



HeartSong Montessori

**Parent Handbook
2023-2024**

HeartSong Montessori
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VISION AND MISSION

Maria Montessori

The Montessori experience is the result of the observations and genius of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Upon graduation as the first woman medical doctor in Italy, Dr. Montessori became interested in the education and training of young children.

Dr. Montessori's observations of children convinced her that each child carries within himself or herself the person he or she will become. Each child's potential is reached through a process of striving, aided by a growing sense of order and self-discipline. Every child must be free to develop at his or her own rate. Dr. Montessori designed materials and techniques that allowed her students to work in a way previously considered beyond their capacity. She quickly saw a new and valuable relationship develop within the classroom. No longer was the student dependent on the teacher. The child was now free to use the environment and other children as tools in his or her learning.

In a Montessori classroom, the teacher, through the study and observation of children, prepares the environment to attract the child. As the child is drawn toward learning, the teacher is free to provide small lessons and observe each child. In turn, each child is free to choose enticing work and repeat it continuously, if desired, until he or she is satisfied. Thus, fostered at an early age, concentration and self-discipline become the cornerstones upon which the child's confidence and competence as a learner are built. Montessori children grow learning, to observe, to think and to judge. Natural curiosity and tendencies toward learning become the roots from which the older child evolves and emerges as a socially confident and intellectually disciplined adolescent.

Dr. Montessori died in 1952. Today, after over 100 years of international application, the Montessori method thrives in many countries. In the United States, more than 3,000 schools have been established since 1957. In addition to the national Montessori certification now available to ensure quality Montessori care and education, the National Independent Schools are preparing to include Montessori schools in their certification process.

Vision

We envision a community of curious, self-directed learners peacefully and passionately engaged with their worlds through mindful relationships, heartfelt action and an abiding sense of wonder.

Mission

Traditional wisdom teaches that each person's essence can be understood as a unique song woven harmoniously into the greater song of the world. Neither dominating nor disappearing into the others', each child's song is meant to make a particular and indispensable contribution to the whole. Our mission is to protect, nurture and inspire each child's essential song or spirit by providing a safe, inviting and joyful learning environment where the foundation is formed for their individual, lifelong learning journeys.

Philosophy and Values

Montessori Philosophy: An authentic Montessori program, HeartSong provides multi-age classes, a carefully prepared student-centered environment, hands-on learning materials, uninterrupted work periods promoting deep engagement, and "teacher-as-guide" who nurtures the spirit of each child.

Community: We seek connection and partnership with every parent and family, aiming to be part of the web of relations that comprise each child's social world. "School", we hope, is not just a drop-off place – another

fragment in a fragmented world. We embrace differences and work to always maintain a safe, caring environment, hospitable to all. The multi-age classroom in particular provides rich opportunities for children to practice "unity in diversity" as they each learn from, care for, lean on, teach and lead one another.

Peace Education: Peace education is a less well-known aspect of Montessori, but is integral to the whole approach. Woven into the classroom environment, it is not a special curriculum but is instead an outcome of the school culture. Students are continually supported to make choices that promote mindfulness, self-awareness, and joy and to resolve conflicts amicably by, for example, the use of the Peace Rose.

Core Values

Because a school environment powerfully influences a child's moral and character development, we affirm our commitment to modeling, teaching, and supporting the following values:

Respect: for self, others, and the natural world

Compassion: as a central aspect of all relationships

Learning: a labor of love and a journey of wonder that lasts a lifetime

Community: the dance of diversity, belonging, and interdependence

Purpose: every child is endowed with, and obligated to, an innate, unique sense of calling

Courage: a core capacity of the heart and the antidote to fear

Creativity: joyfully connects us with the deepest parts of ourselves and the world

PROGRAM

Primary Curriculum (2 ½ to 6)

The Montessori preschool classroom is a "house" for children. Children choose their work from among the self-correcting materials displayed on open shelves, and they work in specific work areas. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community", working with high concentration and few interruptions. Normalization is the process whereby a child moves from being undisciplined to self-disciplined, from disordered to ordered, from distracted to focused, through work in the environment. The process occurs through repeated work with materials that captivate the child's attention. For some children this inner change may take place quite suddenly, leading to deep concentration. In the Montessori preschool, academic competency is a means to an end, and the manipulative materials are viewed as "materials for development".

In the Montessori preschool, five distinct areas constitute the prepared environment:

- **Practical life** enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.
- The **sensorial** area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, etc.
- **Mathematics** makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, sequence, operations, and memorization of basic facts.
- **Language** includes oral language development, written expression, reading and the study of grammar, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, alphabet cut-outs, and various presentations, allowing children to link sounds with letter symbols effortlessly, and to express their thoughts through writing.

- **Cultural** activities expose the child to basics in geography, history, and life sciences. Music, art, and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

The Montessori Environment is a prepared environment designed to aid your child in their search for independence, concentration, and happiness. Children need an interactive, hands-on, educational environment to become self-motivated and successful learners. Here, children are free to explore with their senses, in order to fully understand the world around them. **They are free to learn at their own pace.** We never push a child academically; the child learns through their own explorations and from others in their environment. Interaction with their peers in a real-life community is necessary. Children require ample time and space to practice and perfect their abilities. The Montessori materials provide children with a variety of interactive experiences including learning activities of practical life, sensorial, language, math, science, history, culture, art, etc. Dr. Montessori found that children need more than just academics; they need to be allowed to explore their world and society.

Our classrooms are communities. The children care for the environment they learn in, along with the people within. Children will have a job within their community. Our school and classrooms only have one rule, and that is the rule of respect. Respect fulfills so many needs within an environment. When a child follows the rule of respect, they will never say or do anything to hurt another child. With respect, the child will care for everything within their environment. Most importantly, with respect, the child will care for their own self. Respect will carry a child confidently and happily through the rest of their life. We ask that you help in fostering this respect. Respect comes in many forms. We respect people by listening to their words and looking them in the eye when we speak with them. We respect people by giving them common courtesy like saying “excuse me”, “please”, “thank you”, and “you’re welcome”. We respect the environment by not throwing trash on the floor, by not harming animals, by caring for books we read, etc. These small considerations show respect and model respect for our children. This leads to a child feeling appreciated and cared for. Once a child feels respect, they will in turn give that respect to their immediate environment, including all the living beings within it.

Our full day program runs from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm, with an option for an after school program until 5:00 pm. We do provide a 3-day per week program for **first year students only**, to help in the transition from being at home to being in a school environment. Second year students will be considered for this program only if space is available.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

Admissions

Thank you for your interest in our school. We are excited to introduce you to our inspiring learning environment, and answer any of your questions. Applications are accepted throughout the year, as space is available. If there are no spaces available, you will be placed on a waiting list. During the application process, we encourage you to ask lots of questions to make sure this is a good fit for your child and family.

Steps to enroll:

- 1) Schedule a tour and classroom observation
- 2) Submit online application form and \$50 registration fee per student
- 3) Complete interview with Executive Director and submit enrollment packet online

Once we receive your application, we will schedule a parent interview and child visit. Once the interview and visit are completed, and both parties decide this school is a good fit, we will make a decision on the enrollment status, and invite you to fill out an online enrollment packet.

Enrollment

The following forms are needed by the school to complete enrollment:

1. Signed enrollment form
2. Family questionnaire
3. Tuition and enrollment agreement
4. Immunization form or waiver
5. Photo release form
6. Topical preparation permission form
7. General health appraisal, due within 30 days of enrollment
8. Medical administration form, if needed
9. \$150 Yearly Materials Fee

Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment for currently enrolled students begins on February 1st of each school year, and ends on February 28th or 29th. During this period, re-enrolling families have first priority in securing enrollment for their children. Parents or guardians must return an enrollment agreement and deposit to the school to secure enrollment for the fall. Open enrollment begins on March 1st of each school year.

During open enrollment the school will consider all spaces for which it does not have an enrollment agreement 'open', and will begin filling these openings with new applicants. If extenuating circumstances do not allow a returning family to secure enrollment for the fall during the re-enrollment period, please speak to the Executive Director.

Non-Discrimination Policy

HeartSong Montessori admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs or other school-administered programs.

Vaccinations

The school is required to have a vaccination file for each child, which must include a copy of vaccination records, a medical exemption form or a non-medical exemption form. HeartSong Montessori does accept children who have vaccination exemptions.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

Enrollment Agreement

The school year is considered to be continuous from August through May. Parents enroll their children for that period of time. The August to May tuition is divided into equal payments according to a plan (annual, semi-annual, monthly) agreed upon and committed to through the school's enrollment agreement. Allowances or refunds will not be made for phasing-in, illness, vacations or quarantines. Early withdrawal from the year's program will require a 30-day written notice. If 30 days' notice is not given, tuition for the month is still due. Accounts must be up-to-date to be considered for enrollment or re-enrollment.

Tuition Payments

For the 2023-24 school year, the first tuition payment is due on August 15th. Annual payments are due by August 15th. Semi-annual payments are due on August 15th and January 9th. Monthly payments are due on the 15th of each calendar month from August through May. In order for us to meet our financial obligations, we depend upon prompt payment of tuition. A late fee of \$20 will be assessed for payments made after the 25th of the month in which the payment is due. Payments will be made to HeartSong Montessori. There is a \$20 fee for returned checks.

Materials Fee

There is a yearly materials fee for each student of \$150. This provides for consumable art materials and handiwork supplies.

Withdrawal

HeartSong Montessori reserves the right to ask a family to withdraw a child if the behavior of the child or the parents is a safety concern. This can be done without notice if necessary, or with 30 days' notice at the discretion of the Executive Director. Our goal is to ensure the safety of the children, teachers, and families in our school community. If a parent decides to withdraw a child, 30 days written notice will be required and any remaining tuition will be refunded.

Calendar

For 2023-24, the first day of school will be August 21st and the last day of school will be on May 24th.

HeartSong Montessori will be closed for the following holidays:

September 4th, 2023: Labor Day
November 20th to 24th, 2023: Fall Break
December 25th, 2023 to January 5th, 2024: Winter Break
January 15th, 2024: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 19th, 2024: President's Day
March 18th to 22nd, 2024: Spring Break

We have added a teacher professional development day to the calendar. This will mean we will have an early release day once a month. All dates are Fridays. Those dates are September 15th, October 13th, November 3rd, December 22nd, January 26th, February 16th, March 8th, April 12th, and May 10th.

Student Records

All student records are confidential. Parents have the right to review and add comments. Records are released only upon written parental consent and when all financial obligations have been met. Please give the Executive Director sufficient notice if records are to be transferred. We uphold FERPA, or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

DAILY SCHOOL ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

Arrival and Departure

Drop off in the morning will be outside from 8:00 am to 8:30 am, where students will be dropped off at the front gate. There will be a staff member to help check your child in electronically, and to help assist your child with this transition. At pick up time, please wait at the gate, and we will bring the children out to you when they are ready to go home for the day. Families utilizing aftercare will need to come knock on the front door so we know you are here, and then we will assist in getting them ready to go home. Each adult that is authorized to pick up your child will have their own code. Children must always be brought to school by a parent or other authorized adult, and be signed in.

The morning greeting and plans for the day are a valuable part of your child's day. All students and staff members will be moving inside at 8:30 am to prepare for morning circle. Therefore, it is important that you arrive with your child by 8:30 am. **Tardiness is very disruptive to the children and the teachers. If your child will be tardy, please call the school so that we can be prepared for his or her arrival.**

Dismissal for the full day program begins at 3:15 pm and ends at 3:30 pm. Any child picked up after 3:40 pm that has not signed up for aftercare will be charged a \$10 aftercare fee.

During afternoon departures, a staff member will be outside to help students find their parents or designated pick up person, and check for special pick up arrangements. **No child will be allowed to leave the school with someone other than the driver authorized by parents without written permission, or a call by the parent to the school office on the day of the authorization. Please let the authorized person know to bring a photo ID that will be checked before the child is released.**

Parents are requested to inform the school in advance if they plan to pick up their child prior to his or her scheduled dismissal time. This will help the teacher to prepare the child in a timely way without disturbing the classroom.

If a child who is not enrolled in after school care, has not been picked up by 3:35 pm, the staff member will first call the parent, and if unable to contact the parent, the staff member will call all emergency contacts. If after 2 hours, a child still remains at school, the staff member will contact law enforcement who will come pick up the child.

Aftercare

For those families planning to utilize the aftercare program, written or verbal reservations with the Executive Director will be required. Aftercare will be provided from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm and will cost \$10.

Attendance and Tardiness

Regular and punctual attendance is critical to ensuring a positive experience for your child. Consistency and routine are essential elements in a child's Montessori experience. Erratic attendance can lead to missed lessons and interruptions in the child's natural learning process, a sense of alienation from the classroom activities and routine, as well as a feeling of social isolation. Please notify the teacher of any extended absence of your child (anything more than 2 days)

Snow Days and Closures

HeartSong will follow District 51's decisions regarding weather related openings, early closing, and cancellation of school. As soon as we know, we will put a notice on the home page of the website, email and text all parents. Announcements for school closings and late openings can be found on all local television stations and on the Internet.

It may be necessary to close school early. In this circumstance, the school will notify parents and persons authorized for pick up for that day.

Inclement Weather

We will follow the guidelines in the Child Care Weather Watch for both cold and hot weather. In extreme hot weather, we will be doing activities in the shade, making sure students have adequate sun hats and are drinking plenty of water. If there is cold weather, we will make sure the students are properly dressed with a warm hat, jacket and mittens or gloves, if appropriate. If the cold or hot weather is extreme enough to prevent outdoor play, we will provide space and activities for gross motor activities indoors.

Schedule

Our program runs from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday.

8:00 to 8:30 - Arrival time with outdoor play time

8:30 - Handwashing and transition time

8:45 to 9:00 - Circle Time

9:00 to 11:15 - Independent work time

11:15 - Circle Time/lunch set up

11:30 to 12:00 - Lunch

12:00 to 1:00 - Outside recess time

1:00 to 1:45 - Nap time/quiet time

1:45 to 3:00 - Afternoon work period/clean up

3:15 to 3:30 - Pick up time

Discipline

HeartSong Montessori uses positive discipline, which is implemented in a developmentally or age-appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the individual child. Our focus is on how to help children resolve problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and school community. The goal of our discipline policy is to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person as well as the space we share.

The need for discipline within a Montessori classroom is greatly reduced by the prepared environment. The teachers make a point of keeping engaging activities available for the students so there is never a lack of something interesting for each student to do. The teacher may also redesign the work areas, jobs available, number of children allowed in a work area, etc., in response to classroom behavior.

For younger children, the primary method in a Montessori classroom is redirection – moving the child from a disruptive activity and engaging him or her in something more productive. Emphasis is put on directing a child to what they may do (making appropriate choices) rather than telling them what they may not do.

The classroom also utilizes a peace area. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax and calm down, or to try to resolve conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area by her- or himself, or may be requested to visit the area by a teacher, or, in the case of conflict resolution, by another child. On occasion, in the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to collect him or herself and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

Here are the steps that will be taken:

1. Parents will be notified of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school in a timely manner.
2. If it is necessary to involve parents in the resolution of a problem at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation, and with the aim of helping the child. Parental support during that time is very much appreciated.
3. Through conferences, goals will be mutually agreed upon.
4. If the goals cannot be met within an allotted time, further professional help or other school placement will be considered for the child.
5. This last step may result in either suspension or expulsion of the student.
6. Each step will be documented and kept in the student file.

HeartSong Montessori also has access to a mental health consultant if those resources are needed.

Observation of the classroom

After the first few weeks of school, parents are invited to make appointments to observe the classroom. One observer is welcome in the classroom at a time, so be aware that impromptu class visits may not be possible. Please check in with a staff member before visiting the classroom. An observation sheet will be given to you with guidelines for your stay. The teacher will call you to answer questions concerning your visit.

Visitors

All visitors must sign on the visitor log, which is located at the front door.

Snacks

As you can imagine, we stress healthy snacks and lunches for you and your children. We offer snacks of fruit, grain, vegetables or dairy every morning and after school. Please let us know in writing if your child has any specific dietary or food allergies. Some examples of snacks are vegetables and fruits, crackers and cheese, raisins or dried fruit, yogurt and applesauce. At the beginning of the year, we will do family style snacks to establish routines and practice grace and courtesy lessons. After that, the children will have access to the snacks to serve themselves when hungry.

We try to introduce your child to many new fruits and vegetables so they may discover what they enjoy. We ask the same of you for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast is a very important meal in the day and we ask that your child get some form of protein during breakfast, as they are expending a lot of energy during school. Fruit is also important as it is a complex carbohydrate and will last longer than the quick fix of pop tarts or other like items. We suggest eggs, whole grain breads or muffins, fruits, hot cereals, and yogurt as a good start to the day. These foods have “staying power” and your child will be happy to work all morning. Proper food will feed the brain, allowing it to function at a higher level!

Lunches

One of the primary values we have at HeartSong Montessori is to help the children be independent. Please send their lunch items in a lunchbox and containers that they can open and close by themselves. Please send 3 or 4 nutritional, ready to eat finger foods that contain at least one protein. Avoid foods that your child can't manage independently. Please send reusable containers. Consider the environment, and help us reduce the amount of trash and uneaten food thrown away. You may send a cloth napkin if you choose. We will provide utensils for the child to use each day at school. Utensils from home tend to get mixed up in the washing process and do not make it back home. Each child will be responsible for putting their food on their plate and tucking away their lunchbox. We try to send all uneaten food home with the child.

Some other tips:

- Foods that need to be served warm should be sent in a thermos or an insulated container, as the staff cannot facilitate the heating of individual lunches. We do not have a microwave.
- Please make sure that any temperature regulated food is kept cold by using the appropriate ice pack. Our inspections from the health department do include checking the temperatures of food in lunchboxes.
- Most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods rather than a large quantity of only one or two items.
- If your child cannot finish his or her lunch, the remaining food will be sent home in his or her lunch box. This will help you to better gauge the amount needed for your child's lunch.
- Please do not send juice or any other drinks with your child unless approved by the Director. The children will be encouraged to fill up their water bottles and drink water throughout the day. On special occasions, the school may provide special drinks/snacks.
- Candy and gum are not allowed at school. These snacks will be sent home for your child to enjoy once school is over. No gum is allowed at school at any time.

Toileting

We are happy to offer our support in the toilet training process. We recognize that children are capable of amazing things at much younger ages than they get credit for. And toileting is one of them! We offer a loving, natural environment for a child to learn to use the toilet all by themselves. Your child will have multiple role models, as there are many others who are using the toilet with success each day. Once a child acclimates to their environment, we recommend sending them to school in underwear. Bring in several pairs and we will consistently

encourage and remind the child to use the toilet throughout the day. You'll be pleasantly surprised to find your child excitedly indicating when they need to use the toilet, and learning how to pull down and up their pants. We want as much success and joy for your child in this development, so we'll work closely with you throughout the process. Before you know it, your child will be using the toilet comfortably, and will have such pride and joy in their accomplishment! For your information, we use the following terms when speaking to your child about this process: pee, poop, toilet, and bottom (and if necessary, to refer to: vagina and penis).

If you are using cloth diapers, disposables or pull-ups, please send your child with an appropriate amount of those items. You will be notified when the stash is getting low. We use Seventh Generation all-natural wipes. If you prefer something else, please send those in too. If your child needs a diaper cream, it will need to be brought to school labeled with their name. Please do not put in their backpack or bag with them since this is a keep out of reach item.

Birthdays

Children can enjoy having a birthday snack at school. We suggest that parents provide a healthy special snack for their child's celebration. Carrot cupcakes with cream cheese frosting that are decorated with raisins are an example of a popular birthday snack acceptable for school (low sugar, please!). Our birthday celebrations in the classroom take place at 11:00 am and parents/guardians are welcome to participate. During the celebration, the birthday celebrant shares pictures, and the parent/guardian tells the story of the child's life.

Families are encouraged to donate a book to the school library on their child's birthday with a personal inscription. This has proved to be a wonderful way for the children to leave their own legacy at the school and to build the school library in a personal fashion.

Holidays

Holidays and celebrations can be a challenge for young children. All the distractions, noise, and pressures can leave a child feeling out of sorts. Montessori's approach to holidays is to honor and respect the celebrations of all cultures, but to keep holiday activities to a minimum within the classroom. While it is appropriate to study religious and cultural events from a historical and cultural perspective, the school discourages celebrations that cannot be enjoyed by the whole school community.

Toys

Children should not bring toys to school. Such items can easily be lost or broken. Parents are asked to carefully monitor what their children bring to school. Objects from nature or educational items can be brought in to share with the class on any day.

Marking of Belongings

Parents are advised to mark clearly all of their child's belongings including sweaters, jackets, extra clothing, educational items brought to share, books and personal supplies. Each child must keep track of his or her own possessions, as the school is not responsible for lost items. A lost and found is located in the coatroom area. An effort is made to empty the lost and found prior to major school holidays. At the end of the year, remaining items are donated to charity. Please do not send your child to school with any money.

Change of Clothing

Please send in an extra change of clothes for your child in case of spills or accidents. The change of clothing will be kept in a container in their cubby. If the child uses the clothing, it will be sent home and the change of clothing must be replaced the following school day. Please label these with your child's name.

Appropriate Clothing

Clothing worn should allow for independence (i.e., overalls with easy fasteners, elastic waist bands for younger children, and child user-friendly shoes and boots), art projects and outdoor play. Stains cannot be avoided without limiting your child's participation so let them dress in clothes that can get messy. We will play outside every day so please send them in shoes that they can play in. Children who are not totally toilet reliable should wear clothing that is extremely simple for them to get on or off. Loose fitting, elastic waist pants or shorts, or dresses are best for children who are still having 'accidents'.

Because the prepared environment is such an important part of our classroom, we encourage students to wear clothing that is simple and plain and to not include cartoon or superhero characters. These can be a distraction to the students.

Please make sure that during the winter months and on rainy days that your child has appropriate outerwear for outdoor activities. It is not unheard of to take a nature walk in the rain or to build a snowman on a nice winter day! For your child's protection, winter clothing must include a coat, hat or hood, mittens or gloves, snow pants and boots. If your child, due to illness, is unable to participate in outdoor activities, please keep him/her home or come pick up your child early from school.

Children wear slippers or indoor shoes when inside the school. When purchasing slippers or indoor shoes, please opt for plain and simple designs, as this helps minimize classroom distractions

Naps

Preschool children benefit from scheduled periods of rest. This rest may take the form of actual napping or a quiet time for children staying all day or our kindergarteners. At our school, all preschool aged children are required to rest. Children who do not fall asleep within a ½ hour will have a quiet rest time that may involve, but is not limited to, looking at books, listening to music, or other such quiet activities. Naps are available to all children if they need or want to rest during the day. We will provide a cot and sheet for all students that will be laundered weekly. Please send them with a blanket that will be sent home each week to be laundered.

Field Trips

The educational program at HeartSong may be expanded by participation in purposeful, informative field trips that enhance the topics we are studying in the cultural avenue. Field trips will be announced two to four weeks ahead of time to give parents an opportunity to arrange transportation. Parents will be responsible for providing transportation to and from the field trip site. We will also be doing walking field trips that will not need any vehicle transportation. All field trips will require a signed permission slip.

If a parent is late in arriving for school on a day that a field trip is scheduled, the parent is responsible for dropping that child off at the field trip location. There will be no supervisory staff onsite to provide care while we are away.

Media Policy

HeartSong Montessori will not be using any visual media during the school day without specific permission from parents. There will be no TV, videos or tablets used in the classroom. Occasionally there will be music played either in the background or to use for educational purposes to teach music.

COMMUNICATION

Website

The school's web page is the hub of information for all school activities. The school calendar and parent forms can be found by checking the *Parent Information* page on the school's website: www.heartsonmontessori.com. All written notices (permission slips, notes, etc.) will be sent via email.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held two times annually and are scheduled as part of the school calendar in the fall, and spring. If an emergency on conference day makes an appointment inconvenient, please call to schedule a different time. The teacher may invite a child to a conference when appropriate. Special meetings may be scheduled at any time during the year as desired by the school or the family.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Emergency Care

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the school will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file will be consulted immediately and the parents will be called. If necessary, the child will be transported to the hospital by ambulance or emergency vehicle. The consent statement, signed by parents, will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of the parent. It is **imperative** that you keep the emergency contact information up-to-date!

Illness and Medication

For the sake of others, as well as the child, we ask that you don't send your child to school when he or she is sick.

Sometimes it is difficult to tell if your child is not well enough to attend school so here are some suggested guidelines.

- Has a fever of 100 degrees or more
- Has yellow or green mucus coming out of the nose
- Has had diarrhea or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Is not able to participate in usual classroom activities, including outdoor play

We also ask that parents please take a moment to call or email the school and let us know your child is ill. We need to know the time of onset of symptoms, the symptoms, and duration of symptoms for our records for the health department. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis or chicken pox, please tell the school so that we may inform parents of illnesses their child may be exposed to. This helps parents and their medical professionals target treatment, and save office visits and money. The staff cannot adequately inform parents of what is going around unless the parents take time to let the staff know.

Should a child become ill at school, parents will be notified and arrangements will be made to take the child home.

Students can return back to school when they are symptom free from diarrhea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. A doctor's note can be required for certain contagious diseases. Ultimately, the Executive Director reserves the right to have final determination of the return of a student.

Those parents whose children are exempted from immunization due to medical or religious belief will be notified when a communicable illness is present in the school. The children must be kept home until officially notified to return. In order to maintain a state of wellness in the school community, the school may exercise the option to exempt any child from attendance due to illness.

Medication

- a. The staff will administer prescription medication only upon written order from a physician or according to the original pharmacy label on the original medicine container and with a written, signed, and dated request from the parent.
- b. The staff will not administer any non-prescription medication to a child without written, signed, and dated parental permission naming the medication and dosage.
- c. Children who require medication to control a fever should be kept home.

Sunscreen and Diaper Cream

Each parent will be asked to fill out a topical preparations permission form that will allow the school to apply sunscreen and diaper cream as needed. Parents should apply sunscreen if needed before school, and the teachers will reapply sunscreen after lunch. We use Garden Goddess SPF 30, a natural sunscreen with zinc oxide. If you have a personal preference on sunscreen please send that with your child on the first day of school and we will store it here.

Injuries

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered by a qualified staff member (teachers and assistants are certified in first aid) and the child will be made as comfortable as possible. A written accident report will be filled out for any injury requiring first aid, and the report will be given to the parent at the end of the school day. On occasion, parents will be called regarding accidents or injuries that do not require emergency care, but may require a parent's further attention, or for which a parent may want to seek non-emergency medical care.

Please note that while every effort is made to give parents an accident report in a timely manner, there may be situations when an accident is communicated verbally before the report is completed (e.g. a minor injury occurring on the playground just before pickup time).

Safety Onsite and Supervision

HeartSong will strictly follow minimum staff ratios of 1 staff member to 10 students. Students will be supervised at all times in the classroom and outdoors. An attendance sheet will be printed each day and regular head counts will be recorded on that daily sheet. Head counts will be performed during all transition times including going outside for recess, lunch time, and afternoon pick-ups.

Emergency Plan

HeartSong Montessori maintains an emergency preparedness plan for emergencies that may affect the school. The plan is reviewed annually. The emergency plan is kept in the front room and can be viewed by any member of the school community. Parents will be given the information sheet on emergency evacuations and sites.

Requirement to Report Abuse and Neglect

The staff at HeartSong Montessori is required, by Colorado State Law and licensing regulations, to report immediately, to the police or Department of Human Services any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, or child neglect or exploitation. They will call the Department of Human Services at 970-242-1211.

The staff may not be able to notify parents when the police or Department of Human Services is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This depends on the recommendation of the Department of Human Services.

If you have concerns about this child care facility and would like to file a complaint against the facility, you may contact:

Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Division of Early Care and Learning, Child Care Licensing and Administration at 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO, 80203-1714 or call 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Volunteers

To support the education of the children of our school community, we encourage all parents to become active participants in the school through volunteering, and by becoming familiar with the curriculum of the school and its underlying Montessori philosophy. Such participation is not only rewarding for parents, but supports our mission of setting an example for the children of building and serving our community.

There are many ways that parents can support HeartSong Montessori through participating in work days, completing curriculum projects and repairs, taking laundry home each week, bringing in practical life materials like flowers and oranges, and volunteering in the classroom. A minimum of six (6) hours of volunteer work will be required by each family over the course of the school year. A sign-up sheet will be provided to families prior to the start of each month to sign-up for various tasks as determined by the Executive Director. If parent volunteer tasks are not fulfilled by the week prior to them being due, the Executive Director will designate a parent to complete that task. The Executive Director will determine dates for school deep cleanings twice per year. Families are required to participate in at least one school deep clean per year in addition to the six (6) hours of yearly volunteer work.

Classroom Participation

Parents who have a talent, career or hobby that they think would be interesting to the children are encouraged to make arrangements with the class teacher to set up a time to share their skill and knowledge with the children.

Parents are also encouraged to share anything they may have to aid in our different curriculum studies. Please work with the class teacher to develop your talent, information or hobby into a presentation that will be developmentally appropriate for the children. The teacher will discuss with you the guidelines for working in a Montessori environment. It is quite different from a traditional educational environment, and you will be given tips on how to gear your presentation that is complementary to the Montessori Method.

Parent Education

The school has several parent education workshops during the school year. These get-togethers are a way to help parents better understand what their children are doing in the classroom each day and to help parents carry out the Montessori philosophy in their own home. There are also meetings to familiarize parents with the different curriculum areas of the classroom, and workshops at the beginning of the school year to help new Montessori parents get acquainted with the Montessori philosophy. Many of the questions that come up during a given school year are answered at these events, so we encourage your attendance. These events are structured as “Bring your Parents to School Nights” so your child also can act as an “educator”, teaching you the materials that he/she is learning to master. All staff will also be on hand to add depth and answer your questions about the materials and/or curriculum.