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Shamrock Montessori

Parent Handbook

2024-2025



SHAMROCK MONTESSORI

PARENT HANDBOOK

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What is Montessori?

Dr. Maria Montessori

Montessori classrooms are beautifully designed to meet the needs of children in a specific age range. In Montessori classroom, children make creative choices in their learning, work in groups and individually to discover and explore the world around and develop their potential. Dr. Montessori observed that children experience sensitive periods, or windows of opportunity, as they grow. As students develop, Montessori teachers match appropriate lessons and materials to these sensitive periods when learning is most naturally absorbed and internalized.

“We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being.”

Maria Montessori

Dr. Maria Montessori is the founder of the Montessori method of education. She was an Italian physician, educator, and innovator who specialized in pediatrics and discovered the marvelous abilities of young children to learn through their senses.

Mission Statement/Goals

Shamrock Montessori strive to develop a “whole” child by implementing curriculum and methodology based on the Montessori philosophy of education and human development, and by partnering with parents- children’s first teachers in this endeavor.

According to the teachings of Dr. Montessori, the following are the goals we expect to see in our children:

- ❖ A joy of learning
- ❖ Learning through discovery
- ❖ Independence
- ❖ Self-confidence
- ❖ Self-discipline
- ❖ Concentration
- ❖ Attachment to reality
- ❖ Love of order
- ❖ Ability to choose
- ❖ Enjoyment of quiet



Our Core Values:

Mutual Respect	Responsibility
Compassion	Honesty
Kindness	Awareness
Holistic Diversity	Peace

Montessori Curriculum

Practical Life Activities:

Activities in this area provide real life experiences for children. The purpose and aim of this area is to help the child gain control in the coordination of his movement, and help the child to gain independence and adapt to his society. The practical life exercises are organized in three main areas: care of the person, care of the environment, grace and courtesy.

Sensorial Activities:

Sensorial exercises were designed by Dr. Montessori to cover every quality that can be perceived by the senses such as size, shape, composition, texture, loudness or softness, matching, weight, temperature, etc. which are categorized into eight different groups: Visual, Tactile, Baric, Thermic, Auditory, Olfactory, Gustatory, and Stereognostic. Montessori believed that sensorial experiences began at birth. Through his senses, the child studies his environment. Through his study, the child then begins to understand his environment. The child, to Montessori, is a "sensorial explorer".

Mathematics:

Learning mathematical concepts in a Montessori classroom begins concretely and progresses towards the abstract. They are developed from simple to complex. Process is taught first and facts come later. Order, coordination, concentration, and independence are experienced by the child using these materials. The math activities are designed into five groups as follows:

- Introduces sets of one through ten which prepares the child for counting and teaches the value of quantity.

- Involves the decimal system using the golden bead material. The child will become familiar with the names of the decimal categories: units, tens, hundreds, and thousands.
- Deals with the operations using the golden bead material. The concept and process of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- Consists of linear counting. Quantity is presented using the teen and ten beads followed by symbol and association. The bead chains also introduce the child to skip counting such as five, ten, fifteen, twenty, etc.
- Contains activities such as strip boards, snake game, and memorization of facts. Fractions are also a part of this group.

Language:

The Montessori classroom is designed in such a way that all activities gear themselves naturally toward the development of the skills required for oral and written language and reading. Language development is also encouraged in the classroom because of the freedom of conversation to the children. In the Montessori environment, vocabulary develops by using specific words for objects in the classroom. At approximately 4.5 years, the children begin to put phonetic sounds together to read short words, and by 5 years of age the amaze their parents with their love of writing and reading.

Science:

Science is all around us. Young children interact with the natural world everywhere they go. They learn how to observe patiently, analyze, and work at each problem. They learn about living/non-living and plant/animal. They learn the “parts” of animals from the insect to the mammal with our hands-on materials. They explore their world through dissection of a flower, apple, or arrange brings excitement into the classroom. Our hands-on science materials are the joy of learning for children.

Geography:

The Montessori Geography curriculum is twofold: physical and cultural geography. Physical geography discusses the formation of the universe, the creation of the earth, and all its physical properties. Cultural geography is the study of human society and culture. The two together show the child that we are all members of the human race who must co-exist peacefully in order to survive.

History:

Teaching history in a Montessori classroom helping children understand the passage of time. They learn the concepts of time measurement with timing devices for 1 minute, 2 minutes, to 1 hour. They also learn the clock, days of week, months of year, calendar, and personal timeline with our materials. The information in regards to history is given orally and informally during some of the geography exercises such as the flag stories of the country, fossils, and etc.

Art:

In the Montessori context, the child of the first plane is not taught art as a subject. As in all the areas of the classroom, we offer the sensorial explorer the materials for his own personal experience. From these materials and exercises, the child will have different sensorial stimulations with various points of focus. From these, the child can learn the art of his own culture, compare it to the art of other cultures, and can be provided with the materials to create his own art.

Music:

All human groups have music. It is a path of culture in any society. Music is also a means of communication and self-expression. It can be therefore seen as another form of language. The child needs to have music to absorb and instruments with which to make music. He needs the opportunity to express himself spontaneously. As a base for the child's musical experiences, we want to provide him with the elements with which to make music. The elements are pulse (or rhythm), pitch (or tone), dynamic, timbre, and form.

Physical Education:

We know the relationship between movement and the brain. Maria Montessori said: "Movement, or physical activity, is thus an essential factor in intellectual growth, which depends upon the impressions received from outside. Through movement we come in contact with external reality, and it is through these contacts that we eventually acquire even abstract ideas."

Children want to move – they need to move -- while they are learning. Shamrock Montessori provides environments for movement, both purposeful and playful. From gross motor work in the classroom to running on the playground to music with movement, children can engage in physical activity throughout their day, promoting emotional growth and intellectual growth.

Montessori Kindergarten Curriculum

Montessori education has three year cycle. The first year children are the beginners. They not only get lessons from teachers, but also learn from the older ones by observing and listening to their work. With the help of the older ones, younger children usually learn quickly and enthusiastically. The second year children are more independent and comfortable in the classroom. They learn how to interact with both older ones and younger ones, while developing their knowledge and skills in all different areas. The third year children have the unique opportunity to be role models and community leaders and experience the full benefit of Montessori education. Their knowledge is reinforced and their skills are strengthened by practicing and sharing with the younger ones. Please read over our “kindergarten curriculum” carefully and you will see the advanced learning that is possible for the 5-year-old child!

❖ PRACTICAL LIFE

Grace and Courtesy

Creative sewing (Embroidery)

Carpentry (Sawing wood)

❖ SENSORIAL

Visual perception and reading (Matching picture and reading cards)

Forming an 18-tablet color wheel and labelling, then drawing and coloring

Discrimination of metric size, geometric objects and names (pink tower, broad stairs, long rods, color tablets, knob cylinders, geometric cabinet)

Recognition of solid shapes and names (Geometric solids with labels)

Perception of three-dimensional shapes/areas with their algebraic foundation (Binomial and Trinomial cubes)

Recognition of plane geometrical figures and their equivalences/labels

(Constructor triangles, plus names)

Composing and writing music, notation and singing to tone (Bells, with labels)

❖ MATH

Unit family combinations to make 10 (Numerical rods, combination of 10)

Adding in 4 digits (Addition: one, two, three and four places)

Exchanging (Dynamic addition and changing)

Forming quantities to 19 with beads and matching to numeral (Teen boards, with problems)

Forming quantities to 99 with beads and matching to numeral (Ten boards, with problems)

Counting 100 chain by 10's, with numerals (Chain of 100, with markers)

Counting 1,000 chain by 10's and 100's, with numerals (Chain of 1,000, with markers)

Counting chains by 5's, 6's, 7's, 8's and 9's with bead bars and numerals (Skip counting)

Squaring with chains and squares of 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 with numerals (Square of numbers)

Cubing with chains and cubes of 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 with numerals (Cube of numbers)

Counting in sets of 10's to 100 (hundred board)

Finding all possible combinations of quantities to equal 10 (Bead stairs, combinations of 10)

Putting two quantities together to get a sum, up to 18 (Addition strip board, problems and chars)

Making an addition chart up to 5 digits (Dot game)

Subtracting (taking away) bead quantity from larger quantity (Negative snake game)

Subtracting quantities from a larger one, up through 18 (Subtraction strip board)

Adding the same quantity 2 to 9 times (Multiplication board, with problems)

Building a multiplication problem with beads (Multiplication with bead bars)

Dividing a quantity (100's and 1,000's) among several children (Division with decimal system)

Dividing a given quantity, up through 81, among skittles (Division board, with problems)

Identifying 3-dimensional fractions, from 1 whole to "a whole in 5 parts" (Fraction skittles, whole to five)

Finding equivalences among plane fractions, from 1 whole to "a whole in 10 parts" (Fraction insets, with paper)

Finding equivalent denominators and adding them (Fraction addition)

❖ WRITING

Practicing writing, both manuscript and cursive, with lightness of touch (Metal inset designs, movable alphabets and writing cards)

Cursive writing with ink

Writing name within lines (Free-hand name on prepared paper)

Using loose letters and inventive spelling to create letters and stories (Friendly letter and creative writing)

❖ LANGUAGE

Labeling objects in the environment (Environment matching cards with tracing paper)

Making simple phonetic words with loose letters (Moveable alphabet with spelling strips)

Reading and acting out phonetic commands (Phonetic command cards)

Sorting phonogram objects, matching to sandpaper phonogram cards and writing words (Phonogram buckets and sandpaper cards)

Reading and matching phonograms words (Phonogram puzzle boxes)

Reading and matching phonograms to pictures (Phonogram work pages, reading booklets and picture boxes)
Making a tree or house of families of words (Phonograms) (House and tree of words)
Learning commonly-used non-patterned words, simple and difficult (Puzzle words)
Reading sentences and matching to pictures (Picture sentence boxes)
Reading definitions and matching to pictures (Definitions)
Fitting loose words together to make a sentence (Puzzle sentences)
Reading difficult commands and acting them out (Command cards, second level)
Matching and sorting special kinds of words (Synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms)
Placing objects into alphabetical order
Sorting words into like groups (Words having associations)
Sorting singular and plural objects and matching with words
Reading books from phonetic through phonogram (Reading books)
Making phrases with grammar objects (Grammar boxes)
Identifying parts of speech with symbol stickers

❖ **GEOGRAPHY**

Sorting land, air and water objects (Three forms of matter) **Making land shapes from clay** (Land forms, all 10)
Cutting opposite land shapes from paper (Making paper land shapes)
Sorting continents into hemispheres
Forming continents or countries from clay (Making clay maps of countries)
Tracing and making country and continent maps (Map making)
Free-form drawing and coloring of flags of nations (Flag making)
Matching objects with continent or country (Using artifact boxes of countries)
Researching facts about countries (Fact folders of countries)
Identifying national anthems of world countries

❖ **HISTORY**

Sorting timing devices for 1, 2, 3 minutes and one hour with labels
Making a paper clock with quarters (Traditional clock making)
Making a clock booklet (Clock booklets)
Making a timeline of “my day” (My day)
Participating in making a class diary
Matching days of week to timeline (Days of week, with writing)
Making calendar of the month (Calendar making)
Sorting and matching pictures with age of person (Personal time lines)
Digging in sand for fossils and naming them (Archeological “dig”)
Laying out earth’s time line

Matching and sorting picture cards and labels for the needs of humans throughout history (Food, shelter, clothing, transportation, defense, art, music and religion)

Reading about a composer, and playing his music

Sorting still-life, landscape and portrait art

Sorting styles of art

❖ **SCIENCE**

Sorting magnetic/non-magnetic objects

Matching sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks, with labels (Rocks, three types)

Sorting inorganic/organic objects

Sorting living-non-living objects

Making a parts-of-plant booklet

Dissecting a flower and naming parts

Making a parts-of-animals booklets

Matching plant picture cards to labels (Matching cards)

Making a booklet of kinds of plants, leaves, flowers

Matching skeleton parts cards with labels (Skeleton matching cards)

Sorting animals with or without backbones (Fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals)

Sorting animals into family groups (Male/female/baby sorting)

Sorting objects showing life cycles for frog and butterfly, with labels

Making a volcano

Laying out planet replicas in their order (System of planets)

Making constellations with lights

❖ **ART**

Leaf pressings and rubbings

Melt art

Crayoned textiles

Crayon engraving

Mono printing

Sculptures

Block printing

Paper-mache

Clay modeling

Charcoal drawing

Stitchery

Note: Most 5-year-olds will not complete all of this work. It will be completed in the 6-9elementary classroom.



Mixed Ages

Maria Montessori emphasized the need for mixed age groups spanning at least three years, and found that young children thrive in a mixed age setting, without competition and comparison to each other. She said: “is that the groups should contain different ages, because it has great influence on the cultural development of the child. This is obtained by the relations of the children among themselves. You cannot imagine how well a young child learns from an older child; how patient the older child is with the difficulties of the younger.” Social development is one of the main benefits of this grouping. At our school the children are mixed in ages from 2.5 to 6 years.

Staff

Our class will be bilingual program (English/Chinese) which is directed by two certified Montessori teachers (English/Chinese) and assisted by Montessori interning teachers. All teachers and staff have been checked for a criminal history. All certified teachers and interning teachers have also completed CPR/First Aid/HIV training and have Food Handler's permit.

Christian Activities

The “Shamrock” in our name refers to our Christian view of Montessori education—faith, hope, love. We are committed to develop a “whole” child of spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical. We enjoy the freedom to express our faith in the following ways:

- ❖ Singing Christian songs.
- ❖ Telling stories from the Bible with figures.
- ❖ Praying at circle time for children or teachers who are sick and for other requests.
- ❖ Celebrating the Christian holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter.



Admissions

Ages of children

Children from the ages of 2 mo to 6 years may enroll at Shamrock Montessori.

Steps to Enroll

- ❖ Simply call in to schedule an appointment for tour to meet our staff and get familiar with the classroom. Tours are conducted daily.
- ❖ Complete an enrollment application form and sign by both parents. A new form must be completed each year.
- ❖ An immunization from is required by the state which will be on file at our school for every enrollee.
- ❖ The forms of Authorization for Emergency Care & Health Procedures must be signed on or before the first day of attending class.
- ❖ Parent Handbook Agreement Form is sign and return in office
- ❖ Please bring 5 small photos or snapshots of your child before the first day of school which will be used on his/her belongings cabinet, work drawer and a name card. New photos are needed each school year.

Tuition

Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually or monthly in accordance with the following payment schedule:

Annual	Due August 20th
Semi-annual	Due August 20th and January 20th
Monthly	Due the 20th of each month

There will be a \$35.00 late tuition payment charged for payments received later than the due day.

Children and Parent Interview

The parent interview is the perfect time to converse about a wide range of topics related to your child's education, ask detailed questions about school culture, educational philosophy and academics. A child who wishes to enter the school after 4 years or who has a disability will be asked to visit the school and meet the director in order to determine if the school is a match for the child and what special services may be required.

Daily Schedule and Operation

Daily Schedule and Hours of Operation

It's essential for children to be dropped-off and picked-up on time.

Parents or another person who authorized by the parent to take the child to or from school, shall sign in the child on arrival and sign out at dismissal daily, using a full, legal signature.

Preschool daily schedule as below:

Morning	8:00-8:45 a.m.	Morning care
	8:45-9:00 a.m.	Morning Drop-off Teacher greeting children at the door. Children settle down and wash hands.
	9:00-9:30 a.m.	Morning circle time with special theme and group activities; Class discussions; Birthday celebration in Montessori way.
	9:30-11:00 a.m.	Morning Montessori working time: free choice lessons with Montessori materials; individual or small group presentations; snack.
	11:00 -11:10a.m.	Second circle time with special theme and group activities; singing; reading; games; etc.
	11:10-12:00 p.m.	Outdoor play.
	12:00-12:30 p.m.	Lunch time
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Nap time.		
Afternoon	2:30-2:40 p.m.	Wake up. Children roll up their sleeping mat, wash hands and take snack.
	2:40-3:00p.m.	Afternoon snack time.
	3:00-3:30p.m.	Afternoon circle time with special theme and group activities; Class discussions; Birthday celebration in Montessori way.
	3:30-5:30 p.m.	After care

(ps. Feel free to check our Toddler Schedule on school website: [Toddler Schedule | Bellevue | Shamrock Montessori \(shamrockmh.com\)](#))



A late fee will be charged for any child picked up from school after the scheduled pick-up time.

Vacations & Closures

Shamrock Montessori observes normal federal holidays as the Bellevue public school district. We also observe an in-service day every quarter, which allow teachers to train and to keep the school in order. The school calendar will be available on our website, at the back of this handbook, and in your child's classroom.

Absences

Please call the school to let teacher know if your child will be absent. Shamrock Montessori does not have make-up days or refunds for illnesses, absences or vacation. We base our budget on the monthly tuition from each child and need a guaranteed amount to meet our expenses.

Napping

We believe in the importance of naps for a child's well-being on these busy days at school. Children under four years old are expected to nap. These children are asked to bring a small pillow and blanket with their name on them and take home to be laundered every Friday.

English/Chinese Sharing Day

We will have our Sharing Show-N-Tell day on Wednesdays. Your child is welcome to bring in ONE item on this day. The child will show at circle time and tell all of his/her friends about it. Suggest items are:

- ❖ Objects, artifacts, or books relating to Unit Study or Sound of the week.
- ❖ Objects of special interest or importance to the child, such as postcard from relative, gift from grandparents, art work done at home, souvenir from vacation, and etc.)

But no toys any other day outside of Show-N-Tell day.

Safety and Healthy

Drop Off and Pick Up

A teacher will be ready to greet your child from 8:45-9:00 am. Your child will prepare him/herself to start the school day. It's very important that your child arrive school no later than 5 minutes after the start of class so that he/she does not miss our circle activities and other important events. We understand that separation can be a very stressful time for children as well as parents. Please have a set schedule with your child: one hug and one kiss, which will help your child to achieve a successful separation.

Class ends and dismissal at 5:00 p.m. Children are expected to be picked up from school on time. Late pick ups are disruptive to our afternoon programs, often create anxiety in the child who is picked up late and create unsafe student/teacher ratios. We will charge \$2 per minutes you are late.

Visitation Policy

All visitors are required to sign in in the classroom visitor log book, recording the date and time of arrival, purpose for visit, and sign out with a time of departure. The Montessori classroom is a very special place. The environment has been carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of children. A very delicate balance occurs between the child, teacher, and the environment as they work together to support growth and learning. The presence of visitors moving freely through the room can be distracting and at times confusing for the children. It can interfere with the atmosphere of independence and concentration in the classroom.

We ask that all visitors respect the children and the classroom. The teacher will guide visitors into appropriate areas to sit and observe. Visitors should remain seated and restrain from engaging in conversation or activity with the children. In the case of parents, student teachers, and volunteers, the teachers will direct visitors to appropriate activities within the classroom where they can become involved such as sharing a special skill or cultural information during circle time, listening to children read, or directing a special project.

Supervision of Children

A child will never be left unsupervised. Efforts will be made to familiarize children and parents with potential substitute teachers, volunteers, and student teachers.



Should an emergency arise where the teacher may need to leave the classroom an approved substitute will be called in to supervise the children. In the event of a planned, short-term, non-recurring absence of the teacher (i.e. doctor's appointment, teacher training, personal day) parents will be notified in advance and an approved substitute will be arranged.

Emergency and Accidents

Through appropriate supervision, most accidents can be safely avoided. Our staff is appropriately trained in CPR, First Aid, Communicable Disease Recognition, and Child Abuse and Neglect Recognition. If an emergency does occur, the procedure is as follows:

- A staff member with first aid training responds to the child's immediate needs.
- Another staff member calls 911, and the parents, if it is in the best interest of the child.
- If transportation is needed, the child's individual emergency instructions listed on the *Child Enrollment and Health Information* form on file will be consulted. Emergency personnel, staff, or parents may transport the child. A staff member will stay with the child if a parent is not present.

Accidents will be reported to the parent by the Accident/Incident Report Form. Minor accidents will be treated with first aid, which will be described on the Accident/Incident Report Form.

If your child has unique health needs (i.e. has food allergies, asthma, sensitivity to bee stings, etc.), please provide us with details of required treatment. Parents will be asked to complete a *Medical and Physical Care Plan* form so proper care and prevention can be provided.

Fire Drills and Earthquake Procedures

We practice monthly fire drills and quarterly disaster drills including earthquake drills. A schedule is available upon request. Staff are trained on an ongoing basis.

Preparedness: The school maintains a three-day emergency supply of food, water and first aid equipment in sealed containers. 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 your child will enjoy, a small flashlight and a bottle of water.

Our building is regularly examined for safety in a possible earthquake, and any areas found wanting are addressed.

Crisis/disaster plan: A full disaster plan is enclosed. Evacuation plans are posted in the classrooms.



School Closing, Delayed Openings

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous, school may be postponed, closed early, or canceled.

Shamrock Montessori follows the school closing policy of the Bellevue School District.

Please listen to your local radio and television stations for school closing and delay information.

There is no credit or make up days given for weather and emergency related school closings.

Illness

Shamrock Montessori must exempt children and staff from attendance if the following symptoms occur:

- ❖ Vomiting (two or more times within 24 hours).
- ❖ Diarrhea (three or more watery stools or one bloody stool within 24 hours).
- ❖ A fever of 100° Fahrenheit or higher needs to be fever free for 24 hours before returning.
- ❖ Rash/lice or nits: rash especially with fever or itching.
- ❖ Eye Infection: thick mucus or pus draining from the eye.
- ❖ Sore throat: sore throat with fever or swollen glands.

Please keep your child home from school if they show any of the symptoms above.

Administration of Medication

All medications must be in the original container and accompanied by a completed form, available in each classroom. The information on the form includes:

- Child's first and last name
- Name of the medication
- Reason for giving the medication
- Amount of medication to give
- Start and stop dates
- Expected side effects
- How to store medications.

All other medications must be accompanied by a consent form from the child's health care provider. Medications will be stored according the package



directions with the child's name in a container that is inaccessible to children. Consent from the child's health care provider is required to administer medication beyond the recommended dosage. Unused medications will be returned to the parents or properly disposed of.

Food Allergies

It is the responsibility of the parent to alert the school of any food allergies that their child may have. Children's allergies will be posted in the location where food is prepared. Parents should provide or suggest an alternative to foods that their child is allergic to. Written directions from the child's health care provider must be presented for children who require nutritional supplements or are on a medically modified diet.

Positive Discipline

Dr. Montessori said: " We are respectful and courteous in our dealing with children, we treat them as we should like to be treated ourselves. We should have mastered a great educational principle and be setting an example of good education."

In our system, we obviously have a different concept of discipline. The discipline we are looking for is active. We do not believe that one is disciplined only when he is artificially made as silent as a mute and as motionless as a paralytic. Such a one is not disciplined but annihilated. We claim that an individual is disciplined when he is the master of himself and when he can, as a consequence, control himself when he must follow a rule of life. Montessori has a unique approach to discipline in that the children are helped to develop self-discipline through their own engagement. This is in contrast to traditional schools where discipline is applied externally with the result that the discipline.

School Field Trips and Outings

Walking field trips are also taken throughout the school year. A walk to a nearby park or through the neighborhood is thoroughly enjoyed by the children. Options for the Shamrock Montessori student community to meet up at various locations accompanied by their parents will be organized by the school throughout the year. These outings will occur on weekends and are completely optional. Shamrock Montessori is not responsible for loss, damage, or injury that occurs on these weekend outings.



Child Abuse Reporting

Shamrock Montessori is required by law to immediately report any suspicious occurrences of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or child exploitation by telephone to Child Protective Services or local law enforcement.

Nutrition

Meals and Late Snacks

Morning Snack	9:30-11:00 a.m.	provided by school for all children, free choice throughout the day
Lunch	12:00-12:30 p.m.	provided by school
PM Snack	2:30-3:00 p.m.	provided by school for all children, free choice throughout the day

Shamrock Montessori's hot lunch will be provided by **Green Sprouts Food**: [Green Sprout Foods | Grow Cherish Thrive \(greensproutsfood.com\)](https://greensproutsfood.com) Their mission is to bring nutritious food to the children, in the most sustainable way possible. Their monthly menu will be available for you to check out on the website: [Our Menu | Green Sprout Foods \(greensproutsfood.com\)](https://greensproutsfood.com)

Lunch is a special time for the children to socialize. At school the children will learn about table manners and setting up their table independently before meal. We will kindly ask parents' help to bring in a placemat, a plate, a bowl, a cup and a set of utensils which are packed in a wet bag to school daily (Classroom teacher will send out a purchase link for you to prepare before the first school day).

Snacks will be prepared from nutritious foods from at least two food groups. Snacks that are provided by families must be nut-free.

Birthday Treats

Children's birthday may be celebrated on the actual birth date or closest school day to it. If you wish to bring food, please bring a nutritious snack such as vegetables, fruit salads. Beverages, ice cream, sticky candy and icing are not recommended. Please send all supplies (napkins, plates, juice, etc) in original packing. All items need to be store bought.



In order to inculcate a spirit of giving away at birthdays, we suggest that the child bring a gift to the school on the day, such as a beautiful book, rock, or artifact.

For the birthday ceremony, please write one statement that exemplifies each year of the child's life and bring in a photograph of each year, this personal sharing will be celebrated at group time. Parents of the child are welcome to attend.

Special Foods

Food substitutions, due to allergies or special diets and authorized by a licensed health care giver will be provided, within reason, by the school. These special snacks may also be provided by the parents.

Communication

Observations

Observation is an important teaching tool in a Montessori classroom and is the most beneficial way for parents to understand their child's day. Scheduling a classroom observation prior to a conference with your child's teacher will provide insight to the parents, therefore leading to a more meaningful conference. To make an appointment for an observation please contact the school office.

Website and Internet Information

Our website is www.shamrockmh.com

We maintain two blogs that feed through our website and Facebook page: *Shamrock Classroom Life* is a blog for our school activities and newsletter. It contains the monthly theme and the child's work in the classroom. Contact office to given permission for your child that may be photographed on our school website: <https://www.shamrockmh.com/blog>

Classroom Newsletter

Shamrock Montessori newsletters are published monthly and are distributed to the school community including current parents, families on our waiting list, friends of the school, and posted on our website. The focus is on Montessori philosophy, child development, and community topics of interest.



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences are regularly scheduled twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. A parent can request a conference with a teacher at any time throughout the year and your teacher may schedule additional conferences if necessary.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Shamrock Montessori maintains careful notes and documentation on each child in accordance with the traditional Montessori curriculum. Children are never compared to each other or “graded” in a traditional or arbitrary manner. Written narratives are kept for younger children and portfolio samples are kept for older children. Evaluation of progress is based on the individual growth of each child.

Montessori Education Nights

Three to four times a year we will host Montessori education nights open to the school and larger community. We will discuss different areas of the Montessori philosophy and child development. This is a great opportunity to meet and talk with other parents, ask questions, and learn about what your child does each day in the classroom. These meetings will be announced through our newsletters and website.

Volunteering at Shamrock Montessori

Volunteering is essential for the school, and helps to maintain a beautiful environment and strong community. This can be done in many ways – school beautification, material making, event planning, to name a few. Families will be contacted as volunteer opportunities arrive, either via a phone call, email, or through postings in the Weekly Notes. Families are also encouraged to offer any special skills, such as playing an instrument, dancing, cooking, a cultural activity, etc., to bring into the classroom. Before coming into the classroom as a volunteer, we ask that parents and family members either attend a parent education session on being an adult in the Montessori Prepared Environment or speak with the Head of School to receive individual training. We believe that knowing the adult's role in the Prepared Environment will make our volunteers comfortable and bring the most benefit to the children.

General School Information

Clothing

All clothing and other belongings, which are brought to school, should be packed in a Ziploc bag and clearly labeled with your child's name. A supply of clothes for changes should be sent at the beginning of the year and checked regularly to insure an adequate supply. On rainy days, a raincoat with a hood and an extra pair for shoes and boots would be appropriate. The children work with materials in the classroom that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet (water, paint, etc), sometimes more than once a day. They appreciate the option of changing into clean dry clothes on their own. Since self-sufficiency is encouraged, parents are asked to consider the ease with which their child is able to dress him or herself. For example, overalls make look cute but may be challenging for your child to unhook when they need to use the bathroom. Each child should keep a pair of indoor shoes to wear while at school. This helps keep our environment clean and healthy.

Outdoors Play

Time outdoors is an important part of a child's day. It provides the fresh air needed to insure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills. Weather permitting the children go outside every day. In the case of a light sprinkle or drizzle or flurry the children may still go outside for a short time. Ithaca's weather is known to change frequently; therefore it is important to dress appropriately. If your child is recovering from an illness and still is not able to go outside, you are asked to keep him or her home. The school does not have adequate staff to provide for the care of one or two children while the other children are outdoors.

Saying Goodbye and Hello

The week before school begins, please speak positively and hopefully about your child's first week of school. Be certain that he has visited the school, met the teacher, used the school bathroom, and played on the playground. Take him along with you when you selecting his inside shoes for class, and his coat and boots.

The first day of class is extremely important for you and your child. On the first arrival day speak firmly to him that he is growing up and may now go to school. If he brings lunch, plan with him and allow him to assist you in preparing his lunch. The night before school begins, let him select his own clothing for the first



day as well, and lay it out in his bedroom. Ask him to select with you his breakfast for the next morning. Get him a small alarm clock of his own and set it together. Tuck him in bed with love and sufficient time to give your attention to him.

The next morning, show your peacefulness about his first day by smiling, and saying, “what a wonderful day this is! You are now grown up enough to go to school!” Plan enough time for a leisurely breakfast and dressing experience. Allow him to put on his own coat, help him with his shoes if necessary, and allow him to carry his own lunchbox to the car and any extra items that he is taking to school. Allow him to walk into the school on his own power and at his own pace, carrying his lunchbox himself.

If parking spaces are available, please take him to the classroom door to say “hello” to the teacher, and “goodbye” to him. Plan enough time to leave him gracefully, especially the first two weeks. If he is unhappy at the separation, firmly state that you will be back after class, that you love him, and allow his teacher to take him in to class. Leave immediately with a smile!

Upon returning, show your happiness to see him again. Do not pick him up, however, but bend down to say “hello” and allow him to walk on his own power to the car.

Items to Bring Before the First Day (Sample for preschool)

- ❖ All forms (Registration, Child History, Immunization Form, Emergency Medical Consent)
- ❖ 5 wallet-size photos
- ❖ 3 sets of changing clothes in a wet bag with name label on (shirt, pants, socks, underwear, etc).
- ❖ Sleeping bag if needs nap
- ❖ Inside shoes
- ❖ Water bottle with water
- ❖ When the rain begins, your child needs a rain jacket with hood and waterproof boots.

Annual Registration Fee: Each year at the time of enrollment, an annual registration fee of \$300 is required. (ps. Returning student | siblings will be \$250.)

Enrollment Form: Each child must have a completed enrollment form signed by both parents. A new form must be completed each year.

Immunization Form: The state requires an immunization form to be on file at our school for every enrollee. You must complete and sign the form at the time of enrollment. If this is not done, your child may not enroll.



Authorization for Emergency Care & Health Procedures: These forms must be signed on or before the first day of attending class.

Child History: This form must be completed and signed at the time of enrollment.

Children's Food Preparation Items to Bring

Food prep is a great practical life activity. It follows the child's natural interest to imitate the "real work" that adults perform around them. The child develop independence and fine motor skills as they learn to prepare food. They practice grace and courtesy when they offer the food to share with their friends as well. Flower arranging is one of the child's favorite activity. It adds such a lovely warmth to the classroom and provides the children additional opportunities for practicing everyday skills such as pouring, cutting, measuring, and estimating. We recommend that parents ask your child two or three times a week, "Would you like to take a slice of bread, or fruit to cut at school today?" Be sure that the food items come in a marked plastic bag, and that the fruit and vegetables are small. A young child can handle a small juice orange or a small banana most easily. Whole wheat provides more firmness for cutting than does white bread.

Sequence of cutting food at school:

- Whole wheat bread, or other firm varieties such as cheese sticks, in a marked sandwich bag.
- Small banana (to slice)
- Small navel orange (to peel)
- Small juice orange (to juice)
- Small carrot (to slice) (4.5-5 year-olds)
- Small apple (to dice) (4.5-5 year-olds)

Montessori at Home

Encouraging order, independence, and self-motivation are fundamental to the Montessori approach. Carefully designed classrooms allow students to develop competence in caring for themselves and their surroundings. And from the sense of pride that “I did it myself!” blooms the confidence to take on the world.

Bringing Montessori principles into your home can be a valuable bridge to what your child learns at school. Here are some ways to build that connection.

Preparing the Home Environment

Having a place for everything, on a child-friendly scale, encourages both independence and self-discipline. Children know where to find what they need, and where to put it when they’re done. An ordered environment also has fewer distractions, allowing children to focus on the task at hand.

Bedroom:

- Good, low bed
- Fitted sheets
- Bed cover, easy to pull up
- Low shelves for books
- Low shelves for toys, space for each toy (never a toy box), just a few toys at one time
- Low clothes rod
- Low chest of drawers, which the child can use easily
- Full-length mirror
- Shelf below mirror for a comb and brush
- Shoe rack
- Low desk or table and two chairs
- Proper lighting, low lamps
- Carpet area for floor work (blocks, etc.)
- Two working rugs (2*3')
- Vinyl floor area for water work
- Two aprons, to fit child and a friend
- Soft, real colors on wall (not drab or neutral, but not bright red)
- Large clock with numerals clearly marked, with second hand
- Art works in room: pictures, prints, wall hangings, sculptures (many may be checked out from the library)
- Bulletin board

- Art center: crayons, glue, liquid crayons, scissors, newspapers, creation box of miscellaneous collage items
- Cleaning supplies, dust mop, duster, broom, dustpan, carpet sweeper, sponge and bowl
- Plants, pets: only those which a child can care for
- Hideaway: sheet, blankets to make a tent

Kitchen:

- Low paper towel rack
- Tray, bowl, and sponge for spills
- Small tray and pitcher for milk pouring at mealtime
- Space in refrigerator and/or cupboard for acceptable snacks (container of water so that the child may help himself)
- Dishes down low so that the child can help set the table

Bathroom:

- Low towel rack
- Low shelf for toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, sponge, comb, mirror, bowl, bucket and washcloth for hand washing
- Footstool
- Access to clothes hanger

Empowering Language:

A key concept in Montessori education is respect of each child as an individual. Words, as well as actions, convey this respect. Our teachers practice the art of “active listening” and “I – statements” to help children get in touch with their own feelings. They also try to eliminate phrases of flattery such as “good job, great job, very good” and, instead to say, “You’re proud of your work!” Teachers also attempt to eliminate the ubiquitous phrase, “you need to...” instead, teachers say, “We walk in school,” or “Please wash your hands before lunch!” we hope that parents will participate with us in this respectful language with their children. For further information, you may read Dr. Thomas Gordon’s book, *Parent Effectiveness Training*. He gives his “Roadblocks to learning” to communication as below:

- Ordering, directing, commanding
- Warning, admonishing, threatening
- Exhorting, moralizing, preaching
- Advising, giving solutions/suggestions
- Lecturing, teaching, arguing
- Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming

- Praising, agreeing
- Name-calling, ridiculing, shaming
- Interpreting, analyzing, diagnosing
- Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling
- Probing, questioning, interrogating
- Withdrawing, humoring, diverting

Correlating the Home and School Environment

The following are some simple, everyday suggestions for Montessori in the home, encouraging the child's independence, self-confidence, reasonable freedom of choices, orderliness and responsibility:

- Arrange bathroom facilities for the child (stool to reach the sink with his own washcloth, towel, hairbrush, clothes basket, etc., in an assigned place).
- Place a container of juice or water on a low shelf in the refrigerator, and an accessible cup or glass for all those, "I want a drink" requests. Simply say, "You may get it."
- Purchase a small pitcher or measuring cup at mealtime for the child to serve himself and, later, others.
- Invite the child to help you make his bed, dust, sweep, care for pets, and sort laundry according to dark and light for washing, and then to fold simple items.
- Create the "possibility" of order for the child's toys and belongings (just enough space so that each item can have its place on a shelf.) Display only toys and materials the child can handle and work with successfully: i.e., scissors, old magazines, paste, crayons, paper, matching games, puzzles, books and a variety of toys adapted to the child's level. Purchase 2 work rugs (2*3') for big work and friend.
- Show the child how clean up after working with something and where to return it to its place. Be sure that this is done before other activities are begun.
- Set aside an area of the yard where your child can really garden, hoe and rake, plant and water.
- Reflect on a typical day. Were the majority of your encounters with your child of a negating or restraining nature? Build up a positive relationship between you and your child, play games with him occasionally. Give him your total attention, if only for a few moments. Matching games, which stimulate sensory perception, are easily invented and prepared. Example:

present him with a color, then, ask him to show you objects of that same color in the room. Show him a piece of wood, glass, plastic, etc., and ask him to find other objects made of this or that.

- Observe your child and watch for times when he is particularly interested in color, shape, number, texture, etc. Please encourage his/her interest and share this with your child's teacher.
- When your daily schedule allows for a non-rushed trip to the grocery store, your child can benefit from this. On this occasion, let him walk instead of ride through the aisles with you. "oranges, we need six-1,2,3,4,5,6." Point out, name, examine gently, count, weigh, etc.
- Excursion to the zoo- the entire zoo area need not be covered in one visit. Follow your child and occasionally give him an example of what observing really is. Sit or stand and watch a particular cage or family of animals for some time. Do not simply flit past everything with him in hand.
- Whenever demonstrating a task to your child, first perform actions very carefully yourself. Show him step by step, using as few words as possible.
- Respect and observe your child. An inner guide is directing him. Become sensitive to anticipate and aid him. Read the Montessori philosophy found in Dr. Montessori's books. Many can be checked out in the school office.
- Introduce the rules and limits of your household gradually, make them possible for the child to adapt to. Once you have made them, be as consistent as possible, and remember, your example is the best teacher, the child is observing you with his entire being.
- When school starts, these steps may be helpful:
 1. At bedtime, choose and lay out all clothing to be worn the next day at school.
 2. Awaken the child early enough for unhurried dressing, eating, and toileting. Note: if he resents being awakened, then set an alarm clock to awaken him, giving the child the responsibility of getting up by themselves.
- Children learn by imitating the adults, so set a good example of being on time for school and other things involving the family.
- Plan some time each day to be shared with your child alone.



Termination Policy

Occasionally, a child will experience some difficulty in adapting to the center's environment or abiding by the school rules of behavior. A conference will be scheduled if your child should experience some difficulty. We will work closely with you to see if the problem can be resolved. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive to the group, we reserve the right to ask you to withdraw your child from the center.

You must give a two weeks notice when voluntarily withdrawing your child from Shamrock Montessori. You will be responsible for all final payments through the end of the notice period, whether in attendance or not.

If the rules and policies set forth are not followed, we reserve the right to terminate the daycare contract agreement at anytime. In such an event, we will be paid in full through the end of the month in which such termination occurs.

The child care arrangements will be terminated immediately for any of the following reasons (but not limited to):

- * Failure to comply with the policies set forth in the parent handbook.
- * Failure to comply with the contract.
- * Destructive or hurtful behavior of a child that persists even with parent cooperation in stopping the behavior.
- * Non-payment of childcare or late fees and/or recurring late payment of fees.
- * Repeated failure to pick up the child at scheduled times.
- * Failure to show up for 5 consecutive days without any communication.
- * Inability to meet the child's needs without additional staff.
- * Blatant disrespect towards the provider or provider's family.
- * If a parent knowingly brings their child ill.
- * Consistent child-rearing style differences between the parent and provider.
- * False information given by a parent either verbally or in writing.

If for any reason legal services are needed, Shamrock Montessori will not be responsible for any legal or court costs incurred.

Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

➤ **IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parents exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

➤ **PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child. Verbal abuse to staff.

➤ **CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION**

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is, and every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem. If, after one or two weeks, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety, behavior does not improve, and the center finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her. The parent will be given a minimum of one week's notice to find another center to provide care for this child.

Child Restraint Policy

When a child with special behavioral or mental health issues is enrolled who may frequently need the cautious use of restraint in the event of behavior that endangers his or her safety or the safety of others, a Behavioral Care Plan should be developed with input from the child's primary care provider, mental health provider, parents/guardians, center director/family child care home caregiver/teacher, child care health consultant and possibly early childhood mental health consultant in order to address underlying issues and reduce the need for physical restraint.

That behavioral care plan should include:

- a) An indication and documentation of the use of other behavioral strategies before the use of restraint and a precise definition of when the child could be restrained;
- b) That the restraint be limited to holding the child as gently as possible to accomplish the restraint;
- c) That such child restraint techniques do not violate the state's mental health code;
- d) That the amount of time the child is physically restrained should be the minimum necessary to control the situation and age appropriate; reevaluation and change of strategy should be used every few minutes;
- e) That no bonds, ties, blankets, straps, car seats, heavy weights (such as adult body sitting on child), or abusive words should be used;
- f) That a designated and trained staff person, who should be on the premises whenever this specific child is present, would be the only person to carry out the restraint.

RATIONALE: A child could be harmed if not restrained properly. Therefore, staff who are doing the restraint must be trained. A clear behavioral care plan needs to be in place. And, clear documentation with parent notification needs to be done after a restraining incident occurs in order to conform with the mental health code.

COMMENTS: If all strategies described in Standard 2.2.0.6 are followed and a child continues to behave in an unsafe manner, staff need to physically remove the child from the situation to a less stimulating environment. Physical removal of a child is defined according to the development of the child. If the child is able to walk, staff should hold the child's hand and walk him/her away from the situation. If the child is not ambulatory, staff should pick the child up and remove him/her to a quiet place where s/he cannot hurt him-herself or others. Staff need to remain calm and use a calm voice when directing the child. Certain procedures described in Standard 2.2.0.6 can be used at this time, including not giving lot of attention to the behavior, distracting the child and/or giving a time-out to the child. If the behavior persists, a plan needs to be made with parental/guardian involvement. This plan could include rewards or a sticker chart and/or praise and attention for appropriate behavior.



Parent's Statement of Agreement

I certify that I have read and have had an opportunity to discuss with the administration any questions or concerns about the rules and policies contained in the *Shamrock Montessori Parent Handbook*. I understand that the statements of policy contained in the Handbook are not a contract. In this handbook I understand the policies and procedures as written. I understand the philosophy of Montessori, the Montessori program offered by Shamrock Montessori.

We may also make changes or modifications in our policies if required by our licensing agencies. Shamrock Montessori will inform parents of changes taking place whenever possible in a timely fashion.

Student Name _____

Parent Name (print) _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Please make a copy of this agreement and turn it in with your enrollment papers.