

Greenwood Montessori Children's House

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PARENT HANDBOOK

The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to age six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement is being formed. But not only his intelligence; the full totality of his being..."

-Maria Montessori

Greenwood Montessori Children's House does not discriminate in its admission policy or in employment on the basis of family structure, age, race, ethnicity, color, sex, creed, disability, political persuasion, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation, military service, or organizational membership, or any other status protected by law.

The 5 Year Old in Montessori

The Important Synthesis

By Renee Borge

Over the past three years we have watched our child grow with increasing fascination. We believe her three years in a Montessori environment have not only helped her grow but bloom. We found the first year an exciting, new experience for her. Like most three year olds, there was a short period of adjustment and then she was eager to absorb so many experiences.

Her second year was happy yet quiet and reflective. She, like many four year olds, spend much of her time watching, thinking, listening, and gaining her own self concept. She was building a storehouse of experiences and techniques for learning.

This year, as a 5 year old, has been the most rewarding thus far. She is able to use all of the materials to help her discover reading, math, science, etc. with confidence and ease. She loves being self-sufficient and able to help those around her. During this year we feel she has developed a love for learning.

This is reprinted from the MECA Lab School Parent Handbook. Many parents wonder about the advantages of keeping their child in Montessori school for Kindergarten. Five year old children in the class have the opportunity to act as leaders. Not only can this benefit them socially, but also intellectually because teaching something to younger children reinforces their mastery of the concept. All the preliminary work done in language, math, social studies, and science by 3 and 4 year olds comes to fruition when they are 5.

MISSION

Greenwood Montessori Children's House seek to nurture a child's physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development. The wide array of activities in the outdoor and indoor environments highlight our recognition of movement as an integral part of a child's development.

At GMCH, we are committed to helping each child reach his or her full potential.

*"If houses for children do not exist
then let us build them."*

-Maria Montessori



threatening behavior, the child may be sent to the Director and the child may be required to go home for the day.

Parents will be informed or called if their child is exhibiting disrespectful or hurtful behavior. When a child is misbehaving on a regular basis and the teacher's efforts are not successful, a special conference will be called with the parents to help formulate a plan with the teacher to modify behavior. If a child's behavior requires extraordinary efforts on the part of the teacher or teaching staff, parents may be required by the Director to seek professional assistance in identifying specific problems or difficulties. If the parents do not pursue the necessary counseling for the child, the Director may find it necessary to withdraw the child from the school. Every effort will be made to resolve the behavioral issues with the staff and family working together. In rare instances, the issues remain unresolved, and it may be necessary to terminate the child's enrollment for the safety of all involved.

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GOALS OF GMCH

At Greenwood Montessori Children's House, we believe that you, the parents, are the first and most important teachers in the lives of your children. We consider it a great privilege to partner with you during the most critical time of their development. Our hope is to help you discover the gifts and needs of your child and to help them develop their human potential. We also endeavor to be their guide in developing concentration, self-discipline, and a love for learning that will last their lifetime.

The teachers of GMCH are committed to supporting each child unconditionally and without fail. Within this atmosphere of love, respect will be taught for classroom materials, one another, and the world. Our hope is for children to become aware of people in need at local and global levels and to respond by giving.

You will notice a section in this handbook for Parent Programs. We welcome your involvement for we know how much the children will benefit. We also hope many friendships will be made in our school "family."

The educational policies of the school are the responsibility of the director. The director is also available to answer parent inquiries, to arrange for observations of a class in action, and to handle day to day school business.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

A Montessori classroom is a peaceful environment and children generally have fewer behavioral problems. Teachers at GMCH give lessons on Grace and Courtesy and give the children opportunities to role play appropriate behavior. The teachers also model appropriate behavior by treating all children and teachers with respect. In turn, children are expected to be respectful. At GMCH children and adults are expected to display:

1. Respect for self
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for materials, tools, and equipment
4. Respect for the environment

Disrespectful and hurtful behavior will not be tolerated. Whenever possible, the teacher will redirect inappropriate, non-aggressive behavior treating it as a "teachable moment". The goal is for the child to become involved in meaningful work, but should the inappropriate behavior continue, the teacher will help the child find a place to sit and observe the rest of the class. The goal is for the child to become calm and rejoin the group when self-control is regained. If the child is still unable to gain self-control, the child may need to sit away from the class.

Very rarely a child may exhibit hurtful and aggressive behavior, e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting, and biting. If this occurs the child will sit by himself/herself to regain self-control. If the behavior is threatening to others, they may be separated from the class. If the teacher is unable to resolve inappropriate or

School Policies

TUITION

Tuition is based on a full school year with payment schedules based on the total tuition. A non-refundable registration fee is due at the time the application is completed and the first tuition installment is due by August 1st. There is no fee reduction due to illness or absence and a 30 day written notice is required if a withdraw is necessary.

RE-ENROLLMENT

In order to reserve a place for the following year, parents must complete a new application and submit the registration fee. Open enrollment to the public will be made afterwards and applications for new and returning students are accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

HEALTH FORMS

All necessary health forms are provided and must be returned before the first day of school.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips will be planned for the year and a written permission will be signed at the beginning of the year to cover all outings. You will be notified of all trips prior to their occurrence. Parents may volunteer to drive. **All children must have an up to date and approved car seat.**

THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

The Montessori Method was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman to graduate from medical school in Italy. The materials and methods evolved from her careful observations of children. She discarded ideas that did not work and kept the ones that did. She discovered that a carefully prepared environment allowed the child to develop concentration and self-control.

The Montessori environment allows for movement which brain research recognizes as an integral part of cognitive development. The development of gross and fine motor skills, concentration, and independence are encouraged by use of the multisensorial, manipulative materials. The Montessori classroom also allows children to grow socially and learn to cooperate with others. A Montessori education instills within the child a lifelong love for learning.

CURRICULUM

The Montessori environment is structured to help each child become aware of Reality in himself, in others, and in things. The moment a child becomes "aware" is the moment he becomes responsible. This sense of responsibility allows the child to work in an atmosphere of freedom within limits. The teacher prepares the environment in the following areas:

Practical Life	Sensorimotor
Language	Mathematics
Natural Sciences	Social Sciences
Physical Sciences	Music
Foreign Language	Fine Arts
Perceptual Motor Development	

The prepared environment allows each child to reach his/her full potential.

Special Events

Pop Tab Collection

GMCH is collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Collected pop tabs help generate funds to support over 1000 families served annually. **ONGOING**

Pennies for Peace

Pennies for Peace® is a service learning program that brings cultural and philanthropic education to children all over the world one penny at a time. **ONGOING**

International Day of Peace

Children around the world will sing on Sept. 21 to celebrate the United Nation's Day of Peace. The singing will travel from country to country within 24 hrs. We will sing "Light A Candle for Peace."

Food Drive

During the month of November, we will collect nonperishable foods for a local food bank.

Sharing Tree

During the month of December, we will be collecting children's hats and mittens for a local program that serves the community.

National School Choice Week

Held every January, National School Choice Week shines a spotlight on effective education options for every child.

Teacher Appreciation Week

During the 1st full week of May, celebrate your child's teacher.

Special Programs

Foreign Languages

We encourage the children to become aware of other cultures and languages by exposing them to foreign languages. We sing songs in other languages as well as conduct games and daily routines in Spanish and French.

Music

Music in a Montessori classroom is seen as an important part of the total development of the child. We will learn songs to support movement, rhythms, routines, cultural awareness, and cooperation. There will also be seasonal songs which are added throughout the year.

Art

Art is seen as a natural extension of the Montessori environment. Many activities will be available to the children everyday like drawing and coloring with various mediums. Cutting and gluing exercises will also be available. A new project will be completed approximately once per month as children work with instruction weekly.

Drama

Creativity is an integral part of the education our students experience. We believe it is our responsibility to provide an environment that allows children to explore the worlds of the performing arts where they can discover talents and passions, and have fun.



GENERAL INFORMATION

INITIAL MEETING

Parents interested in registering their child in GMCH may call the school to schedule an initial meeting. This visit provides an opportunity for you and your child to meet classroom teachers and become familiar with the environment.

DRESS

Comfortable and sturdy clothes are the most practical dress for activities at GMCH. Clothing that fosters independence is best (i.e. large buttons, easy zippers, elastic waistbands). Weather appropriate attire should be worn for continual outdoor play so long as conditions are safe and conducive to a positive experience. Hats, mittens, scarves, and snow boots are best for colder months, and waterproof coats and rain boots are strongly encouraged for rainy day play. **All clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name** to ensure that items are being used by the correct child and are sent home with the correct child. Positive play experiences are also supported by the use of sturdy, close-toed shoes with appropriate support and tread.

All children should bring 1-2 extra sets of clothing and 2-4 sets of underwear and socks in a sealable bag labeled with the child's name.

Foreign Language Parents expose the children to a second language through games, activities, and songs.

Sewing Parents either sew costumes or materials for the school at home or help children in the class learn to sew.

Perceptual Motor Development Parents work in the environment with children to help them develop through movement. Possibilities include overseeing children on riding toys and helping with activities such as yoga, calisthenics, parachute, bean bags, walking a balance beam, and playing ball.

Parent Meet Ups

A few educational workshops a year may be planned at GMCH with the intent of providing parents with current information in the field of Early Childhood Education. We also encourage parents to meet in local parks, play pockets, the local library, or local eateries/coffee shops to meet with other parents who can form your support group. We hope to be there for you as you complete the most important job you will ever have, that of being a parent.

Parent Programs

Parents are not only invited but encouraged to become involved in the events and activities of Greenwood Montessori Children's House. Through workshops and other activities, we hope to share with you all we can about parenting and children. There are also opportunities for you to help in the classroom in a variety of ways or to work on special projects that will benefit the children. Research has show that children who have involved parents are most likely to reach their full potential. Through the various parent programs, we hope to help you learn more about children and foster relationships with your own child as well as teachers and other parents.

Room Parents help to keep the classroom running smoothly by helping with weekly laundry, providing flowers and other needed supplies, helping with fundraisers, organizing celebrations, and welcoming new families.

Reading and Writing Parents help children with language activities like reading aloud, listening to children read, and helping children write creatively as dictated by the children.

CARPOOLS

At Back to School Night there will be an opportunity to meet other parents and possibly form carpools. The school will also provide parents with a class list. Everyone authorized to pick up your child must be noted on the appropriate registration form. If at any time your child's transportation varies unexpectedly, the teacher must have a signed, written note from you to release your child to a different person. A digital copy is acceptable if a hard copy is submitted within 24 hours of the time that the child is released. This is for the safety of your child. Identification may be requested.

ILLNESS/ABSENCES

Your child should have a routine exam by your family doctor before attending school and should have a copy of their up-to-date vaccination record on file at school. If your child has a fever above 100°F, diarrhea, vomiting, or any communicable disease (i.e. chicken pox, Hand Foot and Mouth, flu, viral meningitis, MRSA, Pertussis, etc.), they must not attend school until 24 hours after being symptom or fever free. If there is an outbreak of a communicable disease in your child's class, you will be notified. In order for GMCH to administer medication, it must be in its original packaging/container and given directly to a teacher for safe keeping. The parent/Dr., must fill out a Medicine Permission form.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

School closings will be posted on the local television stations. Look for “Greenwood Montessori Children’s House.” You will also be notified by email and it may be posted on our social media page.

CONTACTING YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER

If you would like to schedule a time to speak with your child’s teacher, please send a note with your child or contact the school number. The teacher will contact you outside of regular school hours. During arrival and dismissal, we try to keep adult conversations to a minimum to better focus on child safety during their transition. Please do communicate your concerns in a timely manner. We do want to help you.

FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE

The Montessori class seeks to help the child develop self-discipline. An independent, self-disciplined child experiences the freedom to maximize his or her potential. The teacher helps the child make choices leading to growth and optimum development. It is at the moment a child becomes “aware” of self in relation to others that he becomes responsible. The Montessori class gives the child choices and freedom within limits of acting in a responsible way for the good of the community.

AFFILIATIONS

GMCH is a proud member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) with all staff trained under certified programs appropriate for their position and following the mission, vision, and values it represents, including its Code of Ethics.

The American Montessori Society (AMS) is the foremost advocate for quality Montessori education, an innovative, child-centered approach to learning. AMS sets the high professional standards that inform Montessori education as practiced in AMS-accredited schools and taught in AMS-affiliated teacher education programs.

A not-for-profit organization based in New York City, with nearly 13,000 members worldwide, AMS is also a hub of all things Montessori: an information center for its members, the media, and the public; a voice in the public policy arena; and a mobilizing force for the global Montessori community, through support services, research, and professional development events.



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY®
education that transforms lives

BEFORE & AFTER CARE

The Before and After Care program is available to students while school is in session. *Fees are \$5.00 per child/ per hour and are payable to GMCH on a monthly basis.* You will be charged for a whole hour if you arrive after the start of the After School Program or after 4:00 or 5:00. We will not keep track of partial hours.

Parents will need to sign in with the supervising teacher at the time of arrival and departure and sign the sheet. This ensures that the child's arrival and dismissal time is properly documented.

Before Care is available starting at 7:00 a.m. and After Care is available from 3:00-6:00 p.m. If you pick up after 6:00 p.m. you will be given a warning the first time, you will be charged an additional \$10 for time used between 6:00-6:30 p.m., and \$1 per minute after 6:30 p.m. We want you to respect the time of the After Care staff by being prompt.

CONFERENCE DAYS & REPORTS (Toddlers/EC only)

Please note the conference days on your current school calendar. We encourage both parents/legal guardians to meet with the teachers to better understand and plan a program for your child. In addition to these conferences, you will receive a written progress report to be discussed at the 2nd conference. Additional conferences should be scheduled as needed or requested.

NEWSLETTERS

Monthly newsletters will be provided to keep you abreast of the classroom snack rotation, upcoming events, feature articles, special occasions, and the happenings at school. Be sure to read your copy! ☺

VISITING THE CLASSROOM

GMCH has an open visitation policy. In fact, we encourage you to observe a class in session and see how your child works in the prepared environment. Remember to allow time at the end to discuss your observations with a teacher. Please speak to a teacher to schedule an observation.

BIRTHDAYS (Toddler/Early Childhood ONLY)

Birthdays are very special at GMCH! We enjoy a "Celebration of Life" and invite your child to bring in a picture of themselves for each year of life. We will also sing "The Earth Goes 'Round the Sun". You are welcome to provide a snack which complies with our Peanut and Tree Nut Free policy. Packages must state that the products do not contain nuts or are not processed in a facility that handles peanuts or tree nuts.

Barnum Animal Crackers	Nabisco Nilla Wafers	Nabisco Oreo
Loora Doones	Nabisco Teddy Grahams	Nabisco Oreo Golden
Keebler Elf Grahams	Keebler Rainbow Wafer	Kellogg's Rice Krispies Treats

SNACKS (Toddler/Early Childhood ONLY)

Parents will provide snacks on a rotation basis. **GMCH is a peanut and tree nut free school.** We encourage you to use substitutes such as Sunbutter and soy butter which can be found in the health food section of the grocery store. Send only fresh fruits, vegetables, or cheese. Please also send a roll of paper towels on your designated day.

LUNCH

As GMCH teachers, we want to partner with you in helping your children enjoy healthy lives everyday. Packing and serving a nutritious lunch is an important way of not only contributing to your child's present well-being but it is also establishing good eating habits which will contribute to their life-long health.

We will provide whole milk and water to drink, so please save other beverages (including juice) for home. We will also provide plates, flatware, napkins, and drink glasses. We ask that you provide food from the five basic food groups: **Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Protein, and Dairy.**

Fruits

A good source of potassium, dietary fiber, Vitamin C, & folate

- ¼ to ½ c. sliced apples, peaches, oranges, grapes, kiwi, strawberries, plums, cantaloupe, watermelon, pineapple, dried fruit
- 1/2 pear, banana, grapefruit
- a Clementine or Halo

Vegetables

A good source of potassium, dietary fiber, folate, & Vitamin A & C

- ¼ to ½ c. of carrot sticks, celery sticks, tomato wedges, cherry tomatoes, broccoli florets, snap peas, zucchini rounds, sweet peppers
- 1 c. of salad or ½ cup of slaw

****Products may say on the front of the box that they have fruit or vegetables in them but if it is far down or not #1 on the list, it doesn't count. ****

Protein

- 2-3 oz. of turkey, ham, roast beef, chicken
- Hard boiled egg
- Beans & legumes
- Hummus

Dairy

A good source of calcium, potassium, Vitamin D, & riboflavin

- 6 oz. of yogurt
- 2 oz. of cheese
- ½ c. of cottage cheese

Grains

A good source of fiber, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folate, iron, magnesium, & selenium

- 1 mini bagel (1 oz.), ½ of an English muffin, or 1 slice of WG bread
- 5 whole wheat crackers
- ½ c. of oatmeal, rice, or pasta

Portion control is also important. An example is that most children only need ½ of a sandwich rather than a whole one. Children will pack up uneaten foods when possible so that you can see what they have eaten. Please keep all sweets at home (i.e. cookies, candy, pudding, gelatin, fruit snacks, fruit strips, cupcakes, chocolate chip muffins, etc.) The children will enjoy a sweeter snack on occasions such as birthdays.