

Children's Courtyard Montessori

2015-2016

Information Package



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INTRODUCTION

Maria Montessori opened the *Casa Dei Bambini* in 1907 in Italy. She was convinced that children needed the privilege of work to develop the person that they would become. Through scientific observations and her knowledge of child development she created materials and an educational system that fulfilled the child's need of movement and absorption of his environment through the senses. Montessori classrooms all over the world support the child's education through the areas of Practical Life, Sensorial Education, Language, and Math. Cultural subjects such as Geography and Science are taught in a practical way that satisfies the child's need to explore and conquer. Grace and Courtesy lessons are practiced daily to encourage and guide a child to become a useful and graceful member of his community.

Children's Courtyard Montessori started as a home based Montessori school in 2004. It has been dedicated to providing families with a caring, safe, friendly, and family oriented environment designed to stimulate children to learn through their senses and to develop their personality and academic skills to a higher level. Our Head of School, Seki E. Ortiz, has been an Early Childhood Educator since 1992. She obtained a Teaching degree in Mexico (1981) and she has worked for Washington State's Olympic Educational Services and Head Start\ ECEAP programs. Mrs. Ortiz was a Master Teacher at the Bedford, TX Courtyard Lab School for 3 years, and has taught in a Montessori classroom for 17years. She has been certified by the National Center for Montessori Education/American Montessori Society and plans to achieve accreditation from the American Montessori Society for our school. Our staff has been carefully chosen taking in consideration their education, Montessori certification, experience, and belief in the philosophy. They are all certified teachers or seeking certification while working at our school.

Children's Courtyard Montessori is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and the following information is designed to comply with the State's rules and regulations and the Montessori philosophy.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Class starts at 8:00 am and ends at 2:30 pm.

Before School Care: 7:00-8:00 am

After School Care: 3:00 – 6:30 pm

Our school is open Monday to Friday all year, with the exception of the dates specified in our calendar.

Punctuality

Please help your child have a good start in the morning by being at school by 7:45 am as classes start promptly at 8:00. The morning routine is very important for the child and it sets the pace for the rest of the day. If you know that your child needs extra encouragement in the morning, arrive a few minutes early so you can take your time helping him get settled before he enters his class. Once class starts teachers will not be able to leave their classroom to attend the door. At 8:00 a.m. carpool will close and parents will have to park on the marked parking spaces and come in to sign your child in at the office. **DO NOT PARK ON THE FIRE LINE** and please do not knock on the classroom doors, we keep them locked for your child's safety. If your child is going to arrive later due to doctor appointments, please make a courtesy call to the office and let us know. Also make sure that your child is picked up in time at the end of school. When you are here on time to pick up your child, he does not feel anxious or left out of after school activities. Please call if you will be late a few minutes so we can reassure your child and have him join others in after school activities. After school fees will apply accordingly. If you know that you will be missing the pick up time periodically, please enroll your child in after school care so we can provide sufficient staff for this time of the day. A charge of \$7:50 will be applied to your account after 2:40 p.m. **A \$10.00/hr. charge will be due in cash when you pick up your child after 5:00 p.m.** (Charge applies every 15 min. within the hour)

Carpool Procedures

To facilitate the drop off and pick up of your child, teachers will do carpool every morning starting at 7:40 a.m. and 2:20 p.m. Drive in front of the building and wait in front of your child's classroom door for a teacher. Please do not get out of your car as this will delay the flow of traffic. If you need to talk to the director, please park in the designated parking spaces and come into the office. Authorities will issue tickets to people parking in front of the school along the fire line. Even if you just need to drop off something, please use proper parking spaces. Remember that these are procedures to ensure the safety of your children.

Uniforms

It is required that children wear the appropriate uniform every day. Monday -Thursday they should wear the school's blue polo shirt with khaki pants, skirt, or shorts; black shoes and white socks. Fridays they are required to wear the yellow CCM t-shirt with blue shorts or sport pants and tennis shoes. No lights or noise.

Release of Children

A daily attendance student log is kept carefully updated every day. Teachers will sign your child in as he arrives and parents are required to sign their child out of school every day. Children are only released to a parent or a person designated by the parents on the enrollment form. We will check the designated person's driver's license to verify the information given by the parents at enrollment. In the case of unexpected events, the teacher will personally call the parents and receive approval before releasing the child to a non-listed person. If parents cannot be reached, the child will not be released.

Illness Exclusion

An illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in school activities, including outdoor play, and **compromises the health and safety** of other children in school is reason for exclusion of the ill child until a professional indicates that your child can be included in activities. Some of these illnesses include uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting, a rash with fever, behavior changes, and a temperature of **99.4** degrees or greater, or when diagnosed with a communicable disease. Should your child develop any of these symptoms during school hours, we will contact you; please be prepared to pick your child up as soon as possible in order to protect the health of the other students and for your child's own comfort. Your child may return to school after **24 hours** of being fever or symptom free.

Medication

If a child requires medication due to chronic illness, parents are required to sign authorization for teachers to provide medication according to doctor's orders and label directions. A form is provided for parent to fill in the medication information, please do not forget to sign this form because we will not be able to medicate your child without a parent's signature. All medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name, the doctor's name, the dose prescribed, and the date brought to us. We will not provide over the counter medication.

Emergencies

If critical illness or injury requires immediate attention, we will contact emergency medical services, call the physician identified in the child's record, provide CPR and First Aid if necessary, and call the parent (in that order). We will ensure the supervision of other children in the group at all times.

In case of fire or natural disasters, we will follow the fire drill procedures practiced in a monthly basis to make sure that all personnel and children know how to react in case of emergency. If we need to vacate the building, we will walk to our "safety place", which is GECU and once we make sure that children are safe and taken care of, designated staff will start calling parents to come pick up their child. We will notify families of possible closures and reopening dates as soon as authorities make that information available to us.

Incident Reports

When a child gets injured during the school day and he has been put at risk in any way, we will issue an Incident Report that same day. This Incident Report needs to be signed by a parent and put in the child's records as required by State Licensing. If the incident involves minor injury to the head, a deep cut, or minor injury to eyes, we will call the parent immediately to decide the course of action. For minor scrapes and falls, which cannot be avoided all the time, we will let parent know in the daily notes that are sent home or at pick up time.

Discipline

The Montessori approach to discipline is consistent and individualized, based in mutual respect between the teacher and the child and focused on self control. Positive reinforcement is used to encourage positive behavior by channeling the child's energy into a constructive educational activity. The Discipline norms for Texas Licensing dictate that discipline must be:

1. Individual and consistent for each child
2. Appropriate for the child's level of understanding
3. Directed to teach the child socially accepted behavior and self-control

The Montessori approach to discipline requires that teachers use methods that foster self-esteem and self-control ; they include:

1. Praise the child's good behavior instead of noticing only the unacceptable

behavior.

2. Remind the child of discipline expectations. It must be done daily in a clear and positive manner. In our classroom we discuss classroom rules and Grace and Courtesy issues every morning before work starts; it really sets the tone for the day.

3. Redirect behaviors using positive phrases: “walk” instead of “don’t run”; “speak softly” instead of “be quiet”, etc. Teachers will do a brief separation of the group when appropriate to the age and developmental level of the child. This time should not last more than 1 minute per year: 3 yr old: no more than 3 minutes. In our class, when someone is being disruptive, he will be redirected or asked to sit at another place until he can control himself (usually to a chair near-by so teachers can still supervise him). When a child is being disrespectful or is having a problem controlling himself, the teacher might hold him by the hand and encourage him to choose work or another appropriate choice until he is ready to make an acceptable choice, or the teacher might make a choice for him. When children are allowed to make another choice, they often change their attitude. Sometimes, usually during group time, the teacher will have a child sit next to her if he is being disruptive or hurting others. All of these practices are not punishment; they are natural consequences to his/her behavior: “when you hurt your friends, you may not sit by them”; “when you are disruptive, you may not join us until you can control yourself”. We will always go back to the child and ask if he knows why he had to leave the group, he/she usually knows why, and then we talk about what is appropriate behavior and why. Most of the time the child will return to work happily and without trouble. That is our final goal, that the child realizes his/her feelings and why the behavior was inappropriate. He is always given the chance to try again.

In instances when a child’s behavior is disruptive and unsafe to others, no matter how much the teachers have tried to work with him, parents will be called to a meeting to try and resolve a plan of action so there is consistency in discipline at home and at school. The second time a child offends others aggressively, parents will be asked to pick up the child from school and a meeting will be needed before the child can return to school. In this meeting it will be clearly stated in a letter signed by the parents that a next offense will result in permanent exclusion of their child from school. The actions that will lead to this kind of enforcement by the school are:

Biting

Hitting

Using profanity or verbally putting others down

Referring to another child’s private body parts in a rude and demeaning way

Using school materials inappropriately or destroying them
Any behavior associated with bullying

Meals

Children are required to have a mid- morning snack. Please send fruit, a yogurt, or other healthy snacks that **do not contain peanuts**. Children and teachers have lunch family style. A placemat, a ceramic plate, a glass, and a set of silverware are required for children to practice proper use of utensils at the table. During lunch we practice appropriate table manners and grace and courtesy routines such as asking politely for something at the table, the gracious way to use a napkin, etc.

Do not send candy.

Immunization Requirements

Every child admitted to our school must meet immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services on the date of admission. An original or a copy of the immunization record signed or stamped by a physician must be in the child's file with the following information:

- child's name and birth date
- number of doses and vaccine type
- month, day, and year the child received vaccination

Exemptions for immunizations must meet criteria specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

TB Testing Requirements

Every child admitted to our school is required to have the Tuberculosis Risk Assessment questionnaire filled and signed by a parent. If the child meets the criteria for skin testing, the testing date and results must be filed in his records.

Hearing and Vision Screening Requirements

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act requires a screening for possible vision and hearing problems for all 4 year old children attending preschool. A signed and dated screening record must be in the child's record by the time he is 4.

Enrollment Procedures

Parents wanting to enroll their children in our school must provide all the information required by the laws of the state of Texas:

- Enrollment agreement
- Admission information
- Statement of the child's health from a health-care professional
- Immunization records
- Tuberculin risk assessment
- Hearing and Vision screening (If applicable)
- Signed admission information forms

Upon registration, parents assume tuition responsibility for the full school year calendar. A two month notice is required if the family will be relocating from El Paso before the end of the school year.

If the withdrawal is immediate, the last day the child attends will be accepted as the withdrawal notice day and parents are still responsible for the two following months' tuition.

Naptime

We will provide a supervised rest period for full day children. This rest period will last between 20 minutes and 2 hours according to the child's individual physical needs. Children who do not nap will be able to work quietly, showing respect for the ones that do. This is also a time for the teacher to give individual lessons.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of education and hopefully our children will be able to make a few field trips during the school year. The school will notify you with plenty of time of any upcoming trips. Permission and documentation will be based on DFPS requirements.

Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to volunteer for field trips and other school activities. However, parents and other volunteers must meet the state's requirements for background check and fingerprinting if they are to be in direct contact with children. When you sign up to be a volunteer, this paperwork will be provided to

you and it must be completed and approved by the DFPS department.

Animals at our school

The school currently has fish as pets. Taking care of animals is part of the Montessori curriculum. If the school chooses to have a guest pet we will notify the parents with enough time for them to decide if they want their child present that day.

Parent Visits and Observations

Parents are welcome to observe their children at any time, but it is better to make an appointment to ensure that only one parent is in the classroom at the time and the distraction is minimal for the students. Montessori education fosters and protects the child's concentration avoiding distractions and showing respect for his work, class observation is limited to 20 min.. Please do not bring other children with you during an observation and avoid interrupting other children at work. Please make an appointment to discuss your observations or review minimum standards and policies.

Parent Participation

Our school requires that parents attend at least three of the seven Parent Education Night sessions and join the CCM PTA. Parents and teachers are a partnership that needs to work as closely together as possible to make the early years of your children the best they can be. Montessori education emphasizes the participation of parents to improve the understanding and success of this partnership.

The first parent education night will provide a more extensive presentation on what Montessori education is and what to expect. In this meeting we will also form a parent committee for our school's needs, special events, and festivals!

No Gang Activity Zone

State Licensing mandates no gang activity in the area surrounding the school. For more information log on to <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>)

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

We are required by law to regularly check the CPSC recall list and ensure that there are no unsafe children's products in our school. To access a list of unsafe children's products, log on to the CPSC (<http://www.cpsc.org>) or The Department of Family and Protective Services (<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>)

Licensing report

Child Care Licensing requires that the letter from the most recent Licensing report is posted where parents can view it. You are also welcome to view the Minimum Standards Rules at any time.

How to Contact CCL

Call 1-800-252-5400

Local office: 834-5739

Or visit their web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.