



little paws
MONTESSORI

Parent Handbook 2018-2019

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I. Introduction

1. Mission Statement

Our mission at Little Paws Montessori is to provide a complete Montessori program which considers the

emotional, intellectual, physical, and social development of the total child by addressing the uniqueness of each in a nurturing, emotionally secure and academically excellent environment.

We create a warm and enriching early childhood environment that promotes learning through hands-on experience, and opportunities for multi-sensory exploration and discovery.

2. Philosophy and Program Goals

As a Montessori school, we use the philosophy developed by Dr. Maria Montessori to help children develop to their fullest potential. We want to educate the whole child, meaning we promote growth in all areas of a child's development: academic, social, emotional, and physical. A key to the Montessori Method is the belief that every child has an inner desire to learn, and we work to cultivate that desire so that each child has a true joy in learning and a lifelong interest to do so.

The teacher's job begins with setting up an environment that draws the child in; they do this by ensuring the environment is beautiful, well prepared, and by having

items available that fit what each child needs developmentally. The teacher does not instruct in the traditional sense of the word, but more accurately guides each individual in her care.

The Little Paws Montessori classroom comprises 5 main areas. Each teacher at Little Paws Montessori has been trained according to AMS standards in these areas. Feel free to direct any Montessori-related questions toward any of us. We love to nerd out over Maria and her amazing method!! We also have a veritable LIBRARY of Montessori books and binders and training literature in the office we would love to share with you at anytime.

There are hundreds of lessons in the Montessori universe, separated by binder per category below. Each lesson includes its own specific age, category, prerequisites, materials, presentations, points of interest, control of error, direct aims, indirect aims, addition exercises, extensions, and associated language terms. All of these lessons are available to parents in the office via our AMS Montessori binders. Ask to check these out anytime!

- a. The **Practical Life** area is equipped with familiar items that invite the child's interest. Speaking to children's sense of order and independence, these materials coordinate physical moments, refine hand-eye coordination, sharpen fine and gross motor control, develop concentration, and encourage social relationships through the Grace and Courtesy exercises.
- b. The **Sensorial** materials enable the child to explore and identify, compare and contrast, recognize similarities and differences and classify sensory impressions in relation to size, color, temperature, texture, scent, taste, pitch, and more.
- c. Montessori **Math** nurtures the mind through the manipulation of materials with the goal of understanding concepts concretely through self-discovery rather than memorization. Math materials allow the child to physically hold a quantity, feel the dimensions, and associate the corresponding symbol. Later, by combining the quantities, separating them into categories, counting them, and comparing them, they comprehend the basic operations of arithmetic.
- d. **Language** includes the development of expressive (writing and speech), interpretive (reading), and

receptive (listening) language. This is achieved through a series of sequential materials, specifically designed to, through a natural process of maturation, transition the child from the mechanical execution to the intellectual interpretation of language.

- e. **Cultural** activities expose the child to the basics in Geography, History, and Sciences. Music, Art, Culture, Food, and Movement are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.

Here are some fun Montessori articles that have inspired or interested us:

From Google to Amazon, How Montessori-Educated Founders Have Changed the World

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2015/12/16/corporate-kindergarten-how-a-montessori-mindset-can-transform-your-business>

The Montessori Mafia

<https://blogs.wsj.com/ideas-market/2011/04/05/the-montessori-mafia/>

How to think like a genius: The Montessori method

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/How-to-think-like-a-genius-The-Montessori-method-7966410.php>

Montessori preschool boosts academic results and reduces income-based inequality

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/10/171030084800.htm>

Montessori: A Good School Choice for Smart Kids?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/going-beyond-intelligence/201701/montessori-good-school-choice-smart-kids>

The Pros & Cons of Montessori Education

http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/education/blog/pros_cons_montessori_education/

Studies Shed Light on Merits of Montessori Education

<https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2018-01-02/studies-shed-light-on-merits-of-montessori-education>

Books we LOVE and have tattered with our marginalia:

The Discovery of the Child, by Maria Montessori

https://www.amazon.com/Discovery-Child-Maria-Montessori/dp/0345336569/ref=sr_1_4?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525661258&sr=1-4&keywords=the+absorbent+mind

Theories of Childhood: An Introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget & Vygotsky, by Carol Mooney

https://www.amazon.com/Theories-Childhood-Introduction-Montessori-Education/dp/013172794X/ref=sr_1_13?ie=UTF8&qid=1525660594&sr=8-13&keywords=montessori+book

The Joyful Child, by Susan Stephenson

<https://www.amazon.com/Joyful-Child-Montessori-Global-Wisdom/dp/1879264102>

Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius, by Angeline Lillard

https://www.amazon.com/Montessori-Science-Angeline-Stoll-Lillard-ebook/dp/B01LY0TIZ0/ref=mt_kindle

Let Me Do it Myself!: Secrets for Raising a Capable, Confident & Considerate Toddler, by Ginny Trierweiler

https://www.amazon.com/Let-Me-Myself-Confident-Considerate-ebook/dp/B01CO1SJ1E/ref=sr_1_32

The Secret of Childhood, by Maria Montessori

https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Childhood-Maria-Montessori/dp/0345305833/ref=pd_sbs_14_2

II. To Do Before The First Day

1. Quickbooks

Quickbooks is the platform we use to pay tuition. If your child is enrolled in after-care, we will bill you there for those additional fees, as well.

Please look out for your enrollment deposit invoice from Quickbooks, and let us know if you have any questions about the payment system.

2. Seesaw

Seesaw is a wonderful platform that connects teachers, students, and parents. This is where you can go on the first day for a little peace of mind – to get updates on your little one, what they're up to, and how their day is going! We will use this platform every day of the school year, posting your child's work and quick snapshots or videos we can grab throughout the day. It is private, and only the child's family will be able to see his or her "journal." Seesaw also offers features like parent/teacher private messaging, school-wide notifications, and the ability for parents to share an idea for a lesson or craft with the teachers. Please note for all school-wide notifications, Miss Faith will always also email the mailing list – should you not have immediate access to Seesaw. And of course, throughout the day we are available by phone, as well!

You can check out Seesaw at www.itunes.apple.com/us/app/seesaw-the-learning-journal/id930565184?mt=8, but Miss Faith will be inviting you all individually by email to join our private school group.

3. Cubbies

Here is what you will need to bring for your child's cubby.

- Cubby Bin, measuring somewhere around 1ft cubed
example: www.amazon.com/AmazonBasics-Foldable-Storage-Cubes-6-Pack/dp/B0711RQMNF/ref=sr_1_13_sspa-

- Nap Mat
example: www.amazon.com/Original-Wildkin-Childrens-Pillowcase-Microfiber/dp/B003F1FETS

- Lunchbox (ideally waterproof and closable with zipper) and Water bottle
examples: www.amazon.com/Skip-Hop-Toddler-Backpack-12-inches/dp/B00SIM40MG/ref=sr_1_3

www.amazon.com/Thermos-Funtainer-Ounce-Bottle-Patrol/dp/B00DAPQV0K/ref=sr_1_1

- Indoor shoes/slippers
example: www.amazon.com/Festooning-Little-Winter-Slippers-Anti-Slip/dp/B07BF6FC36/ref=sr_1_8

- 1-2 change of clothes for potty trained friends, 3-4 for friends in diapers, including underwear/diaper and socks, in a Ziplock bag
- Sweater or jacket in case it gets chilly
- Sunscreen, should you want us to apply it before going outside

4. Earthquake/Survival Kits

The school maintains a three-day emergency supply of food, water, and first aid equipment in sealed containers, to provide for all children and staff. While we supply the necessary items, we encourage all parents to bring a small supply of items for your child such as non-perishable snacks that they will enjoy, a small flashlight, and a bottle of water. A special comfort items from home that will not be missed while it is stored is appreciated.

III. School Year Policies

1. Fire Drills & Earthquake Procedures

We practice monthly fire drills and quarterly disaster drills including earthquake drills. Our focus is on earthquake and lockdown procedures. Staff are trained on an ongoing basis. A full disaster plan is available on the website and in the cubby room and we encourage you to read it. Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

If for any reason, we need to leave the facility to ensure the safety of the children and staff, our emergency meeting place is:

Gelson's Supermarket
5877 Franklin Ave
Los Angeles, CA 90028
323.464.7316

For emergencies, please feel free to use Miss Faith's cell phone number, which is 415.254.5422.

2. "Ouch Report" Policy

If a child becomes injured or hurts another child (even minorly) while at school, we write a quick report

summarizing what occurred. This will be sent home at the end of the day. In the event of a serious incident, you will be notified immediately.

3. Field Trips/Nature Walks

On the first day, parents will have the opportunity to sign a waiver for walking field trips within the neighborhood. For any other field trips, we will have an additional waiver to sign. Those children who do not have signed permission will stay with a teacher on school property. We organize driving field trips with an ample amount of parent volunteers, and children will never ride in private cars.

4. Pet Policy

Animals at or visiting Little Paws Montessori are carefully chosen in regards to care, temperament, health risks, and appropriateness for young children.

Snowball the rabbit lives at Little Paws in an area locked and off limits to the children. She is up to date with her vaccinations. On the first day of school, parents will have

the opportunity to sign a waiver for petting Snowball, only when handled by Miss Faith or another teacher.

Parents are notified in writing if/when any other animals will be on the premises. Children with an allergic reaction to animals will always be accommodated.

Animals, their cages, and any other animal equipment are never allowed in kitchen.

Children and adults wash hands after feeding or handling animals or animal equipment.

5. Birthdays

The Montessori birthday circle is a super special occasion that children excitedly await! OK, and teachers, too!! We will celebrate your child's birthday unless directed otherwise by your beliefs. The traditional Montessori celebration involves singing "The Earth moves around the Sun" song, as your child holds the model of the Earth and revolves around the model of the Sun for as many years as appropriate.

Your child is welcome to bring a special snack! State regulations prohibit home-prepared food at school without labels. It must come from a commercial food source, OR have every ingredient labeled on the home container.

6. Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is highly encouraged. We plan parent nights as well as family activities throughout the year. Please feel free to suggest an additional one at any time! We'd love to help organize! We also encourage parents to join us on field trips and to come to school any time to demonstrate any interesting hobby or talent to the children! We encourage parents to visit all areas of the school any time without notice. Siblings are also encouraged to visit the classroom and participate in family events.

7. Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are offered twice a year in the Fall and Spring, although they may be scheduled at any time if a parent has a concern or particular dialogue to pursue. Teachers will observe and record information on

children's development. We will share the information with you, learn from our knowledge of your child, and together plan for more opportunities to grow. We will keep your child's information strictly confidential.

8. Naps

We believe in the importance of naps for a child's well-being during these busy days at school. Children under four years old are encouraged to nap; children over four are encouraged to try to rest. We provide mats for all the children to place their sleeping pads on.

9. Toilet Training

Toddlers will inherently begin to potty train in Montessori environment when they are ready. We will encourage the use of the potty after every diaper change and we suggest you do the same at home. From there we will move to the child-sized toilet. When you decide to start raining at home, we can schedule a meeting to go over the process so we are on the same page. We may see signs of readiness and ask to meet with you to initiate the process. And, of course, vice versa!

Generally, our older friends are fully potty trained. But, of course, accidents happen (especially during nap) and this is to be expected for some children once in a while.

10. Drop-off and Pick-up

We require that the child be escorted into their classroom and that you or an authorized family member, friend, or caregiver sign the child in and out. You will find an iPad on the wall in the cubby room, with the clock in/clock out program open. You will enter your phone number to clock in/out your child(ren).

When dropping off, the parent (or other person) helps the child until they are visibly in the care of a teacher. This would include helping the child put all items in their cubby, putting jacket and lunch away, switching to their indoor shoes, etc.

11. Classroom Environment

A Montessori classroom environment is kept quiet and peaceful so as not to disturb the children at work. We teach respect and we expect the children to help keep their environment clean. With this in mind, we ask

parents to help us uphold this policy at all times when in the school. Please ask your child to clean up their work space before leaving the school, if leaving early. When entering after class has started, we ask that all adults are quiet and respectful to the other children.

12. Clothing

Please take a few minutes to mark you child's clothing and belongings with their name. This will aid you teachers in daily operation as well as ensure your belongings get home with your child.

13. Absences

Please call the school to let us know if your child will be absent. It is helpful for us to know if your child will not be coming to school.

14. Illness

Children who are not physically well won't fare well in a learning environment. They also may be contagious and pass their illness on to other children and teachers.

because of this, we are unable to accept children into our care if they are experiencing:

- Vomiting
- Body rash, lice or nits
- Diarrhea; 3 or more watery stools in 24 hours
- Thick mucus or puss from the eye(s)
- Swollen glands
- Unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused or cranky
- Communicable diseases (meaning contagious sicknesses). Some examples of common communicable diseases include the flu, whooping cough, strep throat, hand, foot and mouth disease, etc.
- A fever of 101°F
- A fever of 100°F or more AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache or just not feeling well.

We appreciate a quick phone call, email, or Seesaw message from you if your child has fallen ill, so we can take measures to protect other children and staff.

If a child becomes ill while at school, the parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be contacted to pick up their child immediately. A parent or other designated backup

person must be available to pick up the child within 45 minutes. A child sent home for the above reasons must be kept home for 24 hours after symptoms subside.

15. Medications

We understand that children will occasionally need to take medicine (such as antibiotics) at school. Any medications given to the child will be at the discretion of the preschool administrator, and must be in the original (prescription) container, with the physician's instructions on it.

A parent's signature is required to authorize us to administer prescription medication. Please ask the preschool administrator to show you the medication forms and inform your lead teacher of any medications. A physician's signature is not required for these non-prescription medicines: *antihistamines, cough medicine, decongestants, anti-itching cream, diaper ointments, powders, and sun screens.*

However, parents must fill out the authorization form, and non-prescription medicine must also be in its original container. A written physician's permission is

required for other non-prescription medicines not on the authorized list.

We are not authorized to administer herbs or vitamins without a prescription.

All children must have a signed emergency form, immunization form, and healthy history form on file by their first day of attendance.

16. Medical Emergencies

Our procedure for life threatening emergencies is as follows:

- Immediate call 911 and 323.361.2120 for an ambulance to Children's Hospital Emergency Room
- Administer First Aid and/or CPR as appropriate
- Notify parents or guardians
- Transport child to the Children's Hospital as appropriate (see hospital details below)
- Document emergency and file in child's file

In case of illness or accident, it is necessary for us to know where you may be reached at all times. Please

keep a current list of emergency contact information on record with us at all times.

Our local hospital is Children's Hospital of Los Angeles (located 1 mile from our facility). The address is:

Children's Hospital Los Angeles

4650 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90027

Emergency Call Phone: 323-361-2120

Regular Phone: 323-660-2450

From their website:

Our division treats more than 88,000 infants, children and adolescents who need emergency care each year. The emergency department is a designated level I pediatric trauma critical care center and pediatric critical care center. Children with severe illness or critical injury are treated by our emergency department. Children with non-life threatening illnesses or injuries are cared for in lower acuity areas.

As a [Level I Pediatric Trauma Center](#), we are one of 12 hospitals in the nation providing the highest level of emergency care for children. Our specialized trauma team consists of emergency and critical care physicians, surgeons and ancillary personnel. The nursing team is comprised of caring and experienced nurses with a passion for treating children.

We are also designated as a pediatric critical care center, a designation signifying the ability to provide emergency and critical care for ill and injured patients from infancy through adolescence.

17. Cleaning and Disinfecting

Little Paws uses a three step method (soap and water, water, then sanitizer) to clean and sanitize the classroom works and surfaces. Hand washing is mandatory when entering the classroom in the morning, coming in from outside, before meals, and after restroom trips. Cleaning products are stored in a locked closet or cabinet.

18. Toys

We try to have children only bring items from home for Show & Tell or for nap times. We have found that in certain instances the use of perusal items has also helped with transitioning, arrivals, etc. Based on this, we are open to discussion if bringing an items is appropriate for your child.

19. Lunch & Snacks

We ask parents to provide lunch for the school day. We provide morning and afternoon snack. Our snack menu is posted on the website.

Per the Department of Early Learning, each of our snacks must contain at least 2 out of the following:

- a milk product (such as milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese)
- a meat or meat alternative (such as meat, legumes, beans, egg)
- a grain product (such as cereal, bagel, rice cake or bread)
- fruit or vegetable

We serve a choice of water and milk at every snack-time.

Good nutrition is an important element in our overall program. Please pack adequate amounts of protein, which plays an important role in your child's growth and stamina throughout the day, and please keep sugar items to a minimum. We do not allow candy, soda, or gum at our center, and a recent California state law requires we do not serve a child more than one juice per day.

Need ideas of what to bring? Here are some suggestions:

- fresh or dried fruits (apples, bananas, grapes, kiwi, oranges, plums, berries)
- fresh vegetables (carrots, celery, cucumber, broccoli, green beans, tomatoes)
- sandwiches (turkey, ham, salami, roast beef, tuna, egg salad, etc)
- cheese (string, cubes, slices, cottage, cream)
- beans and rice
- mixed nuts (we will keep you updated on any allergies, but so far there is none for this school year)
- chicken lettuce wrap
- yogurt
- crackers with hummus
- green salad
- soup, mac and cheese, or pasta leftovers

20. Licensing

Little Paws Montessori is licensed by the State of California, facility #198019858. We meet all health and safety standards required by the California State Department of Social and Health Services. There are regular health and fire inspections, and our license is renewed as required.

We recognize, value, and promote diversity. It is the policy of Little Paws Montessori that no person shall be subjected to discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, marital status, disabled status, or the presence of any physical, mental, or sensory handicap. Little Paws Montessori acknowledges and protects the rights of children, families, and staff to their own culture and to the customs, beliefs, and practices that comprise that culture.

21. Insurance

Little Paws Montessori carries full insurance coverage including liability and accident policies.

22. Behavior Policy

Goals: We will work in partnership with parents to develop independently thinking children who:

- respect themselves and others
- feel a sense of belonging
- contribute to their community in their own way and with joy and pride

- accept and include diverse people
- solve problems peacefully

Philosophy: We strive to produce a safe and secure environment for the entire school community. We promote the child's rights to develop as an individual through making mistakes and learning from them. Our discipline policies are designed to *never* punish the child, but rather to help the child grow into a respectful and responsible individual who is capable of making the best decisions for themselves and their environment.

Methods: We prepare a child-centered, calm, and interesting environment with child-centered activities. We will *always* respect the child. We will model and actively teach social skills: how to share, take turns, ask for things, communicate, etc. Of course, we teachers are also human and make mistakes, too. We will be sure to point out our own mistakes, too, and discuss how we can make better choices the next time around. We encourage parents to do this, too! It can be nice for the children to realize they are not alone in sometimes have a tough time making the best choices.

Children will learn to solve problems through respectful discussion and negotiation. We will give the children appropriate positive attention for positive behavior. We will *never* inflict pain, humiliate, frighten, or shame any child.

We will deal with inappropriate behavior through respectful reminders, re-directing of energy, ignoring when appropriate, cool offs, and solution-oriented natural or logical consequences. The first month of school we will all make rules for our community together. From there, we will make it clear that anyone who does not follow these rules is perfectly free to do so, but may have the consequence of not being able to participate in certain community activities as a result. We want the children to know that almost any choice they make is perfectly acceptable; while also understanding that every choice may have a consequence.

The following are a list of unacceptable "choices" at Little Paws:

- physical abuse or injury of another student or staff member at Little Paws
- invalidation or emotional bullying of any kind

- damaging the belongings of other friends

Intervention: Whenever a child continues to hurt others physically or emotionally or destroy their property, we will conference with the parents to cooperatively work out suitable behavior goals for the child and techniques to help him or her improve in these areas. We will also implement a timetable to evaluate progress. Parents will take a child home in case of repeated hurting of other children and staff.

Disenrollment: Disenrollment is extremely rare, but would be used when, despite the best efforts of the parents and staff, a behavior plan and reasonable time to implement it, a child's behavior continues to:

- threatened the safety of children or staff
- result in the destruction of property
- seriously and regularly interfere with the ability of classmates to learn and play

23. Religion

We do not disseminate any religious teachings in the classroom. Like most secular schools, we employ philosophies from many cultures and beliefs. A

statement such as “some people believe” would accompany any remarks concerning religious beliefs. We do encourage parents and staff to share their celebration of meaningful religious or cultural holidays with us in an age appropriate manner. An open sharing of such customs and beliefs expands the children’s understanding of the world. It is also a way to learn acceptance and appreciation for other people’s beliefs and differences.

Nothing that we would do at the school is meant to supersede or interfere with your own personal teachings. The foundation laid in your home is by far the strongest basis for your child’s religious growth. If you feel your child is confused by a school discussion, we encourage you to reinforce our statement of “some people believe...”.

24. Child Abuse/Neglect

We are obligated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.

Please visit <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/ap/childabusereportingguide.asp> to read the Mandated Reporter identification and reporting guidelines.

25. Wildfire or other emergency closures

We will make every attempt to stay open and service you. However, in the case of an unforeseen threat or emergency in the area, check your email often. This is the primary way we will notify you of school closures, late starts, etc.

IV: Signatures

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above Little Paws Montessori policies and guidelines, and that I agree to all the terms.

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____

Please be sure to initial beside every section before handing in this signed document. Thank you!!