

# PARENT HANDBOOK



MONTESSORI  
*children's center*

SHOWING LOVE THE MONTESSORI WAY

1000 Miners Road, St. Joseph, MI 49085  
[www.MontessoriChildrensCenter.com](http://www.MontessoriChildrensCenter.com)

Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

Updated 2023

# From the Board of Directors

## Mission Statement

Our mission at Montessori Children's Center is to deliver a balanced Montessori program enriched with Christian values aimed at unlocking each child's potential, building confidence, ensuring independence, and laying the foundation for their future. We adopt Dr. Maria Montessori's teaching methods to develop the whole child intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

## Vision

MCC envisions nurturing students with strong moral character who can become pillars of the community. Our goal is to provide children with the tools for intellectual inquiry and conscientious action, empowering them to appreciate and promote the well-being of their physical and social environments within and beyond the school community.

## Philosophy

Montessori Children's Center is committed to providing a socially and academically enriched multi-age learning environment. Utilizing Montessori pedagogy, integrated with Christian values, we allow everyone to develop mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually at their own pace, helping them reach their fullest potential.

Our dedicated and trained teachers aim to empower each child to become independent, capable individuals, fostering respect and love for self and others. MCC's goal is to acknowledge and respect each child's unique learning style and individual needs. We aspire to instill in every child a joy and love for learning.

# Montessori Approach

Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, and researcher, created a unique educational method based on her studies of children. Her critical work led to her being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

Her philosophy is based on the idea that children naturally want to learn and can do so independently in a well-prepared environment. This method promotes a child's development in all aspects — physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual.

The Montessori classroom comprises mixed-age groups, promoting learning from peers. This allows children to learn at their own pace and respects different ways of learning. Older children help younger ones, reinforcing their own knowledge.

In this system, the teacher, child, and environment work together. The teacher's job is to create an environment that encourages independence and order. The child uses the environment for their own development, with the teacher's support when needed. Teachers are encouraged to "follow the child" through observation, helping them understand each student's strengths, interests, and

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challenges.

Montessori teachers aim to:

- 1) Inspire a child's spirit and imagination,
- 2) Support a child's desire for independence and self-esteem,
- 3) Help a child to be kind, courteous, and self-disciplined,
- 4) Teach a child to observe, question, and explore ideas independently.

Dr. Maria Montessori noticed that children have "sensitive periods" during their development. Teachers use appropriate lessons and materials during these times when learning is most effective. The Montessori method believes that children learn best through experience and discovery. Young children learn by using their senses and movement. The learning materials used encourage logical thought and discovery.

These materials are appealing and simple, and they are designed to teach one concept or skill at a time. They are arranged in order from simplest to most complex. The classroom environment encourages children's independence. Students move freely around the room, often working independently or in small groups. The Montessori curriculum covers many areas, including language arts, mathematics, everyday living skills, sensory awareness exercises, geography, history, science, culture, art, music, drama, movement, and Spanish. The curriculum starts with simple and concrete concepts in the early years, which are revisited over time with increasing complexity. This integrated approach is one of the key features of Montessori education.

WELCOME to Montessori Children's Center. On the pages to follow, the center's policies and procedures will be explained in detail. Many of the rules and regulations are imposed by the state licensing agencies and are based on their findings of what best maintains the safety and health of children in group-care settings. **PLEASE KEEP THIS HANDBOOK IN AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE PLACE TO USE AS A HANDY REFERENCE GUIDE** that will help you know what is expected and needed. Please feel free to also ask questions at any time of the director and lead-teacher if something is unclear. We care very much about your feedback and concerns, and we welcome your participation and involvement.

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## NOTIFICATION OF LICENSING NOTEBOOK

A copy of all inspection reports will be placed in a Licensing Notebook in the program director's office for parent access. To view the notebook, please make arrangements with the program director.

- The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans since our opening in 2023.
- The licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past 2 years are available on the childcare licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

## FUNDRAISING

As an independent, non-profit school, Montessori Children's Center (MCC) continually strives to uphold the highest quality of education and provide enriching experiences for our students. To achieve this, we lean on a combination of tuition fees and additional sources of funding. We cordially invite our current and alumni families, grandparents, staff, board members, and friends within the community to contribute to this cause. Whether it's participating in our sales initiatives or giving directly, every bit of support is invaluable to us.

We sincerely appreciate these financial contributions as they help us keep tuition fees affordable, ensuring our ability to cater to a diverse group of students. All donations are tax-deductible, with MCC's tax identification number being 26-2320264.

We have several ongoing fundraisers, including partnerships with Martin's, Meijer, and the Target give-back programs. Detailed information about these initiatives is provided at the start of the school year, and we frequently remind our community about these opportunities in our monthly newsletters. Throughout the year, we also launch special fundraising events.

It's important to note that these funds directly benefit the students, classrooms, and facilities. They are not directed toward our operating budget. Therefore, parents have the liberty to decide their level of involvement. We provide transparency about the funds raised and their specific usage so that parents can see the direct impact of their contributions.

We actively encourage and welcome parents to participate in and even lead these events. Together, we can ensure that the Montessori Children's Center continues to offer an exceptional educational environment for our children.

## HOURS/DAYS OF OPERATION AND AGES SERVED

The Center offers a comprehensive childcare program year-round for children ages 6 weeks through age 12 years, and Montessori Preschool and Kindergarten through the calendar year for children 3 through 7 years of age. The childcare program is open Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., and is open during school breaks, excluding the scheduled days off noted in the school calendar. School calendars are distributed every September and are available throughout the year in the school office.

## ADMISSION POLICY

Prior to a child's first day of attendance, the following items must be in your child's file:

- Application and Contract (which includes child information record, reserved days of attendance, school-age health statement, and tuition express form)
- Immunization record (for children not yet in school)
- Food program forms
- Health form (if we have immunization on file, the completed health form must be on file within 30 days of the child's first day.)

## REGISTRATION

Current users are allowed first choice for each subsequent school year. New users may register children the week after "current user" registration. Registration fees must accompany registration form(s) to reserve the requested attendance slots.

## REGISTRATION FEES

Registration fees are a part of registration and must be paid to complete that process and reserve your desired attendance slot. This fee compensates for the time and paperwork required for enrollment and is, therefore, nonrefundable if you cancel or withdraw.

## DAYS MISSED

You will be held responsible for all of the days your child is scheduled to be in care. If you can provide a doctor's written note that your child must be absent for more than a week, you will not be expected to pay for any days missed after the first week for that particular illness. We have scheduled staff to cover those times, and a child's absence does not reduce the center's budgetary obligations for that day.

If your child will be absent on a scheduled day, please call to notify us of your child's absence and the reason for it. We are required to keep a record of absences for each

child's file. Please notify us as soon as possible of any illness that may be contagious so that we can notify other parents and staff if needed. If a child fails to show up for more than two scheduled days in a row, and we have not received a call from the parent, we will call the parent to document the reason for the child's absence.

## COSTS/FEES

A separate rate sheet will accompany this handbook and will also be included in any registration and/or enrollment information given to parents. A yearly tuition increase will be reflected on the first day of September of each year.

## PAYMENT

On the first day of each month, tuition for the full month is due.

Montessori Children's Center requires all families to have a kangarootime account on file which will allow an automatic deduction from checking, saving, or a credit/debit card. This service will allow us to process our payments quickly and is a safe, secure, and convenient payment option. Parents will be asked to complete an application for automatic withdrawal of funds from their checking account or credit card account at the time of registration.

Our tuition rates are pro-rated with consideration of holidays and closings due to weather, power outages, etc... therefore, no credit will be given for center closings.

## ADDITIONAL FEES

**Returned Payments:** Returned payments will be charged a service fee of \$25.00 and will be billed to your account automatically.

**Late Payments:** Monthly tuition payments are billed to your account in advance. If a tuition payment does not process due to insufficient funds in the account, payment must be made by cash no later than the following morning (including the \$25.00 service fee. Payments made more than one day after the due date are considered late, and a late charge will automatically be billed to your account in the amount of \$25.00. A past due balance, as of 6 pm on the day following the payment due date, will result in suspended enrollment until your account has been paid in full. There are no discounts for missed days due to illness, snow, or holidays.

**Schedule Changes:** A \$10 fee may be charged for changes in the schedule during the contract period.

**NO REFUNDS FOR PERIODS OF ABSENCE**



## NO CREDIT FOR VACATIONS

## SNOW DAYS - CANCELLATIONS

If the community public school's classes are canceled or delayed due to inclement weather conditions, all MCC classes will be closed.

## LATE PICK-UP / EARLY ARRIVAL FINES

In order to maintain compliance with state regulations concerning the staff-to-child ratio, there are heavy penalties for early drop-off or late pick-up when no appointment has been made. You must schedule additional appointment time if you need to bring your child at a time not previously reserved, including dropping off earlier than usual or picking up later. Be sure to allow necessary time for travel. If children are dropped off before their scheduled time or picked up after their scheduled time, a \$10.00 fee, as well as an additional \$1.00 per minute charge, will be added to your account for each child. All late fees are due and payable within the week incurred; these fines are your responsibility and will NOT be billed to the DHS.

If there is an emergency that keeps you from picking your child up from the center on time, please call immediately to notify us that you will be late.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A two-week written notice before the end of the month must be given to the Center before canceling your child's enrollment, and you will continue to be billed for tuition until a 2-week written notice is received. No refunds for mid-month withdrawals will be given. You will be liable for all scheduled time during the month, including the full 2-week period of notice. There is a \$10.00 fee for all withdrawals.

## BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

As members of the Montessori Children's Center, a community founded on Christian principles and mutual respect, we have expectations for all children to respect their peers, staff members, and the resources and environment around them.

School Community Objectives:

- Cultivate an environment where a sense of community and kindness is the standard.
- Uphold values of respect, tranquility, and cooperativeness among students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
- Nurture a collective commitment to these values throughout the entire school community, ensuring consistency when handling disciplinary issues.

### Montessori Approach:

Our staff members implement Dr. Maria Montessori's guidelines on freedom and self-discipline:

- We design a school environment that promotes positive behavior.
- We establish clear, fair, and consistently applied rules and boundaries.
- We respect behavior appropriate for a child's age and developmental level.
- We guide children towards acceptable activities and behaviors.
- Within the realms of safety and common sense, we allow children to understand the logical consequences of their actions, for example, cleaning up after spilling paint.
- We assist children in expressing their feelings and frustrations verbally and resolve conflicts. Students may solve problems independently or seek help from peers, teachers, or other staff members.
- We address behavioral issues promptly to maintain a secure and respectful community.
- Our overarching goal is to support the child in managing problems positively. Physical punishment, verbal abuse, or withholding food are unacceptable disciplinary methods.

### Behavioral Guidelines:

We believe every member of the Montessori Children's Center community has the right to a safe and healthy environment, respectful interactions, freedom from harassment and abuse, and a conducive learning setting. In alignment with these rights, all students are expected to:

- Strive for educational and personal objectives.
- Take responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
- Uphold honesty.
- Always exhibit Christian values such as respect, kindness, compassion, and consideration.
- Maintain self-control, and refrain from disruptive behavior, harassment, and abuse.
- Treat everyone within the school community with respect and dignity.
- Respect instructions from staff, teachers, and administrators.
- Adhere to the school's policies and procedures.
- Respect personal and school property, including playgrounds.
- Engage in peaceful interactions.

### **Sexual Harassment:**

Everyone at the School has a right to feel respected and safe. Consequently, sexual harassment by any student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel, which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to, the following: name-calling, jokes or rumors, pulling on clothing, graffiti, notes or cartoons, unwelcome touching of a person or clothing, offensive or graphic posters or book covers, or words or actions that cause discomfort, embarrassment, hurt or bad feelings.

Students should inform the teachers or the Director if any words or actions make them feel uncomfortable or fearful. Students/parents may also make a written report. It should be given to a teacher or the Director. A student's right to privacy will be respected as much as possible. We take all reports of sexual harassment seriously and will take all appropriate actions based on your report. The school will also act if anyone tries to

intimidate you or your child or takes action to cause harm because of the report.

## CENTER DIRECTED WITHDRAWAL POLICY

For cases in which a child's behavior is unacceptable, and the staff cannot be effective in helping the child to correct the behavior, the following steps will be taken. The parent will be asked to meet with the Executive Director and/or one or both of the Program Directors to discuss the situation. The parent will be given a period of time (for example, 2 weeks to help the child reach goals set by the center directors.

Suggestions will be given for outside resources if needed and may be required to keep the child enrolled during the observation period. If the child's behavior improves enough to meet the goals set by the directors, the child will be allowed to remain enrolled in the program. If, however, the behavior does not improve significantly enough to be acceptable in the classroom consistently, the parent will be asked to find other care for the child. The child will be able to return only if a mental health professional provides a written recommendation for the child to be re-enrolled in the program.

Examples of unacceptable behaviors include but is not limited to:

- Hurting other children, self, or staff by hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, or throwing things
- Causing damage to center property on purpose or as a result of behaviors such as throwing, kicking, or knocking items over while angry
- Spitting at or on people
- Threats of violence against other children or staff
- Repeated use of profanity around other children and staff
- The behavior of a sexual nature that disrespects personal boundaries
- Consistent failure to follow instructions or rules
- Running out of the classroom \*

\*In cases where a child runs out of the building, the parent will be required to pick up the child, and the child will not be able to return to the center. Keeping children safe is our top priority, and if a child is determined to put himself or herself in harm's way by trying to run out of the building, we cannot keep him or her safe.

## CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

When picking up or dropping off children, the parent/guardian will use the center-provided phone application for secure entry into the building. Visitors or adults picking students up who are not yet registered may ring the doorbell for assistance.

## CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

Classroom Groups are arranged primarily based on age; however, in some cases,

children will be placed for their benefit into a different group:

Infants.....6 weeks – 18 months  
Toddlers..... 15 months – 2 ½ years  
Multi-Age Pre-Primary..... 2 ½ - 4 years (not toilet independent)  
Primary.... 3 - 7 years old  
Summer Camp .....3 - 12 years of age

Wrap-around ages may combine as necessary to keep a group size appropriate for student interaction.

## DIAPERING AND DEVELOPING TOILET INDEPENDENCE

Diapers and wipes are provided for all infants, toddlers and older toddlers, and young preschoolers who are not yet toilet independent. If your child is not toilet independent, a plan to support this area of development must be worked out between the teaching staff and a parent.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Enrollment of children with special needs will be accepted if the Center has appropriately trained staff who can adequately meet those needs. The Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child who has special needs, which the director and consultants decide are too complex for the Center's programs to meet. The consultants can be any combination of the following: the board of directors, the program director and/or the administrative director, the child's teacher, the child's physician, the licensing consultant, and any others deemed necessary by the director. A written report will be composed if a child is denied service stating the specific reason(s) why.

## SNACKS AND MEALS

### **Center Provided Food:**

1. Montessori Children's Center will provide one snack in the morning and one afternoon snack; parents are responsible for feeding children breakfast before they arrive at the center and for sending a lunch for their children.
2. Montessori Children's Center will have emergency meals on-site so that no child is deprived of lunch if the parent fails to provide it. Emergency lunches are shelf-stable meals such as Chicken Salad accompanied by Sunflower Kernels, Craisins, Whole Grain Crackers, and 100% juice, and will be charged to the parents' regular monthly bill at \$5 per meal used.

### **Daily Food & Beverage Policy:**

1. All breast milk, formula, milk, or other beverages must come in clean, sanitary,

- ready-to-feed bottles or containers.
2. Any food or beverages must be consumed or taken home each day; the center will discard any remaining items at the day's end.
  3. All food, including items that require refrigeration, must be placed in a container clearly labeled with your child's first and last name and the date before being left at the center.
  4. To maintain the integrity of each child's diet, food, and beverages will only be given to the child whose name appears on the label.

### **Food Heating & Temperature Control:**

1. Our center is equipped with bottle warmers for infant formula. However, we do not have facilities to heat food in the classrooms.
2. Parents must provide meals that do not require warming, or for foods that need to stay warm, please use a thermos.
3. Cold foods should be sent with an ice pack in an insulated lunch bag to ensure they remain at a safe temperature until consumed.

## INFANT FEEDING POLICY

Parents must send as many ready-to-serve bottles as the child will use during the day. Bottles must be taken home at the end of each day for washing. Bottles of formula and perishable foods needing refrigeration will be refrigerated. Foods will be covered and labeled as to the contents, date of opening, and the specific child for whom its use is intended.

Formula and milk left in a bottle at the end of the feeding will be discarded.

A child unable to sit in a highchair or at a feeding table will be held in a semi-sitting position or placed in an infant seat while being fed.

Children will be held when the bottle is given - we do not "prop" a bottle to feed a child. If a child resists the bottle being held by the caregiver, the child can hold the bottle. However, the caregiver will still hold the child while the bottle is being consumed.

Commercial baby food containers that are opened will be covered, dated, and refrigerated. The contents will be used or discarded within a 36-hour period after opening. A child will not be fed directly from baby food containers if the contents are to be fed to the child at more than one sitting or to more than one child.

## BIRTHDAY TRADITIONS

Every classroom at Montessori Children's Center cherishes the importance of birthdays and has unique traditions to mark these special days. If these details were not shared during orientation, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher for more

information.

#### The Birthday Book Tradition:

Incorporating the presentation of a birthday book into the school can be a delightful part of your child's birthday celebration. A book is a timeless gift, offering joy and learning every time it's read. We will inscribe your child's name inside the cover of the book, marking it as their unique contribution. If you're considering a "birthday book," feel free to ask your child's teacher for recommendations or allow your child to select one of their favorite books.

#### Celebrating Birthdays at the Center:

At Montessori Children's Center, we take pride in celebrating each child's birthday on or as close as possible to their actual birthdate. Parents are welcome to bring a special birthday treat to make the day extra memorable. We ensure that every child's birthday is celebrated. For birthdays that fall during summer months or school breaks, parents are invited to select a convenient date for us to celebrate.

#### Outside-of-School Birthday Parties:

We understand that many families choose to celebrate their child's birthdays outside of school. Please remain sensitive to the feelings of all your child's classroom and do not bring invitations to personal birthday parties to the center unless the child's entire class is invited.

## HEALTH ISSUES

State law requires that a child's "Health and Physician Record" must be completed by a physician, showing up-to-date immunizations and given to the Center before the child's first day of attendance. The completed health form must show evidence of a complete physical within 6 months prior to enrollment (3 months prior for ages 6 weeks to 21/2 years). An updated form is required yearly until the child is in elementary school and every 2 years thereafter.

## ILLNESS POLICY

The Center will refuse attendance of any child with a communicable illness. If your child does contract a communicable illness, please notify the director so that we can notify other parents as well. (Notify us of all other absences also, please.) We are required to refuse the attendance of any child with lice (or nits). The child must be checked by the director (or person in charge) before returning to class.

You may not bring your child to the center if he/she has a fever (101 F or above) or diarrhea (defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern and that are not contained by toilet use) or vomiting within the last 24 hours. (Giving a child Tylenol, etc., to reduce his/her temperature to normal does not take away the illness itself; it is still contagious to other children.)

A child who becomes ill while at the Center, with a fever of 101 F or above, or who is found to have a discharge of thick, green mucous, or who is otherwise obviously ill, will be isolated from the other children. Parents will be notified by phone and must come to get the child immediately after receiving the message.

Parents are expected to keep the office updated fully on how and where they can be contacted in case of an emergency.

If parents cannot be reached, others who have been designated on the child's forms to be called in case of emergency and given permission to pick up the child will be contacted and asked to come to get the child.

The child cannot return to the Center until he/she has been fever-free, diarrhea-free, etc., for 24 hours, without the aid of Tylenol and such medications. Sick children who are sent home from the Center may be asked to bring a doctor's permission slip to return to school. Also, a child having a communicable disease may be required to have a doctor's permission slip to return to school. These decisions will be made by the Center's director or his or her designee if absent.

## MEDICATION POLICY

Children are not to be given any prescription medication without signed permission from the parent and their doctor. Prescription medication must be in its original container with the child's name, name of medication, dosage, frequency, and name of physician on it and the prescription # visible. Over-the-counter medication may be given according to the instructions on the medication bottle and only with written permission from parents and a completed and signed "Medication Request" form (from the Center) to tell the staff what days, times, etc., to give the medication.

The director or lead teacher in charge will be responsible for giving the medication and recording it properly. All medications are to be stored in the refrigerator or in a locked box. No burn creams or other medications for injury may be used. Only soap and water and any bandage as needed. Always wash hands before assisting a child with cleaning a scrape or other bleeding injury, and always wear gloves for assisting with an open wound.

## MONTESSORI GUIDANCE POLICY

The goal of this center is to create an encouraging environment for children and adults, one where positive phrases and tones of voice are used to guide children toward appropriate behavior and positive self-esteem, which will create the best possible environment for all other learning and development.

### **Montessori Goals for Behavior:**



The staff will use Montessori's guidelines on freedom and self-discipline.  
Preparing the school environment in a way that promotes desirable behavior.  
Setting rules and limits that are clear, fair, and consistently applied.  
Accepting behavior that is appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.  
Redirecting the child toward acceptable and appropriate activities and behavior.  
Allowing a child, within the bounds of safety and common sense, to experience the logical consequences of his/her actions (e.g., cleaning up after pouring a cup of water on the floor).

Helping the child to express his/her feelings and frustrations verbally and to resolve conflicts. Students may attempt to solve problems themselves or may seek out/require help from other students, teachers, or staff members.  
Dealing promptly with behavior problems to maintain a safe and mutually respectful community.

Our goal throughout this process is to help the child work through any problem in a positive manner. Unacceptable discipline methods are physical punishment in any form, verbal abuse, or withholding food.

### **The Following Guidelines Help Us to Create an Encouraging Environment:**

The child's safety, interest, and welfare always come first, and every child is treated with unconditional positive regard.

Developmentally appropriate activities will be planned according to the needs based on observations of each child and of the group.

In cases of severe mistaken behavior,

- such as biting or hitting in the toddler room, the child will be stopped immediately from the action, told the word "no," and will be shown how to give "gentle touches" to the other child.
- such as hitting in the preschool and kindergarten classrooms, the child may need to be removed from the situation to cool down, and once the child is calm, the teacher will talk to the child about the consequences of the behavior. The teacher and child (and parents, when possible) will work together to come up with ideas to handle a similar situation the next time.

Guidance takes place in every interaction between adult and child and in every behavior that is modeled for the child. Teachers and parents should work together to help the child develop the skills needed to make good choices now and in the future.

## **SIGNIFICANT OCCURRENCES, ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS**

Any significant occurrences or problems that affect your child while at the center will be reported to you. This includes any known exposure to a communicable disease, any accidents or injuries, any significant (out of the ordinary for that age group) mistakes in behavior, behaviors that hurt others, or when your child has been hurt by another child, or any other occurrence affecting the well-being of your child. When and how you are notified will depend on the seriousness of the occurrence. For example, parents will be called by the program director or lead teacher as soon as possible if a child has a head



injury but will receive a written injury report signed by the teacher and program director at pick-up if the child falls and skins his or her knee.

## RESTROOM ARRANGEMENTS

Several “bathroom times” are scheduled during the day. Of course, if any child needs to use the restroom outside of that time, they will be taken by one of the staff unless the child is old enough and/or responsible enough to go by him/herself.

## OUTDOOR PLAY POLICY

We are required to take all children outside daily if the temperature (and wind chill) is 25 F or above unless the weather is otherwise inclement. We cannot keep any child inside at these times unless we have a physician’s note stating that it is required. It is assumed that if a child is well enough to be here, he/she is well enough to participate in the program as planned. Please send your child the appropriate outdoor wear daily, including snow pants, mittens, boots, etc., when needed. Please label everything that your child brings to the center. All mittens/gloves must be attached, in some way, to your child’s coat - either using clips or a string threaded through the sleeves, etc.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

You are welcome to visit your child at any time. We require that all visitors immediately announce their presence to the Director. For the safety and protection of your child, this open-door policy is limited to custodial parents and guardians of children enrolled in our program. Non-custodial parents, other relatives, or friends of children enrolled are not included in this open-door policy. Anyone else who wants to visit or observe a specific child in a classroom must have been previously given permission by the parent on the forms in that child’s file. Parents are encouraged to give us input regarding policies and procedures and plans for meeting children’s individual needs. This can be done at any time during your child’s enrollment at the Center. We value parental input and recognize that it is essential to meeting the individual needs of each child. Changes in your child’s daily schedule, teacher changes, or room changes will be discussed with you before decisions are made. Parents are also welcome to help out in any way possible with such things as field trips and parties or special projects that teachers might plan. Parent-Teacher conferences will be arranged between teachers and parents to occur twice per year. “Progress Reports” will be given to parents at that time. In addition, please feel free to communicate with your child’s teacher on a very regular basis. We hope to establish a relationship between parent and teacher(s) that is based on openness, sharing, and an attitude of cooperative “teamwork”.

We feel sure that this will greatly enhance the child’s benefits from the program and our ability to meet his/her needs more adequately. Parent-teacher communication is vital to ensure that children experience smooth transitions from one program to another during the day and from one year to the next. Teacher changes and/or room changes will be

discussed with you before decisions are made, and we seek your input and specific ideas in working through any difficulties your child may be experiencing in the program.

## VOLUNTEERS

From time to time, the Center will have volunteers from family members of children and volunteers wanting work experience toward a college degree. Please relate any concerns or problems regarding volunteers or aides, or new employees to the director or person in charge as soon as possible. Volunteers and observers are not allowed to be counted in the ratio of child to staff, except for field trip helpers (when the ratio must be doubled). A volunteer is never left alone with a child or group of children. Long-term volunteers must submit to a criminal history background check. Any volunteer found to be ill or who becomes ill while at the center will be required to leave and will not be permitted to have contact with any of the children until determined to be well and no longer communicable. You must be fever-free (without the aid of Tylenol, etc.) for 24 hours before returning to work after being sick. A doctor's note of permission to return to the center may be required in certain cases, at the discretion of the director.

All staff and volunteers, including volunteers who are parents of a child in care must undergo a background check and any person found to be registered on the public sex offender registry (PSOR) is prohibited from having contact with any child in care. A supervised volunteer does not include the rare occasions when parents accompany their child on a special activity such as a classroom party or field trip, when the parent is only with their child and has no responsibility for classroom activities.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Children may not bring toys, food (unless pre-arranged to replace a meal/snack), or money into the center. Our materials and equipment have been carefully selected to provide a safe and stimulating environment, and they are shared by all children. Personal items are not to be brought from home unless it is specifically requested by the center or by your child's teacher for a project, learning activity, or special event. We will occasionally have a "share and tell" day, and the children will be asked to share something special from home at that time. The teachers may ask that your child bring an item that correlates with the monthly curriculum theme or concept. Please choose those items wisely and keep in mind, The Children's Center cannot be responsible for loss or damage to personal belongings.

## DRESS CODE

Our learning program is fun and hands-on, and our learning often gets messy. All clothing and other items should be comfortable and suitable for safety when running and playing.

**Clothing:** Be sure to dress your children in casual, comfortable, and weather-appropriate clothing. It is important that clothing is easy for the children and/or teachers to manipulate. Furthermore, because we are a Christian facility, we ask that you avoid sending your child in clothing that displays logos, characters, or advertisements directly or indirectly promoting anti-Christian values.

**Shoes:** Rubber-soled shoes are necessary to avoid serious falls and are required during all activities. Sandals are likely to cause your child discomfort while participating in outdoor play, and we, therefore, ask that you not allow your child to wear them to the center. For safety reasons, flip-flops and boots are not allowed. (Snow boots can be worn outside)

**Extra Clothing:** Every child, regardless of age, must have, at the Center at all times, a complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear. Also, you may bring a lightweight sweater or sweatshirt to keep here in case of unexpected cool weather.

**Winter Clothing:** You must bring shoes for the child to change into when he/she wears boots to the Center; boots are not allowed to be worn inside. Hats, mittens, snow pants, etc., are also needed in the winter as we do go outdoors every day when the temperature is above 25 F (and it is not raining, of course). Please label every item with your child's name.

**Nap Items:** Every child who attends in the afternoon must have a sheet and a child-size blanket for rest/nap times. You may also send a small pillow (infant size). Our storage space is small, so please do not send regular-sized pillows or blankets. Please be sure that your child's name is on each article that is brought. We will put names on anything which is not labeled (using a permanent marker) to avoid confusion. Napping materials must be taken home every week and washed and returned the following week.

## GRIEVANCE POLICY

In order to ensure that staff and families have an effective way of negotiating difficulties and differences that arise, the following procedure has been developed. If a parent has any concerns or is anyway dissatisfied with the center's procedures, curriculum, or the child's environment while at the center, He or She should notify the child's teacher of the concern. If there is a problem that the teacher is not equipped to handle, or if the parent is not satisfied with the teacher's response, He or She should meet with the director. If the director feels that the director and staff members cannot handle the problem; or if the parent is still not satisfied that the situation has appropriately been handled, the parent may write a letter to the board of directors to address the problem. The board will take whatever action they feel is necessary to correct the situation.

If a teacher or other staff member has a concern with a parent or other member of a child's family, the teacher will first discuss the concern with the director. If the director feels that the problem must be addressed with the parent, a conference will be arranged between the teacher and the parent, and the director will be present. If the problem

cannot be resolved, it can be presented to the board of directors for their consideration of the problem. The board will take whatever action is necessary to correct the situation.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**INJURY:** In case of serious injury, the emergency number on the health form will be called. If that person is not available, the child's doctor will be contacted. If the doctor cannot be reached, the child will be taken to the emergency room. (If we feel the injury may be life-threatening, a 911 emergency call will be made first) In case of minor accidents, the parents will be informed on the day itself. All accidents will be documented on an "accident report" form and placed in your child's file.

**FIRE AND TORNADO:** A monthly fire drill program and a seasonal tornado drill program will be established and implemented to ensure prompt evacuation of the building in case of an emergency. This will be done in a manner as not to frighten your child but to assure him of his safety. We feel that a continuing education program will be more effective and less stressful for all of us in case of a real emergency.

## HEALTH CARE POLICY

### Hand Washing Policy

All staff members must wash their hands under running warm water with soap for at least 10 seconds upon arrival to work and:

- before handling food to be served to children.
- after using restroom facilities or assisting children in the restroom, or after diapering a child.
- after wiping a child's nose.
- after coming in contact with any bodily fluids or secretions.

### Guidelines for diapering and hand washing

- / Diapering is only to occur in this area or in the bathroom.
- / The diaper pail must be emptied at least once per day.
- / When cleaning a child during diapering, disposable wipes must be used.
- / Diapers should be checked frequently and changed when wet or soiled.
- / The caregiver should wash hands after each diapering and with any contact with bodily fluids.
- / Toilet training must occur according to the center's written policy and signed by a parent when children are ready to learn this skill.
- / Potty chairs are only to be used in the bathroom and are to be cleaned and sanitized after each use.

### Sanitizing of Napping Materials/Equipment

Nap time is from 12:30-2:30 daily (infants and toddlers sleep as needed). Cots/ Mats are placed at least 18 inches apart. All mats are cleansed with a disinfectant spray after each use, and cots only used for a single child are sanitized weekly. Napping

blankets are sent home every Friday for laundering. For infants (under 1 year of age), cribs will be designated for each child's use and sanitized before another child's use. Cribs are placed at least 2 feet apart, no blankets are used in cribs, but a tight-fitted sheet will be used and sent home for laundering each week and when soiled.

### Sanitizing, Disinfecting of Toys

Toys that are placed in children's mouths or are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions will be set aside to be cleaned with the appropriate water and bleach solution and rinsed before handling by another child. Machine-washable cloth toys can be used and will be machine-washed when contaminated. All frequently touched toys in the room with infants and toddlers will be cleaned and disinfected daily. The use of soft, non-washable toys in the infant/toddler areas will be limited to personal use articles that are not shared between children. Thermometers, pacifiers, and other such objects will be cleaned and disinfected between uses by different children. The children's personal items, such as individual bedding, will be returned home for cleaning and disinfecting. Equipment provided by the center for use by the children will be maintained in a clean and disinfected condition and in good repair.

### Bathroom Sanitation

Toilet rooms, toilets, potty chairs, and fixtures will be cleaned and sanitized at least daily and when obviously soiled and will be in good repair.

### Health Care Resources:

Berrien County Health Department 269-683-2800  
Riverwood Center (Community Mental Health Center) 269-925-3371  
University of Michigan Health and Medical Resources  
[www.umich.edu/healthmed.php](http://www.umich.edu/healthmed.php)

## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Pesticide Management Program

If pesticide application becomes necessary, notice of pesticide application will be given electronically through our Kangarootime app and by posting at the entrance doors of the center at least 48 hours prior to application. Pest management notification and requirements do not apply to the following:

- Common products such germicides, disinfectants, sanitizers, and antimicrobials.
- Bait pesticide formulation.
- Gel pesticide formulation.

# Montessori Children's Center



## Parent Handbook Agreement

We are providing you with your family copy of the Montessori Children's Center (MCC) Handbook. We kindly ask that you thoroughly read the handbook to familiarize yourself with our policies, procedures, and expectations.

We request your signed agreement to be returned no later than your child's first day of school.

### MCC Parent Agreement

By enrolling your child at Montessori Children's Center, you are committing both financially and personally. Apart from the initial enrollment commitment, we believe, as an Administration and Staff, that it's essential for each parent to engage in an ongoing commitment by assisting us as much as possible in the everyday educational process.

We encourage you to review the contents of this handbook and discuss them with your child or children.

I affirm that I have read and will adhere to the expectations set by the Montessori Children's Center.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_