

## **Half-Day Preschool Customs 2015-16**

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### **CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION**

There are a few important means of communication that will be used throughout the school year.

- First of all, you will receive an e-mail at least one week prior to any major classroom event informing you of the details, times and opportunities for participation for students and families.
- Additionally, there is a white board and bulletin board right outside the classroom door. Daily events will be recorded there to inform you of what is happening in the classroom. Various sign-up sheets and school information may be posted on the bulletin board as well. Under the bulletin board will be posted a calendar of classroom and school events.
- To the left of the classroom door are “parent pockets” with one assigned to each family. Feel free to use these to communicate with each other. Occasionally you will receive communication from the office in this location.

While we would love to provide daily accounts of each child’s progress, it is not possible due to the number of students and the importance of the long term process that occurs within the Montessori classroom. A daily or weekly “snapshot” of the child is not very helpful in assessing long term growth.

### **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

Transitions can be difficult for both parents and children. If you and/or your child are anxious about saying goodbye on the first few days of school, it might help to discuss your routine in

advance. A kiss and a hug, along with a statement such as, "I'll pick you up at 11:30," is appropriate. Encourage your child's independence by having him or her walk into the school, rather than being carried. Arrive and depart on schedule to show your child how much you care. If you are concerned about your child's transition, you may watch from the observation room. Please do not wave or observe your child through the front windows of the classroom, as this can be very distracting to the children. Please do not return to the classroom door after drop off, as this can upset your child, who may think you have already returned for pick up. If you must speak to the teacher after you have left the door, ask the office staff to hand us a note. A confident, purposeful goodbye contributes to your child's sense that he or she is in control and can cope well with leaving his or her parents for short periods of time.

## **BRINGING OBJECTS TO SCHOOL**

Children do not need to bring any type of backpack, nor do they need any school supplies. This year each child will be given a bag, which he or she will decorate in class. This bag should come back and forth each day for your child to carry his or her work home. Please clean it out each evening as you look at your child's work with him or her. In cold weather, it will also transport hat and mittens, etc. Please provide an easily accessible place for your child to keep the bag at home, such as a hook by your front door. This will facilitate your child remembering to bring it to school each day.

***Please do not allow your child to bring any toys, dolls or blankets to school.*** If you begin the practice of leaving these personal items at home from the first day, your child will not have any difficulty with this in the long run. In the first few weeks, transitions can be difficult and it can be helpful to your child if he can bring a dispensable photo of your family that can be kept in his cubby or class photo album. If your child chooses to wear jewelry, it must be subtle and should not be distracting to the child or his or her friends. We may place items in the parent pockets located outside the classroom if they seem to be detracting from the Montessori environment.

Each child will have a work cubby near the door in which he or she will place the items completed at school. These things should be taken home daily in the bag described previously. Your child will also have a clothing cubby for jackets, sweaters, etc. All items from the clothing cubbies must be taken home daily, with the exception of a pair of slippers (see Footwear) and hat and mittens during the cold seasons. The cubbies are shared between AM and PM students, so leaving sweater or jackets at school uses the space needed by another student.

If your child is being picked up by someone else, feel free to leave a labeled booster seat outside the classroom. If they have other items that should go with them after school, they can be left outside the classroom door against the wall as well.

Children may participate in show and tell approximately once a month. The dates for each age group will be on the calendar posted outside of the classroom. We encourage children to bring books and objects relating to our themes of study as well as natural specimens or culturally interesting objects to share with the other children. Themes will be communicated to the children during meeting time, and to the parents via the white board outside the classroom. We have a nature table in the classroom, and the children enjoy spending time examining and discussing the objects. Books from home may go into our classroom bookshelves for a day or two. Please avoid books that depict media-oriented culture. If your child has a special presentation he would like to make to the class, such as a trip, or a hobby or interest with educational relevance, it can be arranged ahead of time for him to make an in-class presentation.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

### Half-Day Schedule

(Times are approximate, and activities may vary.)

#### AM Session

- 8:15 -8:30 Drop Off, Make work choices
- 8:15 – 10:45 Work Period
- 10:45 – 11:00 Morning Meeting, Singing Time  
(Spanish on Thursdays)
- 11:00 – 11:30 Outside Time, Pick Up Time

#### Lunch Program

- 11:10 -11:15 PM Students may be dropped off
- 11:15 Wash hands and go to the lunch room
- 11:45 Lunch Dismissal
- 11:45 -12:15 Outside Time
- 12:15 -12:30 Pick Up Time for AM Students

#### PM Session

- 12:15 -12:30 Drop Off, Make Work Choices
- 12:15 – 2:45 Work Period
- 2:45 – 3:00 Afternoon Meeting, Singing Time (Spanish on Fridays)
- 3:00 -3:30 Outside Time, Pick Up Time

## LUNCH PROGRAM

If your child is in the lunch program, he or she can look forward to healthy, homemade lunches daily. Our cook uses many fresh fruits and vegetables, makes bread and pizza crust from scratch and entices children to try new foods regularly. Lunch is followed by a period of outside play (weather permitting) and morning children may be picked up between 12:15 and 12:30. PM students who are in the lunch program may be dropped off for lunch between 11:15 and 11:20.

## PICK UP PERSONS

At the beginning of the year you will be asked to fill out a form listing the names of those trusted persons who have regular permission to pick up your child. We keep the forms in a notebook in the classroom, and your child will always be released to those on that list. If someone who is not on the list will be picking up your child, you are asked to provide a written note to that effect. ***Your child will not be released without such written notice, and we will request identification from that person at pick-up time.***

## PARKING LOT

No preschool child is allowed to leave the building without an adult. When your child is released to you at the Dutch door you are responsible for him or her. ***Do not allow any child outside without accompaniment.*** This rule includes not allowing your child to run ahead of you and out the door alone. We also request parents not observe or speak to your children from outside the

playground fence while they are in our care, as it is distracting to the children on the playground. Also, for safety concerns, please do not leave younger children unattended in your car, and always turn off your car engine.

### **ATTENDANCE**

We encourage children to be at school every day (except in case of illness). Absences are hard on the children as the developmental needs of this age include consistency and a sense of order. Regular attendance greatly influences the social life of the class, affecting a child's relationship with his or her peers and teachers. If you know your child will not be in school, please let one of the teacher's know in advance and we will write the information in our daily calendar. As each child is a critical part of our classroom community, we will post a note by each absent child's photo letting their peers know where they are. This is a great way to develop the sense of community within the classroom.

### **SICKNESS**

If your child has a contagious disease please keep him or her at home, and call the school to let us know. E-mailing the teacher is fine if you know the night before, but if your child wakes up ill, please alert the office, as I do not check my e-mail again after 7:00 in the morning. A slight cold or runny nose is usually not reason enough for a child to miss school, but each family will have to use judgment here. Children who attend school are generally well enough to go outdoors to play. In the half-day preschool we administer no medications to the children. If your child needs medicine, a parent must administer it before or after the class.

### **INFORMAL CONFERENCES**

Passing comments at the door about a child's progress are generally all right, but anything more involved should be taken up with the head teacher outside of school, preferably by e-mail. Please do not hesitate to request a conference and to express any concerns you may have, especially in the early weeks of your child's adjustment to school.

### **SCHEDULED PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Check the school calendar for conference dates. You will have two conferences with your child's teacher(s) each year. In the fall and spring semester, conferences for parents of 3-year-old children (the youngest group) will be held one day a couple of weeks prior to regular conferences, during school hours. We will have regular school on these days, and the conference will just be with Mrs. Cusack. Parent-Teacher Conferences for children in the middle groups and kindergarten groups will be on the scheduled November and April conference days, when we will not have class. Sign up for conferences will take place through the office prior to the scheduled dates.

### **CHILDREN'S EVENINGS**

Twice a year the classroom will host a Children's Evening to which children may bring parents and/or other guests to visit their classroom. They will demonstrate the materials with which they have been working and share their favorite parts of school. These events will end with a short group meeting.

### **PARENT FORUMS**

Twice a year we prepare a Parent Forum, in which all parents are invited to come for an evening of information about Montessori education. These meetings are informal, fun and well-attended, and provide a chance to find out more about what your child is learning. Forums are also an opportunity to get to know your parent group and school parent community.

### **INDOOR CLOTHING**

Each child should be dressed in comfortable clothing that can be dirtied with paints or art materials of various kinds. While the school is temperature-controlled, we ask that your child dress appropriately for the outdoor weather. The youngest children should bring a spare change of clothes to be kept at school, including pants, underpants, socks, and a shirt, marked in a bag with his/her name on it.

Because children are so easily influenced and distracted by what is printed or pictured on their own or others' clothing, we ask that your child not wear clothing that depicts violence or images from popular culture. We also request that your child not come to school wearing dress up clothes, such as princess dresses or crowns. We feel that simplifying clothing helps both the staff and the children to settle in more readily to classroom concentration.

### **OUTDOOR CLOTHING**

The children will play outside daily unless it is raining hard or the temperature is below 20 degrees. Between 10 and 20 degrees the children are given a choice to go out. In the winter each child should have mittens, a hat or hood, and boots when there is a significant amount of snow. All outdoor items should be *clearly marked with the child's name*. Bulky items such as snowpants should be carried in a *cloth bag* with your child's name clearly printed on it.

### **FOOTWEAR**

Tennis shoes, sturdy shoes with good soles, or sandals with back straps are recommended. Please be sure your child's footwear is well-fitting, and appropriate for climbing and outdoor play. Winter and rain boots are not allowed in the classroom as footwear, but of course, are appropriate for outdoor play when rain, or snow and ice are on the ground. Hard-soled, well-fitting, no-nonsense slippers with a back are fine for in class, and may be kept in your child's clothing cubby year-round.

### **SNACKS**

We will provide crackers, cheese and fruit daily, along with food preparation works at times throughout the year.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Around the middle of each month we set aside one day, on which to celebrate the birthdays that fall during that month. You will receive an e-mail from us at the beginning of the month to detail the birthday routine. In general, our procedure is that each family recites a short history of the child's life, as the child, holding the globe, walks slowly around the ellipse to represent the passage of time. After each birthday child has done this, we will share a nutritious snack provided by the families involved. At the beginning of the month we ask each family to send a baby picture of their birthday child, which we will display for the month on a bulletin board. For those children with summer birthdays a day will be set aside in May to celebrate the summer birthdays all together.

We encourage parents to ask their children not to talk about home birthday parties at school, and, so that feelings do not get hurt, do not exclude individual children from your child's age group from home parties. For example, if your child is a four-year-old girl, and she wants to invite three of the other four-year-old girls, excluding only one, please encourage her to invite the fifth, as well. Many hurt feelings arise from birthday party talk and exclusions.

### **CLASSROOM PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

At the beginning of the year there will opportunities to sign up to volunteer, including help with classroom laundry, recycling, sewing, pencil sharpening, dusting, and collecting and shelving our library books. These jobs apply towards your required parent volunteer hours. Parents who have previously had a job will be given first priority for these positions.

### **TUITION PAYMENTS**

Tuition is automatically due at the beginning of each month; no notices are sent. You can mail or drop off your payment at the office.