to be given, proper storage instructions, and any special concerns. The child must have had the first dosage at home. Please arrange the dosage given at home so the one at school can be after lunch, around 12:30. The form is also available as a download from our website. Go to [www.chmsreston.com](http://www.chmsreston.com) / log in / Parents / downloads / Documents and Forms / Medication Authorization Form.
2. Prescription and nonprescription medications must be in the original container with the pharmacy label or directions label affixed, and a label with the child's name, the doctor's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the time to be given. Directions for dosage that parents provide must be consistent with the directions on the medication. For example, if the directions indicate that one teaspoon (5 ml) of medication be administered every four to six hours, we cannot administer a different dosage at a different interval without written directions for the child's doctor.
3. Parents must bring medications to the office for safekeeping. Under no circumstances should medications be left in a child's backpack. This includes inhalers, cough drops, aspirin, lip balm, and creams or lotions. Please inform the teacher that medication has been left in the office for your child.

These guidelines are for medications that are to be given on a "short term" basis, two weeks or less. "Long term" medications must have a physician's note with instructions on dispensing the medication and the reason for the medication. Long-term medications must be kept current and replenished when they pass their expiration date. Long-term medications include Epi-pens, nebulizers, inhalers, etc.

### **Sunscreen and Bug Repellant**

Sunscreen and bug repellant are available at school. Both are located on the top shelf of the adult book shelf in the entryway. If you forget to apply them at home, parents should feel free to use the ones provided when you arrive at school. However, the easiest solution is for parents to apply both liberally before coming to school. If parents would like to bring their own bug repellant or sunscreen, we only apply them at 3:00 before going out to play. A medication form must be filled out for each; the form is located at the sign-in desk. Children will not be allowed to administer these themselves, and neither can be left in your child's backpack or cubby. They must be submitted to the office for safe-keeping.

## Security and Access to the Building

Our building has an “all doors locked” security system. Parents are to enter through the right side door with the ramp, using the key pad located by the door. The access code will be given to parents at the beginning of the school year. For safety reasons, please do not let anyone else enter the building with you unless you know them as a CHMS family.

## Site Risks/Hazards Safety Policy

Children's House employs several safety programs available in our area. We use Fairfax County's Community Emergency Alert Network, or CEAN, to receive messages that are automatically sent to our cell phones and e-mail, alerting us to important emergency alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis or emergency. Families are able to receive this same service by going to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cean> and click on Community Emergency Alert Network.

In addition, we have a NOAA Weather Radio that will automatically warn us of weather and other emergencies in our area, including natural emergencies such as earthquakes, environmental emergencies such as chemical releases or oil spills, and public safety emergencies such as Amber alerts or 911 telephone outages.

Licensing Standards require that the School conduct an emergency evacuation drill with staff and children at least once a month and a shelter drill twice a year. We participate in a national earthquake drill in October and a state wide tornado drill in March. Emergency evacuation maps are posted in each room of the building. The shelter room is also indicated on the map. Fire extinguishers are located in the large classroom by the playground door, in the Sunshine room, and in the hallway by the second classroom near the stairs going up to the church.

For a complete description of our Safety Policy, please check the sign-in desk, or inquire in the office.

## Communicating With Parents

In the event of a real emergency, (as opposed to practicing for one), whether it be fire, weather, or security, parents will be notified with a phone call. We will use the Emergency Information Forms that were filled out by parents upon enrollment. Therefore, it is imperative that you keep this information up-to-date so we can reach you quickly, particularly phone numbers. Children's House follows Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management instructions for emergencies regarding sheltering-in-place or evacuations. Parents are expected to follow instructions given by the staff

member calling, to include picking up their child as soon as possible if that is deemed the safest procedure by Fairfax County Government.

For more information on emergency procedures followed by Fairfax County, visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency).

### **Inclement or Excessively Hot or Cold Weather**

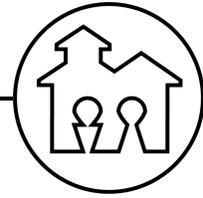
State regulations require that children who are at school for more than 5 hours have an hour of outdoor play during the day. We do not go outside during thunderstorms, but we sometimes will spend a few minutes under the trees getting some fresh air even if it is raining slightly. In extreme weather conditions, we spend only 10 or 15 minutes outside to expend some energy, but we do not go outside on days that are hotter than 100° or colder than 20°. When the air quality is orange or red, we will spend some time outside in the morning, and the late afternoon, but will avoid the middle of the day when the temperatures are the hottest and the air quality is at its worst.

### **Staff Training / Plan Review and Update**

Staff will be trained in emergency procedures as they are hired, and all staff will review the procedures each year at our annual staff training the week before school begins. Updates will be made as necessary to fit current situations.

## **Daily Count of Children**

Attendance will be taken every day to have a count of the number of children in care. Children are counted at various times throughout the day as we transition from one activity or location to another. It is important that your child shake the hand of a teacher when they arrive and before they depart to ensure an accurate count and the safety of all the children.



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# Communications and Parent Involvement

## Parent Involvement

The administration and staff of Children's House are delighted to have parent involvement. We maintain an open-door policy and encourage you to take advantage of the scheduled family activities such as Thanksgiving and holiday events, Parent's Day, or field trips. You are welcome to come for lunch, sign-up to listen to children read, or make an appointment for a more formal observation of a classroom. At Back to School Night we outline the many ways parents are encouraged to get involved in the life of the school. Newsletters and emails will also help you stay up to date about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. We are an active school community that thrives when the parents are in the loop and engaged. Your involvement shows your child that you care about what goes on at school and that you think the time he spends here is important.

## Observing the Classroom

Many parents find that volunteering during the provided opportunities allows them a chance to observe and participate in the daily life of the school. Helping with our gardening program, listening to the older children read in the afternoons, assisting with a cooking activity, or volunteering in the classroom during a teacher's extended absence, are all ways that you can help out *and* get more familiar with what goes in the classrooms. You may also schedule a more formal tour by contacting the office.

## Dropping By / Signing Up

Many parents enjoy helping out in the life of the school. It helps to let the teacher know of your interests so that plans can be made to accommodate you. Sign-up sheets are often posted at the sign-in desk and on the Parent Bulletin Board for the various activities happening each month. We need your participation to make

Children's House the family-oriented, friendly place we all would like to have for our children.

## Daily Exchange of Information

Teachers are always interested in your questions and comments about your child or about the school. If you have a quick bit of information for the teacher in the morning, by all means step into the classroom and let her know. We especially like to know if there are any changes, either positive or negative, in your child's life so we can be appropriately supportive in the classroom. Drop-off time and pick-up time are not a good time for a lengthy conversation, however, as the teachers are busy with the children. Lead teachers use email extensively for communicating with parents during the day and can also be available for telephone conversations during the day if you will call the office and leave a phone number and a brief message so the teacher will know about your concerns.

## Newsletters

A school-wide newsletter will be published quarterly. It is available to every family in a hard copy, attached to an email, and on our website at [www.chmsreston.com](http://www.chmsreston.com). Please look for the copy that has your name on it so we can be sure that every family gets one. Emails will also be sent when needed for reminders and time-sensitive information. Please keep the office updated with your current email addresses. We want to make sure all families are informed of the activities of the school. The newsletter is the *best* way you can stay up to date on the upcoming events. It is important that you read it and share it with everyone who participates in your child's schooling, such as a nanny or grandparents that like to attend our family events. Stay connected – read your newsletter!

## Access to the Website

Our website, [www.chmsreston.com](http://www.chmsreston.com) contains a secure parent area with the following sections:

- **School Journal** – posts of events that are going on at school to keep you updated with our “extra-curricular” activities such as the Apple Picking trip or a puppet show at school. We love to have your pictures of these events, and our upload section is described below. The School Journal has the ability for you to post comments, so it can also be a forum for sharing information such as “What fun child-oriented activities has your family found recently?” or “Who have you used for family portraits?” We would be glad to start any topic you request.

- **Photo Galleries** – we post pictures of fun events at school such as the Fall Festival and Parent Day. Again, parents are encouraged to share photos as we can't possibly take all the good ones.
- **Downloads** – where you can find forms, the Parent Handbook, and other documents of interest.
- **Photo Uploads** – the place to easily upload photos for us to use on the site.
- **Calendar** – on the front page of the website.

To access this section of the website, new families and those who have not yet registered will receive an email shortly after school starts explaining the process and how you create a username and password. You will then receive an invitation from Squarespace Services, our host, so be sure to set your filters to allow this email. If you are already registered, your username and password will be valid for the entire time you are at CHMS.

We hope you will access this section of our website often. It's a great way to keep up with the life of the school and see pictures of the special events throughout the year.

## Student Directory

A directory of family information will be available shortly after school resumes. We will place a draft copy by the sign-in desk for you to check your information for accuracy, and the final copy will be available after the first few weeks of school. You may indicate what personal information you would like in the directory. It is only shared with current CHMS families. Please use this information when planning special events, such as birthday parties. Invitations should be mailed to children's houses and not placed in cubbies. We have a "no talking about birthday parties" policy at school. It is impossible for every child to attend, or even be invited to, every party. Let's keep the hurt feelings to a minimum, please; use the directory for party planning. If you move during the school year, change phone numbers or email, please let us know so that you child's file remains up to date and so that we can send out an addendum to the directory.

## Conferences and Progress Reports

Two Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for each child during the year. We try to plan our conferences to coincide with the Fairfax County teacher work days. A sign-up sheet will be posted several weeks in advance. School will be closed for these teacher work days, unless otherwise noted on the school calendar.

- **Fall:** Conferences for Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten.
- **Winter:** Conferences for Kindergarten.
- **Mid Spring:** Conferences for Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten.
- **Late Spring:** Conferences for Kindergarten.

Progress Reports will go home four times a year as well. This will ensure that we keep the lines of communication open between parents and staff concerning your child's school experience. It provides information on your child's social, emotional, and academic progress, and will be the basis of discussion at the conferences. We hope this will make it possible for you to celebrate successes when they happen and that small issues, whether they are behavioral, developmental, or social, will be addressed before they become bigger. As always, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about your child's progress or if you have any concerns that arise before our scheduled conferences. Remember, school is closed for the fall and mid-spring conferences, and babysitting is provided for the conference time only. Kindergarten conferences are held after school.

## **Family Days and Parent Meetings**

Several family get-togethers are planned throughout the year to help families get to know one another and encourage a community atmosphere at Children's House. We sincerely hope you will plan to attend these events. The children will help prepare for them in a variety of ways, and everyone will enjoy learning about their child's friends at school.

Parent meetings, known as "Parent Nights," are scheduled throughout the year to share important information about your child's life at school. Topics include, but are not limited to, Back to School Night, Montessori Philosophy, Parent Involvement, the Language and Math Curriculum, the Cultural Studies Curriculum, the Montessori Kindergarten Curriculum, and Montessori in the Home. Our goal is to help you understand the importance of the work your child does each day, to help you better understand the philosophy behind what we do, and to give you information in order for you to better communicate with your child about his or her time at school. Please plan to attend the Parent Nights.

## **Parent Resources and Children's Library**

Our parent resource library is located in the lobby area of the school. We have several DVDs, lots of books, and tons of magazines for you to check out and enjoy. Please take advantage of these resources. There is a lot of information on Montessori education as well as helpful books about child development and parenting. We are always adding to our library of resources that is available for parents to check out. If you have a particular topic of concern or interest, please check the library shelf. If you have a resource that you thought was particularly helpful, let us know so we can add it to our library.

Our children's library is mostly made up of books we have purchased from Scholastic Book Club. It is an excellent resource for children's books that are fun, educational, and inexpensive. You will be offered an opportunity to purchase books from Scholastic periodically throughout the year.

You and your child are more than welcome to check books out of our school library. When doing so, please follow these guidelines:

1. Please only check out one book per child at a time. Write the name of the book and the child's name on the sign-out sheet located on the end of the bookshelf.
2. Please return the book you have borrowed before checking out a new book.
3. All of our books are color coded with a tape to indicate the section of the library in which they belong. Please return books to the correct shelf and the correct group.
4. Books can be checked out during school hours only. If you are late picking up your child please wait until the next day to check out a book.

## **One Final Thought**

The poem on the next page was given to me by a dear colleague. I think it sums up my feelings about how important it is for teachers and parents to work together for their children. I look forward to working with you in the coming years to make Children's House Montessori School the best it can possibly be for your child. Again, welcome - we are so glad you are here.

Keturah Collins  
Director/Owner  
Children's House Montessori School

## “Whose Child is This?”

Author Unknown

“Whose child is this?” I asked one day,  
Seeing a little one out at play.  
“Mine,” said the parent with a tender smile.  
“Mine to keep a little while,  
To bathe his hands and comb his hair,  
To tell him what he has to wear,  
To prepare him that he may always be good  
And each day do the things he should.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked again,  
As the door opened and someone came in.  
“Mine,” said the teacher with the same tender smile.  
“Mine to keep just a for a little while,  
To teach him how to be gentle and kind,  
To train and direct his dear little mind,  
To help him live by every rule,  
And get the best he can from school.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked once more,  
Just as the little one entered the door.  
“Ours,” said the parent and teacher as they smiled,  
And each took a hand of the little child.  
“Ours to love and train together,  
Ours this blessed task forever.”