

DISCOVERY GARDEN
MONTESSORI SCHOOL



Celebrating 10 years of guiding and educating Springfield

Parent Handbook

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Introduction

This document aims to articulate expectations we agree on for what parents can reasonably expect of the school, and what the school will expect of parents. It also aims to reduce the possible misunderstandings and disappointments that result when unstated expectations go unmet.

Partnership Agreement

What does the school expect from parents?

Continuous effort to understand and embrace the Montessori approach, and to work in partnership with the school.

These efforts should begin before admission. Our school functions best when parents understand and embrace the mission of the school. We help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education as part of the admission process. In this way, parents can make an informed decision in choosing to enroll their children and continue to provide more learning opportunities throughout a family's years at the school. Once children are enrolled, the school expects parents to attend regular parent-teacher conferences and parent education events and to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the *Parent Handbook* and other school publications. Children thrive when home and school work in harmony, with both environments sharing the same educational values and expectations.

Demonstrate respect for all adults and children, the school, and the school's programs.

Model respect for your children, their classmates, parents of classmates, teachers, and other school staff. In short, model respect for everyone associated with the school. Respect begins with civility and deepens into trust. Our most fundamental behavioral guidelines for the children are, *"respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment."* We expect the same from families and school staff, at all times and in all relationships within the school community. This includes speech and outward behavior. Support your child by speaking of their teachers, classmates, and school in positive terms, respect and abide by the school's policies and procedures, honor your commitments, and look for ways to make a positive contribution to the school community. Through your behavior, you contribute to your children's moral development and to the culture and climate of their school.

Strive to parent according to Montessori principles.

Learn as much as you can about Montessori principles as they apply to the preparation of your child's home environment as well as the way parents interact with our children. This begins with the general principle: *"Never do something for your child that they can do for themselves."* Allow your child to engage in all of the simple tasks of life that children can do for themselves at each stage of development. Montessori education may also entail learning a communication style that is different from previous generations. Children develop a love of learning and become responsible, independent, and capable when parents' values and expectations are consistent with those of the school.

Maintain active, direct, and respectful two-way communication with the school.

Remember this principle of respect: *“Even when there is disagreement, disagree respectfully.”* For more detailed communication guidelines, refer to the section “Communication Between Home and School” in this handbook.

Read communications that are sent home, including all letters, newsletters, updates, and calendars. Inform the school in a timely fashion of pertinent changes in your child’s life. Active communication involves parents sharing observations and concerns about their child with the child’s current teacher.

What can parents expect from the school?

Discovery Garden aspires to fulfill its mission as a Montessori school.

As a Montessori school, we are different from conventional schools. Our first commitment (after student health and safety) is to the multi-dimensional development of the child. Montessori children amass a great deal of factual knowledge in school, but our aim is for each child to be far more than a repository of this information. We guide each child to think for themselves. Cognitive development and a solid academic foundation are important, but they represent only one dimension of our aspirations for our students. Equally significant is a child’s social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development.

Children are given choices and a great deal of freedom—within limits—during the school day. The choices a child makes, and the accompanying responsibilities, influence the emerging character of your child. In choosing or shaping their own work, following that work through to completion, and working independently or in cooperation with others, the Montessori child identifies their interests and develops their individual gifts.

We treat each child with dignity and respect, and expect that they will treat all others with the same respect. We treat each child as an individual and strive to develop each child’s unique gifts. With freedom comes responsibility, and each child learns to balance personal freedom with a sense of responsibility to the self, to others, and to the community.

Efforts to maintain open, honest, timely, and respectful communication with parents about their children and about information affecting the school community.

There are two regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conferences each year, accompanied by written summaries. In the event of special concerns, your child’s teacher will contact you to discuss these concerns by phone, by email, or in person. In addition to conference reporting, teachers will communicate with you via classroom letters and newsletters, email messages, and short reports as needed for individual children.

Each member of the Discovery Garden staff is a well-trained professional, and our confidential evaluations are based on the direct observation of your child. The classroom teams will always offer their best current understanding of your child’s progress as well as their strengths and needs. For all children, this evaluation is based on the directress’s observation, which may be augmented by input from the head of school or auxiliary staff.

Regarding ongoing, school wide communication, the school distributes a weekly digital newsletter (see page 34), a *Parent Handbook*, a school calendar, Peek of the Week classroom updates, and other occasional letters and publications.

We strive to ensure an environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supportive, as well as aesthetically pleasing.

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the classroom teacher's first responsibility is to prepare the environment. This means that the learning materials should correspond to the developmental characteristics of the child at each level, and that those materials must be attractive to the child: correct in size, aesthetically pleasing, well-maintained, and complete. More broadly, the whole school environment must meet these criteria to appeal to the child and to inspire their work. Additionally, we always ensure that the school building and grounds are physically safe, secure, and well-maintained.

Our community of children and adults comprises a social environment and culture that impacts the child's experience. We strive to make this environment emotionally supportive and safe for every child. This does not mean that there are no problems; rather, it means that we will work with your child in developmentally-appropriate ways to deal with problems as they arise. We do so by empowering them with social skills, and aiding them in the development of emotional intelligence to prepare for a lifetime of working with others in different communities and organizations.

A focus on the needs of individual children in harmony with the life of the community, mission-driven decisions embodying good stewardship and responsible management, and an open door to questions or concerns.

Administrative staff will interface with all the various constituencies of the school: students, parents, extended family, faculty, board members, prospective parents, professional visitors, government officials, other schools and educational organizations, and the general public. In your interactions with administration, you can expect professional, courteous, and business-like conduct, as well as mutually respectful communication.

The head of school and administration support staff comprise the administration. They often face decisions requiring a balance of competing priorities. Sometimes those factors are mutually exclusive; sometimes equally well-intentioned adults see matters differently. In making decisions, the administration will focus on the interest of the individual child in balance with the needs of the school as a whole.

Discovery Garden Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities of the school. Discovery Garden does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, family structure or sexual orientation in the administration of its programs.

Note: Discovery Garden is also happy to welcome children with varying levels of physical and mental ability. Children with diagnosed special needs will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine if our environment is the best fit for their needs.

Overview

School Mission

The mission of Discovery Garden Montessori School is to prepare an outstanding Montessori environment that fosters collaboration, cooperation, and peace, and to provide experiences for each child to develop to their fullest potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Through

the dynamic partnership of the child, parent, and teacher, a consistent Montessori framework for education is created, offering the tools for a journey of lifelong learning.

Montessori History

Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician and one of the great educators of the twentieth century, pioneered the work with children that we carry on today at Discovery Garden. She was born in Chiaravalle, Italy in 1870. Her first association with children began in 1898 at the University Psychiatric Clinic in Rome. Through intense study, observation, and long days of working with these children, she discovered their problems were more emotional than medical. She designed special learning materials to meet their needs, and trained teachers to present them in a special way. Montessori's success was proclaimed miraculous. Many of these children went on to pass, or even excel at conventional state examinations.

In 1904, she turned her attention to everyday children. She opened her first school, *Casa de Bambini* (House of Children) on January 6, 1907 in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome. Word of this new education began to spread, and many more such schools were opened in Italy and in other countries.

Within half a century, her work became known as the Montessori Method. In 1929, she founded the Association Montessori Internationale to continue her work. During the war years, it was regarded as a movement for world peace; indeed, she saw children as the most legitimate hope for a new world. Honorary doctorates, awards, and recognition were bestowed on her from countries all over the world. By the time of her death in 1952, she had gained an international reputation as an educator, was a three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

Dr. Montessori fervently believed that children have an inner force that gives them the power and drive to achieve their full potential. When children are given the proper measures of guidance and freedom, this inner force enables them to focus on what they need to know; they learn with wonder, joy, and confidence. A vital part of the Montessori approach is a carefully prepared environment that is attractive and orderly. It includes learning materials designed to meet the needs of each child at their particular level of development. Through skilled observation, the adult is prepared to offer children the kind of instruction that will stimulate their interest and activity.

The special relationship between the child and adult in a Montessori classroom is conveyed by these words of a young child: "Help me to do it myself."

School Philosophy

The school's educational approach is inspired by the work of Dr. Maria Montessori, who created the models for the classrooms and learning materials. Discovery Garden continues her work in developmental psychology and education, providing a superior Montessori environment and dynamic learning experiences, designed according to the developmental characteristics and needs of children, guiding and nurturing each child intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

As Montessori educators, we believe that each child is born to be a learner, and that the full potential of each person is realized through an ordered, challenging, nurturing environment that contributes to the child's physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual development.

We believe that a child and their needs are the central and commanding focus of the learning process. It is the role of the school to observe, to know, and to represent the child as they proceed through the stages of development.

We see in each child the future of society, our nation, and our planet. Children represent unlimited possibilities, and the future rests on our ability to cultivate this potential.

Discovery Garden seeks students from diverse social, economic, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. We recognize that education requires an ethical environment in which the values of the community are respected, and the worth of the individual protected. Our philosophy includes the cultivation of the following values:

- **Self-reliance and hard work:** We facilitate education based on self-inquiry while maintaining school-wide standards of academic excellence. We recognize the intrinsic rewards of the children's work.
- **Respect for others:** This includes those who live or lived in other places and times. We emphasize the constructive advances achieved by humans rather than the wars waged by them.
- **International and interpersonal peace:** We seek to create situations where children cooperate at least as much as they compete.

Our goals at Discovery Garden are to:

- Instill a love of learning in every child.
- Assure a solid educational foundation that will help them achieve their potential
- Nurture, inspire, and support each child's individual development with an enriched and welcoming community
- Actively recruit and serve all children in hopes to attract a diverse group of students

Accreditation

Discovery Garden is a full member of the American Montessori Society (AMS) and strives to become fully accredited by AMS in the future.

School Governance

Discovery Garden Montessori School is incorporated as a non-profit organization and managed by a self-perpetuating board of directors, governed by the school's by-laws. The board of directors serve as custodians of the integrity of the school, holding in trust the school's present and future. The Discovery Garden Board of Directors is comprised of at least seven members, selected from the parent body and the community at large, plus the head of school, who also serves as the executive director. Each member is elected to a two-year term.

The board as a whole represents continuity and permanent responsibility. As such, the board is the main policymaking body of the school. It is responsible for establishing and reviewing the philosophy and objectives of the school, for effective implementation of the policies that it sets forth, and for the school's fiscal well-being.

The board selects and evaluates the head of school, who is responsible for implementing school policy. The head of school guides the board in formulating the school's mission and in developing its strategic plan, prepares and carries out the operating plan and the annual budget, as approved by the board, reports to the board on school matters, and is accountable to the board for effective, businesslike management of the school.

If you would like to serve on the board, or nominate someone to serve, please contact the head of school, or any director, and your name will be forwarded to the board of directors for consideration. The Discovery Garden Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of alternating months, typically with a longer break over the summer months.

Appellate Process

Information

The board of trustees is a strategic board and does not participate in school operations or routinely review decisions made by the head of school. With this in mind, the school has elected to introduce a carefully defined appellate function into the board of directors. While the board expects the use of this process to be extremely rare, we do believe it may be of value to have such a process in place. The head of school will always be part of this process and will participate fully in any discussion of matters appealed to the committee.

Because the head of school is appointed by the board with full responsibility to run the school, and has the confidence of the board, it would be unusual for the appellate process to overturn a decision made by the head. However, there may be an instance in which a review process of decision-making would be helpful to ensure that all sides of an issue have been examined. The appellate process can be used by parents for significant disagreements, such as the expulsion of a child from school, or by a faculty member in the case of termination or non-renewal of a contract. The process is not intended to be used for daily operating decisions or to challenge school policies. In all cases, it is expected that the complainant will have worked through all other processes of conflict resolution, following the lines of communication as outlined in *The Discovery Garden Montessori School Handbook* and the *Employee Handbook*. The appellate process is to be used *only* by the person affected by the decision.

Appeal Procedure

To make an appeal, submit a written, signed, and dated statement to the board of directors' chairperson. No oral or unsigned appeals will be considered. The written statement should describe what the problem is and include specific facts, dates and names, where relevant. The statement should include why the position of the school is perceived to be wrong.

Typically, the appeal will be reviewed in the next regularly scheduled board meeting, which meets with the head of school in attendance.

The Board of Directors will review the information submitted to make certain all circumstances were considered in the decision and that the policies of the school have been followed. Note that the appellate process is not to be used for academic-related decisions. A written response will be sent to the complainant subsequent to the meeting.

School Administration and Teaching Staff

Head of School

Cynthia Barraza serves as the professional educational leader of the school. As head of school and the executive director, she has complete responsibility for faculty, staff, and student selection, evaluation, and dismissal. The head articulates the mission of the school to its constituencies and is responsible for the professional quality and behavior of the faculty and administrative staff.

Directresses

Toddler community directress: Angelica Costello

Primary directress (Daisies Classroom): Lynetta Couch

Primary directress (Sunflowers Classroom): Karol da Silva

Lower Elementary directress: Stacy Gray

Assistants

Toddler Community Assistant: Miranda Grimes

Toddler Community Assistant: Iliana Kauffman

Toddler Community Assistant: Korah McGhee

Primary Assistant: Alexis Miles

Primary Assistant: Kaitlyn Emmendorfer

In House Support Teacher: Lynnette Trueblood

Support Staff

Administrative Assistant: Claire Lea

Creative Movement Teacher: Heather O’Sullivan

Aftercare Assistants: Sydney Roberson, Hailey Garbs and Bridget Sloniker

Faculty Information

Educational Background and Training

All directresses, from the toddler through lower elementary level, either hold diplomas or are working towards diplomas in Montessori pedagogy. In cases where a Montessori training center is associated with a university, a master’s degree can be earned in conjunction with Montessori diploma.

Professional Development

Faculty and staff are expected to complete a minimum of 12 hours of professional development each year, which may include attendance at national or local conferences, university courses, or in-service work. The school supports the ongoing professional development of its faculty by providing the time and resources for its teachers to attend.

For this reason, there are days during the year when classes are out of session and staff members are present on campus for professional activities. These days are used for a number of purposes, including workshops, faculty meetings, and preparation of the environment. Professional development days are marked on the school calendar. Each staff member may also be granted other professional days to attend meetings, seminars, and workshops, or to observe other schools.

In addition, faculty is present on campus for one or two weeks prior to the opening of school in the fall, and up to four days after school dismisses for the summer, in order to prepare the classroom environments and teaching materials. A Montessori classroom is a highly enriched and complex environment that demands much time and effort from the faculty to prepare and maintain. Consequently, Montessori schools typically devote more days to preparation than other schools.

Faculty Changes, Information, and Recruitment

Some faculty turnover is inevitable from year to year. Changes in faculty for the coming school year are formally announced in a parent letter every spring, after contracts have been signed. Later changes are announced in mid-summer.

The school advertises employment opportunities locally and nationally. Faculty members and the head of school participate in the hiring process. In addition, the school annually seeks to

recruit candidates to be trained as Montessori teachers. The head of school is responsible for final hiring decisions.

Check our school website for current faculty web biographies—it's an easy way to get to know your child's teachers and to learn more about the faculty and staff of Discovery Garden Montessori School.

Parent's Voice

Discovery Garden has a talented and involved parent body. Some parent volunteer activities are coordinated through the Parent's Voice, a committee that allows parents to volunteer to participate in their child's classroom and activities. The school depends on the support of these parent volunteers throughout the year. Parents make a valuable contribution to the children of Discovery Garden when they donate their time and talents, and receive the opportunity to meet other Discovery Garden parents. Parent's Voice volunteers help to build community spirit and provide needed (and appreciated!) help to our faculty and staff. Parents can volunteer in a variety of ways:

- Assist with field trips, special events, performances, and other class projects
- Assist with parent education, including planning programs and participating at events.
- Work in the school office
- Assist with fundraising projects
- Participate in renovation projects around the school
- Introduce elements of your cultural heritage or professional expertise to your child's class

There is ample opportunity for involvement; we invite you to participate in as many activities as your schedule permits! As a parent at Discovery Garden, you are already a member of the Parent's Voice; please volunteer when and how you can. For more information, contact the Parent's Voice President, your student's directress, or the school administration.

Community-Building Events

Discovery Garden hosts a variety of events designed to bring parents and other family members together over the course of the school year. Below is a list of the regularly scheduled community-building events.

Welcome Night

Held just a few days before school starts, this event welcomes all Discovery Garden families to a new school year. Light snacks are provided while families connect to the school community. This social time will be followed by a more formal informational meeting.

Kid's Cafe

Discovery Garden will host a kid's cafe in the fall for the entire school community. Parents, students, and staff will gather in the classroom to enjoy treats made and served by the students and a variety of drinks.

Grandparents' Day

Grandparents and special friends are invited to visit Discovery Garden the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Guests visit the classroom with their grandchild and enjoy a reception hosted by

the students. This is a perfect opportunity to help grandparents and other family learn more about Montessori education.

Winter Celebration

Each year before Winter Break, Discovery Garden celebrates the season as a community, with performances by each classroom followed by a potluck reception.

Dinner with Dad

Dads and special friends are invited to join us for an evening meal prepared by our students. This is a great chance for dads to experience the Montessori environment and see their students' hard work in action.

World Fair

Each year in late winter, Discovery Garden hosts The World Fair, a wonderful event involving the whole school that celebrates different backgrounds and cultures. Visitors will enjoy food, crafts, and performances from around the world, many prepared by the students themselves.

Mother's Day Tea

In honor of Mother's Day, our Discovery Garden moms and special friends are invited to tea, prepared by their students. Moms, students, and teachers will gather in the classrooms to enjoy light snacks and drinks.

End of Year Celebration Picnic

To celebrate our hard work, accomplishments, and friendships formed during the school year, we will gather on the last day of school. We will participate in field games and activities, and we end our last day at lunchtime with a potluck picnic.

Fundraising Programs

Each year the school community is asked to invest in the continued success of our school, and to share the excitement as we continue to expand the educational gifts we give to our children. Annual fundraising revenues are one way we make this happen. Revenues traditionally support faculty education and financial aid, enhance the general operating budget of the school, and also help assure minimal tuition increases. The ability to maintain this exceptional environment where parents can make a difference relies on 100% participation from our families. We rely on you to support our programs and to participate in an area that will be meaningful for you, while allowing you the opportunity the help create a lasting difference in our community. Please give as you can when contacted.

The Annual Fund Campaign

A tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund is the single most important gift you can make to Discovery Garden. A letter of appeal will be mailed out in August each year asking for a financial donation to the school. Pledge payments may be made monthly, quarterly, or annually as a single gift payment. Every gift of every size is important to Discovery Garden and to our students. We also ask other community members, family or friends to contribute to the fund, and we encourage you to do the same.

Sip and Savor

Sip and Savor is a festive, fun-filled evening in October where Discovery Garden parents and friends can enjoy an evening out complete with delicious food and wine.

Spring Fling Art Auction

This event, held in the evening each spring, features wine, delicious appetizers, and desserts, as well as both live and silent auctions. The focal points of the auction are the sale of beautiful class projects and individual student pieces. This is a fun way to be involved in Discovery Garden's fundraising, as the planning and preparation go on year-round.

Parent Support

Learning About Montessori

It is essential that all Discovery Garden parents make a habit of attending parent education events offered by the school throughout the year. The purpose of these events is to strengthen the relationships between parents, teachers, and children by offering programs, speakers, and publications that focus on Montessori educational principles and practice, parenting skills, and child development issues. Dates for these events are available on the school year calendar and in the monthly newsletter.

Parent Education Program

Our faculty and administration conduct a series of curriculum meetings and morning coffee meetings for parent education. These sessions help parents to learn more about the Montessori curriculum and familiarize them with Montessori materials, as well as the Discovery Garden instructors.

Volunteer Hours

Parents are a crucial component in the success of our school. Each year many projects are completed, during our parent volunteer hours. Each year we ask parents to volunteer 20 hours per family. These hours can be fulfilled helping in the community building events, fundraising events or during our workdays. Teachers also have a list of activities that can be done in the classroom as a volunteer. Each family has the option to fulfill their 20 hr. a year or submit a donation of \$500 by April 30th.

Auxiliary Programs

Aftercare

Discovery Garden's Aftercare program provides a continuation of the teachings of mutual respect, independence, and cooperation that the students are accustomed to in the classroom. Aftercare is designed to be a warm, homelike environment. The program is planned and supervised by the head of school and the Aftercare Teachers.

The indoor environment includes a quiet area for reading, eating, or resting; an arts and crafts area, and a space for indoor games or free play. The outdoor environment offers nature observations and space for informal gatherings, an area for games and activities, and the opportunity to play on the playground equipment. The Aftercare program is available from the end of regular classes at 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. each school day, with the exception of early dismissals.

Enrichment Classes

Specialized Enrichment classes will be available during the afternoon for an additional fee. These classes will include Spanish, yoga, and music. Please contact the office to learn more about our Enrichment classes for this school year.

Early Bird Care

Discovery Garden offers contract-based early morning care from 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. Space is limited, so if more applications are received than there are spaces by the posted due date, those applications will be placed on a waiting list. If we have the space, a student may drop in on a short-term basis for a daily fee. You must call the office before the end of the day *prior* to the drop-in day. Students cannot be dropped off before school begins unless they are signed up for Early Bird care. Please contact the office to register a child for early morning care.

Summer Camps

As an independent school, Discovery Garden follows a traditional school year (August through May) calendar. When staff is available, and there is sufficient interest, we will also offer a summer camp while school is out of session.

Emergency Care

If you have an emergency, we will care for your child after school until someone can pick them up. Please call the office as soon as possible to let us know of an emergency.

Field Trips

Going out on trips is encouraged for our primary and lower elementary students. Field trips involving the whole school are rare; outings in the lower elementary are mainly initiated by small groups of children under the guidance of the teacher. The purpose of “going out” is to foster independence by making connections with the world beyond the school in order to support ongoing classroom work. Parents will be informed of these outings and will be requested to provide a signed consent for all outings beyond school premises and adjacent neighborhood.

Use of Personal Vehicles

Employees and parents are required to submit a copy of their driver’s license and insurance card to the office before using their vehicle for school business or school-sponsored activities.

Employees and parents must be aware that the school’s insurance policies do not cover damage to personal vehicles when they are used on school business or school-sponsored functions such as class trips or outings. Personal automobile policies will be the only available coverage for damage, and will be the primary coverage for any claims.

Supporting Children

We believe that it is not only desirable, but also possible for every child to be a successful and happy learner. In our experience, children can achieve success in learning when provided with the proper learning environment and the necessary support. Please let your child’s teacher know of any significant changes to your child’s life such as remarriage, divorce, family hospitalization, traveling, moving, death in the family, the anticipated birth or adoption of a sibling, or other significant life events. These events may cause a child to act differently in class, and teachers will be better able to respond to a child’s behavioral changes if this information is provided. This information will remain confidential.

Phase In/Adjustment Periods:

Entering school is a change for both children and adults. We ask both new and returning families to be flexible for the first few weeks of the school year. Often, the first few days are shorter for younger children, and students may require assistance from a parent or caring adult

to whom the child is attached. Children will be phased into the class slowly and securely. Each child is different, so each phase-in time will be different. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during this time.

Before the first day of school, your child will visit the classroom with you and will have the opportunity to explore and meet the teachers. In the beginning, your child will come to school every day unless you are told otherwise. Please make arrangements for you or someone who is close to your child (a friend or relative) to be available for your child these first days.

On the first day please bring your child into the classroom; one of the classroom faculty will greet you and your child. You may show your child the classroom before you leave. For some children, separation will be more difficult, so we might ask you to stay for a couple of minutes in a designated parent chair. We ask you not to initiate interaction with your child or any classmates during this time, as this helps the students more easily engage in the environment without distractions. Once your child has gained the confidence to explore and be independent in the classroom, you may leave. From then on you may choose to drop off your child in carline

Note: toddlers must always be dropped off and picked up in their classroom. One of our teachers will get them from your car and escort them into the classroom.

The first day of school will be short for all students (except Elementary students), from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We ask that you be available to come back if we need you before 11:30. On the following days we will extend the time that they are in school. Within a couple of days, they should be able to stay for their enrolled schedule. Every child's separation process is different; some children may phase in faster than others. This is not a reflection on you or your child. It may take a week or two (all will be okay!) until your child feels comfortable saying goodbye to you. Please trust that we will comfort your child when you leave, and that your child is safe.

The following tips will help with this process:

- Talk about school. Explain to your child what to expect: how long you'll stay, who will be in the classroom, the teachers' names, etc.
- Be positive; your child can sense your own separation anxieties. If you're enthusiastic, they will likely be enthusiastic, too.
- Read books about going to school when you're home.
- When/if your child cries, remain calm. Try not to say, "don't be afraid," or "there's nothing to be afraid of," or "there's no reason to cry." It's best to address your child in a positive way. "It's okay to be afraid. Your teachers will take care of you."
- Never sneak out, or "slip away." Tell your child that you're leaving the classroom. Make sure you are consistent and give one quick goodbye each time you leave.
- When you leave, tell your child where you're going, when you'll be coming back, and what you'll be doing. For example: "I have to go to work now. I'll be back to pick you up when school is over." Please follow the teacher's instructions on when to come back, when to leave, etc.
- Don't ask your child for permission to leave the classroom. For example, "is it okay if I go now?" This can be confusing to your child. Be straightforward instead.

When you've successfully completed phase-in, we ask that you have a clear and consistent separation routine with your child. Teachers will get your child from your car and allow them to WALK on their own into the classroom. Sometimes your child may cry and resist exiting the car. This reaction is not unique and often your concern for your child can transfer to feelings of anxiety for them. Say goodbye kindly and firmly. We will comfort your child.

Evaluations

Sometimes, parents are uncomfortable when we recommend that they seek additional help for their child. We are sensitive to your concerns while simultaneously advocating for the child. It is a delicate balance in which we all continue to work. Our policy is only a framework. Each child is a unique individual and their needs are addressed individually; at the same time, we continue to search for ways to meet those needs and to refine our communication with parents.

Evaluating Students for Possible Learning and Behavioral Difficulties

As part of a teacher's normal recordkeeping process, anecdotal notes are kept to document positive behaviors for each child, as well as behaviors that raise concerns about possible learning or behavioral difficulties. The teacher monitors the areas of concern to determine whether a child is developing emotionally, intellectually, and socially as expected.

If concerns about the child's development continue, the teacher will meet with parents to discuss their observations and to gather helpful information, including what is happening at home. The teacher invites the parents to observe at home and stay in communication with the staff. If necessary, the teacher will suggest authorizing an independent contracted Educational Consultant to observe the child. The observations and reports will be discussed with parents by the teacher and head of school. DGMS staff will keep in constant communication with parents.

If the child continues to experience difficulties, or if at any time the behaviors impact the child's educational experience or the classroom environment, a report will be sent to the parents recommending formal evaluation. The directress and head of school will confer with the parents at that time.

Independence, Work Cycles, and Class Size

In our classrooms, we are committed to supporting each child to develop their fullest potential. One way we do this is by respecting their work and work cycle. The Montessori environment fosters independence and self-esteem by providing opportunities to practice skills, social interactions, and participate in conflict resolution techniques. We meet the standard established by the American Montessori Society (AMS), which includes guidelines for class size. One of the benefits of a large class is that it maximizes the students' opportunities to depend on themselves and each other.

Support Systems

Our parent education and support programs carry out our intention to partner with parents in serving the child. The head of school and the faculty work to provide support for parents by being available to answer questions, and by offering a variety of parent programs. Children at Discovery Garden are learning successfully; they feel good about themselves and believe in their ability to learn. Children who are having difficulty will receive ample support.

However, it is not possible for the Montessori classroom to meet the needs of all learners. We have spent time talking with parents of children whose needs took them elsewhere. These children have transferred to other learning environments and are doing well with more structure or more individual instruction than is typical in a Montessori classroom. As we learn

more about how children learn and continue to work and talk with families, we can help every child become a happy and successful learner. With the child at the center, we continue to build a strong community of support.

Encouraging Children

Here are some tasks to encourage responsibility and independence in your child:

Eighteen Months to Three Years Old:

- Turn off the lights while being carried
- Carry in the newspaper or mail
- Get cereal or snack from kid-friendly containers
- Pick up toys and clothes
- Wash tables/counters with a damp sponge
- Put a soiled/wet diaper in the diaper pail
- Wash vegetables, tear lettuce, and stir
- Help set the table
- Feed pets
- Help clean up after meals and play
- Wake up siblings
- Run simple errands around the house

Four to Six Years Old:

- All of the above, plus:
- Help find grocery items in the store
- Count goods at the grocery store
- Help fold and sort laundry
- Pour drinks
- Give you a back rub or foot rub
- Help measure ingredients
- Water plants
- Help vacuum, sweep, and dust
- Talk about library books or videos to and from the car
- Help younger siblings
- Help plant a garden
- Wash the floor

- Help put groceries away
- Put their clothes away
- Take clothes out of the dryer
- Help make beds
- Make salads
- Bring recyclables to the garage
- Lead family prayer
- Scramble eggs, make toast
- Tell you when the traffic light turns green
- Clear dishes from table
- Seal and put stamps on envelopes
- Put dishes in the dishwasher
- Measure soap for the dishwasher and start the cycle
- Empty dishwasher, stack dishes on counter
- Be responsible for compost buckets
- Haul things in a wagon
- Assist in meal planning
- Rake leaves
- Help wash pets
- Prepare their own lunch
- Walk well-behaved pets
- Carry in firewood
- Start to manage their own money

Six Years and older:

- All of the above, plus:
- Write your shopping list
- Count money in their piggy bank
- Set up a lemonade stand
- Compare products in the store
- Iron their clothes
- Read ingredients for recipes
- Wash dishes and put them away

- Volunteer with any charity

Observing Children

You are encouraged to observe in your child's classroom at least twice a year, typically just before or after a parent-teacher conference. Observing provides an opportunity to become familiar with your child's daily experiences in the Montessori environment. Beginning in October and continuing through April, parents can sign up for observations by speaking to the administration. If you cannot make the observation time that you originally scheduled, please remember to call 24 hours in advance so that your child's teacher will be expecting you. If, for some reason, you find out on the day of the observation that you cannot attend, please call the office or let a teacher know in carline. Call the office to reschedule. Please do not reschedule in carline.

Preparing for an observation

Share your plans with your child a few days before your scheduled observation. Let them know that you will be coming to watch them work and that they should do whatever they normally do when you are not there. Explain that you will arrive at a given time and will stay for a while to watch them work. Convey that you do not want to interrupt or disrupt the class, so you will need to sit very quietly and watch while they continue to work.

Clearly explain that you will quietly leave the classroom after about twenty minutes or so, and that you will be sure to say a quick and quiet goodbye. Mention the pick up plans. For example, "I will see you at the end of your school day and we will go home and have a snack together." It is important that your child knows what to expect and is not surprised when you leave at the end of your observations.

Please be assured that children respond in very different ways to having a parent in the classroom. Some continue their work and barely glance up. Others want to show you all of the new things that they have learned and will bring their work close by. Occasionally, a child will become "clingy" and will want to sit on your lap or cry when you leave. This is not unusual and the teachers will know how to handle such a situation. Bring a notebook to jot down questions and observations that you wish to share with the teacher at a later time. **Note:** Please remember to turn off cellphones during your observation!

Toddler Community and Primary: What to Look for in an Observation

- An environment that is orderly and beautiful: shelves, furnishing, artwork and materials are at the child's level, and materials are grouped by subjects around the room.
- Children working independently: some working alone, some in pairs or small groups, and others having an individual lesson.
- Children concentrating on work or in conversation, even though there is much activity and work going on around them.
- Children cooperating and helping one another.
- Children settling arguments without the teacher's guidance.
- Children caring for the environment: putting work away when completed, cleaning up their messes, and handling the materials with care.
- Teachers interacting with children, but not as the central focus of the classroom.

Lower Elementary: What to Look for in an Observation

- An environment that is orderly and attractive with many inviting materials arranged in subject matter around the room.
- Children working independently, usually in small groups or twosomes while others are having a lesson.
- Children working with materials.
- More writing as the children move towards abstract concepts.
- Children cooperating and helping one another.
- Children settling their own differences.
- Children caring for the environment: putting work away completed, cleaning up their messes and handling the materials with care.
- Teachers interacting with children, but not as the central focus of the classroom.

Student Assessment

We provide a qualitative evaluation of a child's performance that takes into consideration the whole child, including strengths and limitations, as well as social, physical, and creative achievements. The education your child receives at Discovery Garden Montessori School extends far beyond basic skills in math and language. At DGMS, we do not believe in traditional grading methods. Traditional grades provide a quantitative evaluation of a child's work. Grading creates an environment of winners and losers, undermining the spirit of cooperation and community. Furthermore, research indicates that grading actually reduces creativity, as students aim for work that will be safe and acceptable to the adult. The children begin to work to please the adult rather than themselves: to work for the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic reward. For these reasons, the Discovery Garden Montessori School does not "grade" children.

Conference Reports

You will receive two written conference reports each year. These reports will be reviewed with you, in person, at conferences with your child's teacher in the fall and spring. At the end of each school year, you will receive a third written report in the mail, which will reflect your child's social, emotional, physical, artistic, and academic work completed during the course of the school year.

In the fall and spring of each year, you'll have an opportunity to discuss your child's progress at parent-teacher conferences. Throughout the year, if you have questions about your child's progress, please call the teacher for a discussion.

Homework

Generally speaking, homework refers to academic work. However, Montessori educators like to broaden the term: all work that is done at home is homework. It falls into two basic categories, for adults and children alike. First, is the work we do for ourselves: to improve ourselves, to pursue our own interests and dreams. This work could be an extension of work done on the job or at school, or it could be an unrelated activity or hobby that is meaningful to us individually. The line between work and play can become blurred here, just as work the children do at school is often fun.

When children leave Discovery Garden Montessori School at the end of the school day, we hope they will have time to relax, and we expect they will do some work at home as well. Our homework expectations are as follows:

- Activities appropriate to family life and the home environment.
- Continuation of both academic work and self-development:
 - A love of reading is the single best indicator of and influence on academic success. Reading and being read to daily are thus very important for children; consider these activities as standing homework.
 - Projects of the child's own choosing, whether related to topics being explored in class or to other interests.

Transitions/Classroom Placements

Continuity is the hallmark of the Montessori experience, as children stay in the same classroom for eighteen months to three years. This stability provides for both security and growth, as the child's role within the group changes over time, from being one of the youngest in the class to one of the oldest. Psychologist Alfred Adler identified birth order in the family as one of the most important determinants of personality. In a Montessori classroom, every child has the opportunity to be first a youngest child, then a middle child, and finally an oldest child in their classroom family. This experience contributes to the child's personal growth in ways that conventional, single-age groupings cannot.

Even so, children do make multiple transitions as they move through the school's different programs. Dr. Montessori observed that each child passes through planes of development. Each stage lasts six years, and includes distinct developmental characteristics and needs. She created learning environments to respond to each new plane of development.

Toddler Community

The first transition occurs when a child leaves home and enters the toddler community. Children enter toddler community between age 16 months and 24 months, with the ideal entry age being 18 months. A child must be a confident walker to be ready for the toddler community. Children who spend at least a year in the toddler community benefit greatly from the program.

Primary Transitions

For some children, entrance to the primary class is their first school experience. For others, they move up to primary from the toddler community. In either event, this transition occurs sometime around 36 months. Independent care of self is one sign of readiness for primary; this includes toileting and dressing. We also look at a child's sense of order and independence. The sense of order can be seen in careful handling of classroom materials and in following a daily routine. Independence is shown by the child's successful separation from the parents and in the ability to choose their own work in the classroom.

Lower Elementary Transitions

The transition from primary into lower elementary marks the end of the first plane of development and the onset of the second plane. The minimum age for entry into the lower elementary is six years of age.

In determining a child's readiness for moving up into lower elementary, faculty first consider social and emotional maturity. We also look closely at the child's academic skills; they need to be

reading and writing with fluency to prosper at the lower elementary level. They also need to have a strong sense of self-direction and independence, and the ability to work with concentration, both alone or in cooperation with a group.

What Is the Parent's Role during Transitions?

Listen to your Child

To help prepare your child for a transition, it is important to listen. They will probably express a mixture of excitement and anxiety. Change can be scary; listening to your child's feelings, and expressing your support, will make a difference.

Observation

When your child is about to move into a different level, we recommend that you come and observe a classroom at the next level, so that you can better understand the transition your child will be making.

Orientation Meetings

In August and September, we will have two evenings devoted to orientation and back to school presentations for all parents in each class. These meetings are essential for helping your child get off to a good start, since they will cover both practical information and the Montessori approach.

Parents with concerns about whether their child is ready for the next level should contact the teacher. Decisions will be based on the needs of the individual child.

What does the School Consider during Placement?

The Placement Process

In conventional school settings, a child's placement in a classroom is often determined by the child's ability to get along with the teacher (and vice versa). Discovery Garden is not a teacher-centered educational system; it is child-centered. When students move from one program into another, their assets and strengths are analyzed, and then students are placed in a learning community that best embraces their gifts. Placement is determined by matching the skills and needs of the individual with the skills and needs of the learning community. The teacher is one part of the learning community.

Multi-Age Grouping: Building Community

At each level, children are clustered in small learning communities for an eighteen month to three-year period. These small communities provide a number of advantages not found in conventional schools. Children work with others who are older and younger than themselves. The older students serve as role models and tutors for the younger students, and in the process they gain confidence in their own abilities. The younger ones watch the older ones, and in the process gain a clear vision of what's expected of them, and have the benefit of working with and learning from their peers as well as the teacher. This small community is a direct preparation for life in the family and in the workplace. Communicating and working well with others are important life skills.

Balance of Needs and Learning Styles

Each small learning community develops its own personality. The placement of children in these environments as they move from one level to another is a very important task. Each community needs a blend of learning and personality styles, so that it truly reflects larger communities.

Grouping children by their intellectual abilities would defeat the greater goal of establishing a sense of community in the classroom.

Three-Year Commitment

Because the composition of a learning community is selected very carefully, it is rare for children to be transferred from one community to another during this three-year period. We ask parents and children to make a three-year commitment to the learning community and, within that period, to take the opportunity of getting to know other parents and children so that adults can also experience the benefit of a community network.

Parent Requests

Administration and faculty work hard to ensure that each child is placed in an environment where their needs will be met. If you have particular concerns about your child's learning style during a time of transition, you are welcome to meet with the head of school and teachers to discuss those concerns.

Admission Policies and Procedures

Admission Procedures

Tour/Observation

Tours are scheduled by appointment and are typically held in the morning. We require that all parents involved in choosing the school for their child take a tour before submitting an application. During your visit, you will observe a classroom for about 20 minutes.

Application

Once the tour is complete, you can fill out an application and submit it to: Discovery Garden Montessori School, 1515 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO 65804. A non-refundable \$50 application fee must accompany the application. Applications will not be accepted from a Discovery Garden Montessori School family with a delinquent balance.

Parent Education

Prospective parents are strongly encouraged to immerse themselves in the Montessori approach by attending both prospective parent classes and parent education programs. Current Discovery Garden parents who plan to enroll younger siblings are invited to attend and share their experiences as well.

While attendance at parent education programs does not guarantee enrollment, applicants whose parents have attended Discovery Garden parent education programs receive priority in admission.

Admission Decisions

The head of school appoints admission committees to examine each prospective student's application and make enrollment recommendations to the head of school. Decision letters will be mailed to families shortly after a decision is made.

Policies

The school is coeducational and accepts qualified students regardless of race, family structure, religion, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, sexual expression or ethnic origin. The school accepts those qualified students who, in the opinion of the school, will have successful experiences in the program and will enhance the classes for which they are applicants.

Generally, applicants will be given priority in the following order:

1. Qualified siblings of students continuing at Discovery Garden Montessori School
2. Applicants whose parents have attended Discovery Garden Montessori parent education programs
3. All other qualified applicants

The school seeks to create classroom communities that are balanced by gender and age. In general, the school prefers to admit children at age three or younger. Older students will be considered on an individual basis, as space allows, with preference given to students with previous Montessori experience.

The school also takes into consideration indications that the Montessori experience is a preferred method of instruction for the family and the student. If a toddler community or primary aged child applies to another school before they finish primary, any sibling applying to Discovery Garden Montessori School will have their application held until a decision has been made.

The Discovery Garden Montessori School application process is valid on a year-to-year basis. You may apply for your child up to one year in advance. There are no deferred enrollments; applicants declining offers of enrollment are required to re-apply (following the same procedures as other candidates) in subsequent years.

All information obtained in the admission process is confidential and will be used only in the admission process.

Re-Enrollment Review

The school expects students to understand and respect the school's rules and expectations to retain their places. The school reserves the right to refuse admission to, or call for the immediate withdrawal of, a student whose presence is considered detrimental to the school's best interest.

The school reserves re-enrollment for students who have shown good work, effort, attitude, and for families willing to cooperate with the school. The school believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the school and a student's parents or guardian is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. Thus, the school reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to re-enroll a student if the school reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interfere with the school's accomplishment of its educational purposes.

A family's tuition and fee accounts must be current to receive re-enrollment contracts.

A Special Note Regarding Admission into the Toddler Community

Toddler community classes are limited to 12 children. We strive to create in each class a community of young children, with a balance of ages from 16–36 months. A child must be a confident walker to be ready for the toddler community. Also, a child can receive the maximum benefit from the Toddler Community program by spending at least a year in the class. For these reasons, handling admission to the toddler community can be challenging.

We are fortunate that parents have recommended the toddler community to their friends with young children; sometimes we have many more applicants for toddler community than spaces available. The school views the toddler community program as preparatory for the primary level (3–6 years), and that program is a full three-year cycle.

The school gives priority in admission to the toddler community to siblings of current students who are under two years of age at entry. The optimum age of entry is younger than age two, since this will allow the child to have at least one year in toddler community. All children who are over two will be considered for admission after younger children have been placed.

Notification of Admission Policy Changes

In the event of an admission policy change, parents will be notified via email.

Tuition and Financial Assistance

Tuition Information

Each family should have a signed tuition contract in the student's file before the student can start at school. Different payment options are available for the tuition amount. You will receive a digital statement at your preferred email address prior to your tuition being due. All payments are due the 1st of each month. If any checks are returned for Not Sufficient Funds (NSF) a \$35 charge will apply. After a NSF, all further payments that school year should be done with a cashier's check or a money order.

Tuition rates are set by the Board of Directors in January and are announced in February as next school year enrollment begins. If you are having difficulty funding your child's Montessori education, please contact the head of school, who will be most happy to help you work out a satisfactory solution. Parents that are 15 days behind on their payment schedule will be contacted by the office and will be required to agree to a payment plan.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to families of current and prospective Discovery Garden students.

Criteria:

- Continued support for families currently receiving assistance
- Provide funds that enable families already enrolled in the school to stay with the school in the event of changing personal finances
- Consider all other requests

Within this context, preference is given in the distribution of financial assistance to students in lower elementary levels and in order to encourage racial, ethnic, religious, and economic diversity.

Process:

Parents must file an application with FACT program, an outside agency that makes recommendations to schools for financial assistance. More information is available in the office at Discovery Garden Montessori School.

There are three components to the financial aid process:

- Completion and submission of the online financial aid application
- Submission of 2017 income tax returns to DGMS

Note: Please plan to file your 2017 tax return prior to March 15, 2018 if you wish to be considered for financial aid. In order to be considered, we require the full 2017 tax

return, including all related W-2s, 1099s, and K-1. Please contact the head of school, if you have questions.

- Letter written to the head of school requesting financial aid

Warning: All three requirements must be completed before the application can be considered.

Once they are finished, the agency returns its assessment to the school. All forms filed by the March 15, deadline will be considered as a group by the Scholarship Committee, composed of the head of school and one or two board members. Scholarships will be announced by April 15.

Parents must respond, in writing, by the date requested in the financial aid award letter if they wish to accept the school's offer. After this date, the school considers the offer declined and the funds will be reallocated.

Families must reapply for financial assistance every year. Scholarships are based on the relative need of families that have applied, and on the funds available. While the school will make every effort to maintain financial assistance levels from year to year, conditions may change, so one year's award is not guaranty of awards in subsequent years.

Getting to and from School

Car Safety

Use proper car seats and seat belts when transporting students to and from school. Guidelines can be found on websites for safety organizations such as American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Association.

Parking

If you are coming into the school, please park in the spaces provided along Linwood St. If orange cones are out and children are playing in the parking lot, we ask you to use the parking spaces along Portland St. and walk to pick up your child. Please only use designated parking spaces to allow for unobstructed traffic flow.

Mobile Phones

Driving and mobile phones are a hazardous mix. Refrain from using your mobile device while on school grounds, including sending any text messages. Stay alert! Give your child and other children in the parking lot your full attention during arrival and dismissal. Mobile phones may only be used if your car is parked in a designated parking spot (**Note:** This does not include the carline).

Arrival and Dismissal Procedure

Early Arrival (Early Birds): 7:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

Only students enrolled in the Early Birds program may enter the building during this time. Other students arriving earlier than 8:15 a.m. must wait outside the school with their parents. No students, even older students, should be left alone outside the school. Early care happens in the multipurpose room.

Regular Arrivals: 8:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

We expect all students to be in class on time so that they can begin their daily routine. Please remember that consistency in a schedule is the key to achieving normalization. All children

should be in their classrooms when classes begin at 8:30 a.m. Please refer to the late arrivals section for additional details.

Carline

Why use the carline? It is highly recommended that you participate in the carline. We have observed that students are generally less anxious when separating from parents for the day outside the school building as opposed to in the classroom.

Note: Toddlers are not eligible for the carline; please plan to bring your toddler student to the classroom at the start of each school day.

Procedure

1. Enter the school parking lot using Portland St. and turn left, circling around the parking lot. Slowly incorporate into the carline.
2. Stop in one of the two designated drop off spots at the front of the carline, indicated with bright orange cones.

Note: For the safety of all concerned, please only let your student(s) out of your vehicle at these designated spots. Teachers are unable to be responsible for students who are dropped off further down the sidewalk, and it creates an unsafe situation for students and drivers.

3. Allow teachers to help your children exit your car on the driver's side and escort them into the classroom. It is not necessary for you to exit the car to assist the teacher; in fact, this can slow down the carline process.

Note: Please have your child unbuckled, kissed, and ready to go before the teacher arrives at the car. Please refer to the phase-in procedures for drop off on the first day.

Walking Your Child In

If you wish to leave your vehicle and help your student to the building, please park in a designated parking spot and walk your student all the way to the front door. This will allow the carline to move forward unimpeded.

Breakfast/Snacking

Students who are still eating as they arrive at school can be a distraction to themselves and their classmates. If your child is still eating breakfast or a snack as you arrive for carline, please pull into a parking spot and wait for your student to finish eating before you join the carline or walk your student to the front door.

Late Arrivals

Our late arrival procedures are as follows:

- At 8:30 a.m., the doors to the school are locked. If you arrive after this time, please park in the visitor spaces and walk your child to the side door of the school where our office staff will let you in.
- After 8:35 a.m., the parent of the late student will be asked to sign a late arrival register. This allows the school to track the number of late arrivals in a semester.

Each family starts the semester with a total of three grace passes to arrive late without a valid excuse (i.e. a doctor appointment). Parents will be notified by the administration when they have used up their grace passes. Families who have used all three of their grace passes and

continue to arrive late will be asked to take their student(s) home and arrive once the first transition is in course. This time may vary by classroom.

If you anticipate consistent problems arriving at school by 8:30 a.m., please contact your child's directress to develop an action plan for moving forward.

Dismissal and Pick Up

Half-Day Dismissal

Half-day dismissal will be at 12:00 p.m. Please come to the front door, and a teacher will let you into the building to pick up your child. Depending on the day and the weather, primary students may already be outside on the playground when you arrive.

Full-Day Dismissal

Full-day dismissal will run from 3:15 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Enter the school parking lot using Portland St. and follow the same procedure as morning drop off. Students will be dismissed to the carline from the front door.

Aftercare Dismissal

Students that participate in Aftercare programs can be picked up between 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at their parents' convenience. Parents need to come into the Aftercare room to pick up their children.

Late Pick Up

At the end of the dismissal period, children who have not been picked up are taken back to their classroom or the Aftercare room. Parents who are late will need to park and come into the school. We will make the children comfortable while they wait. It is natural for a child to be anxious in this situation, so please call the school if you know you will be late. After a five minute grace period, parents will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute.

Changes in Pick Up Routine

If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than the person who usually picks up or who is listed on the Authorize to Pick Up form, or if your child is going home with a friend, please notify the office at least 24 hours prior to pick up. If there is a last minute change of plans and you need to notify the school less than one day prior to pick up, the school will accept hand-written notes on the same day, an email to info@dgmontessori.org, or, as a last resort, a phone call to the office. Last minute phone requests may need to be followed by an email. All requests are subject to verification, and anyone picking up a child will be required to display personal identification. These measures are in place for the protection and safety of your child and for your peace of mind.

Attendance

Attendance: Why it Matters

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the Montessori environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

- A consistent routine provides security for children; a sense of security enables children to learn more readily.
- A child's experiences in the classroom and with the materials are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning.

- Your own commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school and learning. If you often invite your child to stay out of school for different activities, you implicitly undermine the importance of school in their mind, which can affect their performance.
- Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect both your child's adaptation to school and their learning.

Please make every effort to ensure your child's regular attendance. In this regard, we specifically request that you:

- Schedule family vacations and trips to coincide with school holidays.
- Schedule appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, or other professionals outside of classroom hours when possible.

Excused Absences

Excused absences include illness, injury, or family emergency. If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office by 9:00 a.m. that day.

Unexcused Absences

For children in their kindergarten and lower elementary years, absences for any reason other than those previously mentioned are unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences in a year may affect the school's decision to offer a re-enrollment contract to a student.

Excessive Absences

Any absences, excused or unexcused, in excess of 10 days per school year are considered problematic for students. In that case, the teacher will notify the head of school, who will meet with parents to create an action plan.

Note: The State of Missouri requires Discovery Garden to file a report if there are excessive unexcused absences for students age seven and older.

Tardies

School begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. When younger children arrive late, it violates their sense of order, their sense of what is right and what is expected, and their sense of how things are supposed to be. For the older child, there is a sense of embarrassment and disorientation. In either case, arriving late starts the day off on the wrong foot.

Late arrivals also disrupt the classroom community, the work of the other children, and the teacher. Out of respect for your own child, the classroom community, the other children, and the teachers, please help your child arrive at school on time.

If tardiness becomes excessive, the head of school will contact the parent, and together they will discuss how to manage more timely arrivals. In some extreme cases, excessive tardiness may affect the decision to offer a child a re-enrollment contract for the following school year.

Communication between Home and School

School Contact Information

Discovery Garden Montessori School:

- **Main phone number:** (417) 631-4590.
- **Address:** 1515 S. National Ave. Springfield, MO 65804

- **Website:** www.dgmontessori.org
- **Email:** info@dgmontessori.org

Each directress has an email address for direct communication:

- **Toddler community** – angelica@dgmontessori.org
- **Primary classroom** – lynetta@dgmontessori.org
- **Primary classroom** – karol@dgmontessori.org
- **Elementary** – stacy@dgmontessori.org

Office Hours

The main office will generally be staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, throughout the school year. During school hours, staff will strive to answer and return calls as soon as possible. Office hours may be modified when the presence of office staff is required elsewhere or when children are not in attendance. The school year runs from mid-August to the end of May, usually with a summer session in June and July.

Communication from School

Changes to Contact Information

If you've had a change of address, email, or phone number, please call or email the school at your earliest opportunity. It is vital that we have current contact information, especially phone numbers, to be able to reach you at any time during the school day.

Website

Our website, www.dgmontessori.org, is full of useful information. It includes the school calendar and administrative forms. The website is updated monthly. Additionally, it includes comprehensive information on the school and Montessori education.

Peek of the Week

Each class will send an email to parents most Fridays from mid-August until the end of May. This information will also be posted in the parent exclusive area of our website. You will need to create an account to access this information.

School Newsletter

Every week during the school year you will be sent a school-wide newsletter by email, which will include news, updates, reminders, Montessori articles, and other pertinent information. The main goal of this newsletter is to communicate and to create community. Other submissions will be restricted to topics related to or of benefit to the students and will be considered at the discretion of the school administration.

Communication with Second Families

In situations where parents are separated or divorced, please advise the school of additional addresses for mailing purposes so that everyone is fully informed about school functions, parent-teacher conferences, etc.

In the event of a change in custody arrangements, Discovery Garden Montessori School requires a notarized document stating the terms of the custodial agreement to be placed on file.

Contacting Your Child's Teacher

We value frequent, timely, and open communication with you about your child. We will use many forms of communication to contact you: phone, email, newsletters, written notes, conferences, progress reports, etc. Each teacher will let you know the best way to contact them. Teachers are typically unable to check their email during the school day, but they will do their best to respond to your emails before the following school day. If you have an urgent question or information for your child's teacher, please contact the administration.

Please avoid:

- Dropping by the classroom to speak to the teacher during the school day
- Holding extended conversations with the teacher in the carline
- Sending oral messages to the teacher via your child

Changes in Home Situation

Please inform your child's teacher by note or in person if there is a change in your home situation: death, divorce, relocation (even within Springfield), a new baby, friends or relatives visiting, either parent leaving for a trip, a new babysitter or caregiver, a change in carpool or in the child's daily routine, or any fears, bad dreams, or fantasies. A change at home will probably be reflected simultaneously or subsequently in behavior at school. Communication with parents will enable the teacher to help the child as the need arises.

Proper Lines of Communication

These are the proper procedures to follow in communicating with the school about your child's progress and continuity at Discovery Garden Montessori School.

Parent to Teacher

Communicate directly with your child's teacher.

Many times a child's development presents challenging issues to consider. Working directly with the teacher in a spirit of collaboration is the most effective way to resolve any issue and to build a solid partnership between school and home for future work. We encourage you to open up communications with your child's directress before seeking outside opinions about problems in the classroom; in our experience, this is the most beneficial process for students, parents, and faculty.

Advocates or adversaries? Some popular literature implies that, to advocate for their children, parents must take an adversarial relationship toward the school. Our experience reveals such an approach to be counterproductive. You are, by definition, your child's advocate. At the same time, the school is also an advocate for your child; we each develop our own view of what is happening. Teachers' experience and training help them to evaluate and make sense of their observations of your child. We want to work together with you—on the same side of the table rather than from opposing sides—to develop mutual understanding in the interest of your child.

Parent or Teacher to Head of school

Going beyond the classroom. At times, either you or the teacher may feel the need for a fresh perspective on the issues under discussion. If that is the case, either the teacher or the parent may arrange a meeting to include the parent, teacher, and head of school. In either event, it is expected that the parent and teacher have made a concerted effort to work on the issue before involving the head of school.

Whenever an outside specialist (speech and language pathologist, tutor, educational diagnostician, psychologist, occupational therapist, or physical therapist) is working with your child or conferring with you and the teacher, the school expects to receive copies of written reports, and the head of school will attend conferences with them to broaden the support network.

Parent to Head of school

Parents are welcome to contact the head of school with matters pertaining to guided observation of classrooms, their child's transition to the next level in the school, information about referral to specialists, and special events. All matters pertaining to classroom issues must follow the guidelines described above.

Contacting Administrators for School Business

School Pictures

Individual pictures of the children will be taken each year, along with group pictures or photo composites of each class. Orders and fees for photos are a responsibility of each parent. Notice will be given prior to the day pictures are taken and at the time they are available.

School Closings and Other Emergencies

Communication of School Closings

When severe weather creates hazardous conditions in our area, regular school scheduling may be suspended. Our major concern is always the safety of our students and staff. We follow the Springfield Public School (SPS) schedule for full day closings due to inclement weather, and we will make every effort to post these closings on our school website or voicemail. However, please understand that if there are power losses or unsafe road conditions, we may not be able to access the computer or phone system to complete these communications in a timely manner. Therefore, if the Springfield Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather or emergency information, and you have not received any other communication from us, assume that Discovery Garden is closed as well.

Ultimately, it is the parent's responsibility to monitor local news reports to find out if SPS Schools are closed due to weather conditions. If, in your judgment, weather conditions present a threat to safety, you should keep your child at home. In the event that SPS schools should have a delayed start or early release, the head of school and administrative staff will assess the situation and notify parents through email or by phone if necessary/possible.

Use of Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool and has the potential to reach audiences far beyond the Discovery Garden community. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone.

Interacting online with other community members is no different than interacting with these individuals or groups face to face; we are required to maintain dignity and respect.

Recognize that:

- Social networking sites are increasingly interconnected in ways that may be largely outside the direct control of the users on any given site, and social media activities may be publicly visible.
- Serving as a role model is a critical responsibility for all members of the Discovery Garden community.

- You should exercise appropriate discretion when using social media when those communications can impact the Discovery Garden community.
- When you contribute to social media, it leaves a digital footprint for all to see. Do not post anything you would not want friends, parents, teachers, or future employers to see.
- Faculty and staff are forbidden from ‘friending’ current students (of any age), former students under the age of 18, and parents of current or prospective students, due to the inherent conflicts of interest that this may raise.

Community members are strongly discouraged from publishing on public media (i.e. YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, etc.) photos or videos of other students or community members without first obtaining the written permission of all those involved.

Emergency Plan

The emergency management plan will be implemented in response to situations that require us to evacuate the school, or to shelter in place (take shelter in the school). Examples of such situations include fire, severe weather, toxic spills, or acts of war.

Types of Emergencies

Fire: Students exit the building and remain on the Discovery Garden Montessori School campus. Fire drills are held monthly.

Bomb threat (or other situation requiring a campus evacuation): If necessary, students will evacuate the Discovery Garden Montessori School campus and go to Springfield Museum of Art (1111 E. Brookside Dr. Springfield, MO 65804) or University Heights Baptist Church (1010 S. National Ave., Springfield, MO 65804). Campus evacuation drills are held once annually.

Shelter in place (tornado, chemical spill, etc.): Students and teachers will take shelter in the basement or other appropriate safe location in the event of a tornado or any other event that requires us to seek shelter indoors. In the event of a chemical spill or other airborne hazard, the ventilation system carrying outside air will be shut down.

While sheltering in place, the school will be open as long as students need to be here. The school has stores of bottled water and food for such a situation. If a shelter in place is declared, we strongly discourage parents from coming to the school until instructed to do so.

Shelter in place drills are held twice annually.

Intruder Lockdown: Students and teachers will take shelter in their classrooms with the hallway doors locked. They will not leave their classrooms until given the all clear by the Springfield Police Department. Drills for this type of emergency are held twice annually.

Communication during an Emergency

Our first priority in the event of an emergency is to ensure that the children and school staff are safe. Our second priority is to contact parents and to keep you informed.

The school will communicate with parents via email and telephone. It is important that parents keep the school up-to-date on emergency contact information. Depending on the circumstances, communications may be limited; even if the school phone lines remain open, they will be tied up if there are multiple calls that come in at the same time.

The school maintains contact with the Springfield Police Department and the Springfield Fire Department in the event of an emergency and follows their instructions.

Classroom Life

Looking for information about daily life in the classroom? Many parents ask questions such as: what kind of foods to pack for lunch, what is the school dress code, how are the students encouraged to conduct themselves at school, and how to celebrate your child's birthday at school. Many of your questions will be answered in this section.

Nutritional Guidelines for Student Lunches

Warning: Due to the increasing rates of severe allergies to peanuts and tree nuts among preschool and elementary populations, Discovery Garden will be a peanut-free and tree nut-free facility. This restriction is to be observed by all students, parents, staff, volunteers, and visitors. Your diligence in this important matter is essential to student health, and we thank you for your extra effort.

What people eat is, on one hand, highly personal with roots in culture and even religion. Discovery Garden Montessori School is very aware and respectful of this in our diverse school community. On the other hand, diet is a major factor in children's sound growth and development, as well as in how they function, attend, and learn on a daily basis. In addition, eating habits, healthful or otherwise, are established in childhood; therefore, learning about nutrition is an important part of the curriculum for any child.

The points we focus on in this part of the curriculum are objective and scientifically based:

- Certain diet elements are essential for good health, growth, and optimal function.
- Certain diet elements do not contribute to health and, in excess, can be harmful.
- Our country has a crisis of obesity that includes children.
- We live in a society where many distortions of a healthful diet are considered "normal," such as:
 - Fast food
 - Eating "on the run"
 - Large serving sizes
 - High-calorie foods with little or no nutritional value
 - Highly refined foods
 - Foods with high salt, sugar, and fat content

The principles we strive to promote are:

- Appropriately sized servings
- Additive-free foods (can be determined by reading labels)
- Avoidance of fried foods and trans-fats
- Lots of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain foods rather than refined foods
- Whole fruits rather than juices
- An emphasis on the importance of fiber
- Protein, whether from meat, fish, beans, nuts, or dairy products

Nutritional Examples

To adhere to our diet principles, refer to these nutritional examples to pack healthy and delicious lunches for your child:

Milk and Dairy Products

- Milk: whole milk, reduced fat (1% or 2%), skim, buttermilk, powdered milk, yogurt
- Cheese: cheddar, Parmesan, Swiss, Monterey jack, provolone, ricotta, cottage, Muenster

Protein

- Poultry, beef, lamb, pork, fish
- Egg
- Dried peas or beans
- Tofu
- Vegetable protein mixed with meat, poultry, or fish

Nuts and nut butters

- **Warning: Discovery Garden is a peanut and tree nut-free campus.** However, many grocery stores now carry peanut and tree-nut free alternatives to peanut butter such as soy and sunflower seed butters. Ask the staff if you are having trouble locating these alternatives.

Fruit

- Any fresh, cooked, or dried fruit

Vegetables

- Any raw, canned, or cooked vegetable
 - **Note:** If a dried pea or bean is counted as a meat alternative, another vegetable should be offered as well to count as a vegetable.

Grains

- Breads: whole grain wheat, rye, soy, cornbread, English muffin, French, Italian, Vienna, tortilla (corn or flour), raisin, pita, bagels, waffles or pancakes, crackers (graham, rice, zwieback, Melba toast)
- Cereals: cooked oatmeal, grits, or farina, ready-to-eat wheat, corn, rice, or oat
- Cooked grains: rice, bulgur, pasta, barley
 - **Note:** Look for grains with at least three grams of fiber (breads, crackers, and rice)

Ingredients to Look for

- Whole wheat flour, whole grain flour, stone-ground whole wheat flour

Ingredients to Avoid

- “Partially hydrogenated,” “enriched wheat flour,” “high-fructose corn syrup”
 - **Note:** Items with excessive amounts of added sugar may be sent home at the discretion of the teacher. Please be especially careful not to send any kind of candy.

Lunch and Snack Etiquette

Food is not just the essential “fuel” for our bodies to function and develop; it also, universally, serves as a social function. At Discovery Garden we strive to promote this aspect of food by conducting snack and lunch time in a way that provides for the social element and the exercise of grace and courtesy. This includes:

- Setting the table using tablecloths or place mats, china, glassware and silverware, napkins, centerpieces, etc.
- Setting aside a special place for a few children to eat snack when they wish
- Teaching table manners
 - Saying “please” and “thank you”
 - Waiting to eat until everyone is served
 - Chewing with the mouth closed
 - Not speaking with food in the mouth
 - Using silverware and napkins properly
 - Waiting for others to finish
 - Cleaning up and making the table ready for the next person

To promote individual responsibility and to maintain the integrity of the classroom lunch routine, please do not plan to deliver your child’s lunch during the school day.

Packing Lunch

Children should help prepare their own lunches until they are able to do it for themselves. Involving them in shopping, reading labels, and planning meals is important in their ownership of what they eat. The more children know about what is good for them and why, as well as what is not good for them and why not, the more they will be able and willing to make positive choices on their own.

Though the school does have microwave ovens, it is not practical for the toddler community and primary children to use them to reheat food. We encourage the use of wide-mouth thermoses. Lower elementary students have some limited use of microwave ovens. This involves scheduling, and your child’s teacher can provide you with more information.

The children are learning about the environment and recycling. We encourage the use of reusable containers and the avoidance of excessive packaging.

Clothing Guidelines

Toddler Community and Primary Students

Children’s clothing should allow for their freedom of movement. Older children who are developing independence and are toilet trained should be dressed in clothing they can put on

and take off easily. Allowing children to dress themselves, tie their shoes, or zip on their jackets helps promote independence and self-confidence.

Please avoid:

- Jumpers
- Overalls
- Onesies

These clothing items can inhibit children from learning how to independently dress and undress themselves.

Our days at school are filled with trips outside to the playground, arts and crafts, gardening, and other activities that have the potential to be messy. Clothing should therefore be weather appropriate and easily washable. We recommend that your child dress in comfortable two-piece sets in lieu of jeans, party dresses, or other items which may hinder movement or be difficult to clean.

In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of peace, we ask that all parents refrain from dressing their children in clothing that depicts superheroes or other aggressive characters. We have observed that such clothing can lead to excessively rough playground games, teaching violence as a way to solve problems, and the exclusion of certain children from activities. Examples of unacceptable characters include Spiderman, Batman, and Incredible Hulk. In general, we prefer that students do not wear clothing with pictures of any licensed cartoon characters but instead choose clothing depicting non-licensed animals, flowers, people, etc.

For all toddler and primary students, each article of clothing, including shoes, **must** be labeled with the child's name.

Jewelry and Other Distractions

Children should not wear or bring jewelry to school because it is easily lost or broken and is potentially dangerous if it gets caught on classroom or outdoor equipment. Small studs for children with pierced ears are acceptable.

Other items such as purses, umbrellas, belts, sunglasses, and costume hats can be a distraction and are best avoided. However, sun hats and ball caps for the playground are always welcome!

We ask that all parents support these guidelines. Review the dress guidelines with your child. Have some clothes for school and others for play. Keep toys, purses, etc. in the car at arrival. We immensely appreciate your help with these matters.

Shoes

Shoes should enable your child to move with coordination and confidence. Sandals with ankle straps, tennis shoes, or leather Oxfords are best.

Please avoid:

- Jellies
- Flip-flops
- Cowboy boots
- Clogs
- Tight dress shoes (esp. patent leather)

These are more difficult for children to walk in and can be dangerous in the classroom or on the playground. **Note:** Please also avoid flashing shoes. They are highly distracting for the wearer and other children.

Excessively long shoelaces and double knots are an added obstacle to the child. Cotton shoelaces remain tied; synthetic ones slip. To foster independence, we ask that students wear slip-on or Velcro shoes until they are able to tie their own shoelaces with minimal assistance.

Elementary Students

As with any level here at Discovery Garden, it is imperative that children ages six and older be encouraged to dress for comfort, movement, and physical activity.

Shoes

Children in lower elementary attend physical fitness during the week and are extremely active during playtime. Shoes that allow for appropriate participation in these activities are necessary; tennis shoes or sneakers are ideal for this age. Please discourage your child from wearing clogs or shoes with high heels.

Clothing

We encourage children in lower elementary to dress for comfort rather than style. We do expect the clothing to be neat, clean, and without holes. We also encourage children not to wear clothing that displays logos, brand names, or images from for-profit entities (cartoon characters, rock bands, products and merchandise, etc.). Please make sure that outerwear (jackets, hats, etc.) is adequate when the weather is cold.

Discovery Garden T-Shirts

If you would like to show your school spirit by wearing a t-shirt with a Discovery Garden logo, you can buy a child or adult sized shirt when the administration is able to make them available. During the year we hope to have school t-shirt days, and adult volunteers will be invited to wear them at school events.

Possessions

Some children like to bring something from their home environment to school; it is a part of themselves to place in the new environment. We want to honor this urge and, at the same time, be sure that what the child brings leads to a positive experience.

Things to Bring to School

Flowers, things found in nature, and small plants are welcome, as are things of interest to the class (i.e. cultural or scientific artifacts or objects). If you have any doubt, call your child's teacher.

Some children like to bring something that will remain in the classroom. Your child's teacher can make suggestions of small things needed by that classroom.

Things to Leave at Home

Please do not send any live animals unless it has been arranged with the teacher. Please leave all toys, music, card collections, money, food (except lunch), empty lunch boxes, candy, gum, pillows, and blankets (unless specified), picture books, medals, and trophies at home or in the car.

Lost and Found

Jackets, shirts, pants, shoes, and lunch boxes that are left behind at school are deposited in the *Lost & Found* box, currently located in the teacher work room area of the school. Items labeled

with names are returned to students. Throughout the year, the unclaimed items are removed and donated to a charity. Please check regularly for your child's items and let the staff know if your child is missing an item. Please understand that, in a community environment such as a school, it is common for items to be lost and never found again—**never send your student to school with anything that is expensive or irreplaceable!**

Special Occasions

Birthdays

At Discovery Garden Montessori School, we like to invite parents to help mark children's birthdays by telling their life story and secondarily, if wished, by serving a "treat." We encourage creative thinking and healthful choices when deciding on a birthday snack. Adults have the association of cake with birthdays, but children find many foods satisfying and special. How about big strawberries, watermelon, smoothies, fruit kebobs, crackers and cheese, or veggies and dip? The possibilities are endless!

To be clear, **this is not a birthday party at school.** Each classroom has its own guidelines for birthday celebrations that should come home to you from the classroom. When in doubt, call your student's directress for details. If you wish to send or bring a birthday treat, please observe the school's nutrition guidelines (refer to nutritional guidelines for student lunches on page 38) and the classroom teacher's requests.

For students whose birthdays fall over the summer break, we will hold their celebration on or near their half birthday during the school year.

If you are throwing a birthday party for your child and plan to invite children from the class, it is better to invite only a few or to invite them all. When many but not all are invited feelings may be hurt. Please mail the invitations; do not send them to school for distribution. Our teachers' daily routines are tightly scheduled, and this can be a distraction to the work cycle. A directory of school families will be available shortly after the start of the school year for this purpose.

Holidays

The Montessori philosophy reflects universal acceptance of all people and appreciation of differences. Cultural diversity is well-represented and highly valued at Discovery Garden. Holidays are explored culturally and historically as special times for sharing traditions.

We emphasize the celebratory nature of holidays and encourage community participation, understanding, and appreciation. Traditional symbolism is used as a tool for exploration, not as an expression of religious devotion or mere decoration. Child-initiated activities, discussions, and questions are supported, and parents are encouraged to inform their child's teacher of which holidays you celebrate at home and what your traditions are. If a parent wants to send in holiday gifts for all the children in the class, please receive permission from the lead teacher in advance.

Playground Rules

Aggressive behavior is not tolerated. If a child is behaving in an aggressive manner, they will be required to sit out on a bench until they are calm. If a child continues to act aggressively and is unable to listen to the supervising teacher, they will be removed from the playground for the rest of the recess. During Aftercare programs, the same rules apply. Usage of play equipment will be permitted following the age recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

Below are guidelines to help children determine the boundaries of play:

- Keep rubber chips on the ground—no throwing!
- Keep sticks outside the playground.
- Only throw balls.
- One child may slide at a time.
- Slide sitting down and facing forward.
- Reach the top of the slide by using ladders, not by climbing back up the slide itself.
- Stay out of the garden unless accompanied by a teacher.
- Keep the playground litter-free.
- Encourage inclusiveness in play.
- Be respectful of other classmates and teachers.

Approach to Discipline at Discovery Garden Montessori

Maria Montessori developed the concept of “normalization” to describe the process by which each child acquires certain personality characteristics that lead to success in the classroom and throughout life. A “normalized” child will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits, and become independent.

Our goal is to create and maintain an environment in which each child can successfully reach this level of normalization. Normalization of the classroom begins with the modeling of the appropriate behavior by the teacher combined with a high level of respect for each student. Many discipline problems can be avoided by the following strategies practiced in every DGMS classroom:

- Provide a structured Montessori environment in which a child feels secure and comfortable with their work
- Monitor student work and behavior closely
- Engage and interest the student
- Plan classroom procedures and rules carefully and in detail with the participation of the students
- Systematically teach students procedures and expected behaviors
- Redirect a child and use conflict resolution techniques immediately, when necessary
- Organize instruction to maximize student task engagement and success
- Work one-on-one with children who need additional guidance
- Communicate directions and expectations clearly

The effective Montessori guide (teacher) emphasizes prevention rather than remediation in classroom management. The teacher systematically approaches teaching by planning and preparing well in advance, setting expectations and teaching the procedures, routines and standards of behavior at the start of school and reteaches as necessary, and maintains these through prompt and consistent reinforcement of appropriate behavior by providing appropriate, well-prepared lessons and activities that engage learners.

If a student has difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age-appropriate. Personal attention, distraction, substitution and/or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many instances resolve themselves as the student, within the bounds of safety and common sense, experiences the logical consequences of his actions (i.e. wiping up after throwing a paint can on the floor).

If the student disregards the rules of the classroom community, the teachers will seek the underlying causes in order to help the student understand the inappropriateness of their actions and to find a constructive alternative. If such behavior occurs repeatedly, the teacher may request the head of school and/or other classroom teachers to observe and offer consultation before the parents are contacted for their support and cooperation.

While individual classroom rules will vary based on the students' yearly renditions, many rules are universal and long-term. Montessori Standards of Behavior include:

- Respect yourself, others, and our environment.
- Demonstrate responsibility and respect.
- Keep the DGMS environment clean and orderly.
- Keep the bathrooms neat and clean.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Walk quietly in the hallways.
- Treat all classroom materials with profound respect and care.
- Return all things to their proper place.

Toddlers

Living peacefully with others can be an overwhelming challenge for toddlers when their strongest and most impulsive language is through their bodies and not their words. Cognitively, motor messages override verbal messages at this developmental age. Even when words do come, sometimes they do not accurately or effectively express what the child is trying to say.

Toddlers expend enormous amounts of energy getting their bodies to do what they want them to do and to go where they want them to go. Frustration can precipitate tears or whining and even biting, pushing, or pinching. Though not acceptable behaviors, these responses are effective means for a toddler to communicate frustration. Thankfully, most toddlers develop acceptable ways of venting these feelings as they become more comfortable in their environment.

For minor misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is often all that is necessary. For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly state the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings. We help the child use language to describe what they need or want.

When a toddler persists in aggressive behavior, the adult stays by the child's side until the child has calmed and can refocus their attention positively. During periods of unacceptable behavior, teachers continue to interact with the child, using gentle, positive support and clear, simple language. If this behavior persists, teachers will:

- Meet with parents to share concerns and discuss ways to replace the aggression with positive coping mechanisms.

- Inform the head of school of concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action, if follow-up is needed.

Primary Children

For minor, nonchalant misbehaviors, gentle redirection toward work, which will re-engage the interest of the student, is still often all that is necessary.

For recurring, minor misbehaviors, a teacher may temporarily limit the child's choice of workspace and/or quietly discuss the impact of such behavior on class materials or on other children's feelings.

For more serious or unsafe misbehaviors, staff members will immediately intervene to protect the child from the hurtful consequences of their own actions, to ensure the safety of others, and to prevent serious damage to the environment. The child may be temporarily removed from the group activity to reflect with a teacher on what happened and on what they can do to remedy the situation.

When appropriate, an Event Report should be filed, and a phone call or conference must be convened with the parents to inform and decide together an appropriate course of action. Teachers must also inform the head of school of concerns and decide together an appropriate course of action, if follow-up is needed.

Unacceptable Behaviors

Unacceptable behaviors include:

- Talking back and arguing with the teacher
- Misuse of the DGMS materials or the playground equipment
- Intentionally not following directions in the classroom or playground
- Encouraging others to misbehave
- Disrupting or impeding the work of others
- Showing rudeness or disrespect to others
- Physically harming peers or staff

If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, the following disciplinary actions will be taken, according to the severity of the misbehavior:

1. They will discuss the unacceptable behavior with the teacher and an Incident Report will be completed. The completed Incident Report will be sent home for the parent/guardian.
2. They will be sent outside the immediate environment for a time to recover or be given a redirecting activity in a different environment.
3. They will be sent to the head of school, who will discuss the behavior issue with the child and may opt to one or more of the following:
 - Call the parent/guardian to discuss the issue with the child present.
 - Keep the child in the office or away from the classroom – they will not be allowed to return to class until the parent/guardian has spoken to the head of school.
 - A parent/guardian will be called to immediately remove the child from school for a specific length of time (suspension) and conditions will be set for the child's re-admittance.

Offenses and Disciplinary Action for Elementary Students

DGMS has adopted three levels of infractions. The levels are determined by the seriousness of the act.

Levels of Disciplinary Action

Level I infractions are the least serious and will be dealt with by imposing less severe consequences than Level II and III.

Level II infractions are more serious than Level I and require more formal disciplinary actions.

Level III infractions are the most severe and are grounds for a mandatory 10-day suspension and consideration for expulsion.

Any other serious misconduct is punishable at the discretion of the administration. During the time of an in- or out-of-school suspension, students are not allowed to attend any extracurricular activities.

Administrative Review can be used when a Level III offense has occurred. A tribunal hearing may be held and the head of school, other appropriate school personnel, the student, and the parent/guardian will conduct a total review of the student's record. The consequences for the infraction will be determined at the hearing and can range from suspension to expulsion.

The following lists detail possible consequences for each level of disciplinary action. This is intended to be used as a guide for administrators and staff. Consequences may be severe at the discretion of the head of school.

Level I

- Child conference with teacher
- Incident/Behavior Report
- Call or conference with parent
- Recess or other activity restriction (loss of privileges)

Level II

- Child conference with head of school
- Call or conference with parent
- In-School Suspension (ISS)

Level III

- Child conference with head of school
- Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)
- Repeated incident = expulsion from school
- Administrative Review and reassignment

Grounds for Dismissal

The following constitute grounds for a child's dismissal from our program:

- Inability to function in the Montessori classroom. Occasionally, a child needs more help than we are equipped to give. Parents will be informed if the teacher observes that this problem exists

- Habitual absences and/or tardiness (either arriving late or leaving early)
- Continued failure by the parent to attend parent-teacher conferences
- A parent or guardian convicted of a crime or moral turpitude
- Overdue tuition
- Parent behaviors that are neither respectful nor conducive to the community, including irresolvable differences regarding school policies

Health and Safety

Necessary Health Records

Students will not be able to attend school until we have these necessary forms on file:

- Emergency Release Form
- Health Inquiry Form
- Current immunization records from your doctor

These records will ensure that we have all of the information necessary to handle any emergencies involving your child expeditiously. Please be sure that this form is updated at all times, especially with phone numbers where parents can be reached. They must be on file before your child starts school.

Is My Child too Ill to Come to School?

We cannot admit your child to school if **one or more** of the following conditions exist:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in normal school activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness/injury requires more care than teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in the class.
- The child has one of the following (unless medical evaluation by a healthcare professional indicates that child is well enough to attend school):
 - a. Oral temperature of 100.4 degrees F. or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - b. Rectal temperature of 101.4 degrees F. or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs and symptoms of illness
 - c. Armpit temperature of 99.4 degrees F. or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness
 - d. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness, such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill
- A healthcare professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease.
- The child exhibits other troubling health symptoms as determined by the directress.

These guidelines are taken from the Missouri Health Department Division of Health Standards and Licensure.

Note: At their discretion, a directress has the authority to send home a child who does not have a significant fever if that child exhibits other concerning symptoms.

Returning to School after a Fever

Your child must be free of fever, without the aid of fever-reducing medication, for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Regardless of fever, we generally recommend that your child is fully recuperated and well rested prior to their return to school.

Early Departure Due to Illness

If a child needs to go home due to illness, usually the directress or administration will call the parents to arrange for pick-up. The child is escorted to the office or another quiet area and staff is informed about the pick-up arrangements. The child will not be left alone at any time while waiting for a parent to arrive.

Contagious Diseases

If your child has an illness that is communicable (strep, chickenpox, etc.) please call the school office right away at 417-631-4590. If necessary, this information will be disseminated by the administration. Please do not send emails to teachers or other office staff.

An email will be sent to alert other families in the school. No mention of the child's name will be made. If your family does not have an email address, we will send a note.

You will be contacted in the event your child exhibits any such symptoms at school.

Head Lice Guidelines

Parents/guardians should consult their physician or pharmacist for advice on the proper use of an approved medicated shampoo for head lice.

Readmission Criteria

Students will be checked by the staff prior to readmission to the classroom. Students will only be allowed back if their scalp is free of live lice.

Illness, Accidents, and Emergencies at School

The school employs a proactive safety program which focuses on prevention to minimize accidents and injuries to children and faculty. We review our policies and procedures regularly, and conduct safety inspections to correct any potential hazards. In addition, we review the staff coverage to ensure proper adult supervision is maintained.

All faculty and staff receive training in First aid, CPR, and EpiPens. If an accident or injury occurs, faculty responds immediately and follows emergency procedures. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit which is inspected and stocked regularly. An Incident Report is completed whenever an accident or injury occurs, and the report is reviewed to determine if any corrective action is required. We maintain records of all such occurrences.

Parents and guardians are asked, upon enrollment, to sign an Emergency Release Form empowering the school to seek and approve emergency medical treatment when medically necessary.

Minor Injury

In the event of minor injury, an adult tends to the child and administers first aid. The lead teacher informs the parent about the situation, either by phone, in person at dismissal time, or by note. If the child has sustained an injury to the head, we will advise the parent as soon as possible. The lead teacher completes the Incident Report and routes it to the head of school, who reviews and maintains it in the student's file in her office.

Serious Injury

In the event of serious injury, a faculty member will immediately call 911 and notify the administration. The staff will administer first aid until the arrival of emergency medical technicians. Parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity, so they may come to the school or hospital if the student is to be transported there. Staff will never transport students in private vehicles in medical emergencies. Either a parent must come and retrieve the child, or if it is necessary, the child will be sent by ambulance with two staff members to the emergency room. If a parent cannot be reached, a faculty or staff member will remain with the child, accompanying them to the hospital and remaining with the student until a parent arrives.

After the emergency is handled, the directress and other witnesses fill out an Incident Report. The head of school will contact the family to check on the condition of the injured child later in the day, or that evening after school.

Life-Threatening Allergic Reaction

We follow the steps outlined above under “Serious Injury.” Please complete an Allergy Action Plan and provide any emergency medications. All staff and faculty who work with your child have been trained to recognize allergy symptoms and know how to administer the EpiPen. We will follow the steps outlined in the plan. Contact the office if your child needs this form.

Medications

If your child requires medication, please confer with your doctor and, if possible, obtain medication that can be administered twice daily, in the morning and in the evening at home. Medication prescribed to be taken three times daily should be taken in the morning, after school, and before bed.

If it is absolutely necessary that your child have medication administered during school hours, please contact the office to obtain and fill out a Permission to Dispense Medication form at the time medication is to be dispensed. School staff will not administer medication, including aspirin or other over-the-counter pain relievers, without written authorization of a parent. Never send medication to school in your child’s lunch box.

Medications must be delivered to the school office in the original container, labeled with the child’s name, a date, and dosage directions for administration, the physician’s name, and pharmacy name. The school will administer the medication only as stated on the label instructions, or as amended in writing by the child’s physician.

Follow these guidelines to allow school staff to dispense over-the-counter medications:

- The child must fall within the correct age range written on the label instructions of over-the-counter medication, or else we must receive a doctor’s written instructions stating the amount and dosage schedule.
- We cannot give medication “as needed” without prior detailed written instructions or verbal consent from a parent at the time of administration.
- Parents must give written notification when a child is to stop taking a medication.
- Parents must provide dispensers for medication.

Animals at School

Some classes do have a variety of classroom pets. Please indicate on your child’s Emergency Release Form (ERF) if they have an allergy to animal hair or dander. The teacher will check this

information before introducing an animal to the class. In addition, some children have fears about animals. It will be helpful to inform the teacher in writing about such fears.

Smoking

Discovery Garden is a smoke-free environment. Smoking or other use of tobacco products is not permitted on campus except in the privacy of vehicles and out of the view of students.

Building Security

During the school day, children are not to leave their classroom or the building without the permission of their teacher. However, freedom of movement within the classroom is a part of the Montessori approach to education. Some classrooms allow children to work in the hallways of the school as well. The goal is for the children to slowly gain independence of movement throughout the school as they grow while adhering to school safety policies.

Except during arrival and dismissal times, the exterior doors to the school are kept locked at all times. Visitors, parents or prospective parents will need to ring the doorbell and be escorted during their visit by a staff member. During school hours, parents and visitors will be asked to use our side door facing Linwood St. Our door facing the parking lot will be used exclusively by students and teachers during carline and to go in and out towards the playground. The Linwood St. access to the parking lot is generally kept chained off for safety and security purposes.

The administration of DGMS review security procedures on a routine basis. If you have concerns or recommendations, please drop a note to the head of school.

Child Abuse Reporting

The Missouri Department of Social Services requires teachers and school staff to report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services. School staff that suspect child abuse or neglect are also required to notify the head of school and make a report. If you suspect any child abuse or neglect, or if you have questions about whether the concern you have constitutes abuse or neglect, call the 24-hour toll-free Abuse/Neglect Hotline at **1-800-392-3738**.

Misconceptions about Montessori

(Adapted from the American Montessori Society)

Choices

The children should be able to choose whatever they want.

The ability to make good choices is an important life skill to learn, but it is not accomplished by giving children open-ended choices about everything! It is facilitated by giving limited, age-appropriate choices in certain circumstances. It can begin with an infant, by placing two or three appropriate toys within the child's reach and then observing what attracts the baby enough to make the effort to reach and grasp: the knitted ball, the rattle, or the bell?

When we see children in tank tops on chilly days we suspect the parent has a misunderstanding about choices. It is never appropriate to open the closet door to a young child and ask, "What do you want to wear?" or the refrigerator door and ask, "What do you want to eat?" Children do need to develop a sense of personal preference and a sense of what is appropriate for the situation. This can be facilitated by a parent saying something like "It is a cool day, a good day for a turtleneck. Would you like to wear the red one or the blue one?"

Remember, offer limited choices where all the alternatives are good. In school the children can choose from the activities they have already been shown how to do.

Independence

In Montessori schools, children have to do everything themselves.

We do encourage the fostering of independence, but a key component of this effort is teaching children the specifics of how to do things themselves. First, the child must be taught a skill—such as how to hang up their coat on a hook that they can reach—and then they are expected to do so. If the task is too hard (such as a hook set too high) the child can't be successful. If the task is manageable, but the parent picks up the coat where the child has dropped it, the child will not gain responsibility and independence.

Using the example of coats again, at school we teach the children to hang their coats on their cubby hooks. First, we show them to pull through any inverted sleeves so the coat will be ready to put on. In dressing, we show them how to place the coat on the floor with the front facing up, stand by the collar, and insert both arms at the same time, flipping it over their heads—the easiest way for a child to put on a coat, sweater, or jacket. Some children do it easily. Others stand and hold their coat without making an attempt and say, “I can't.” We show them again and assure them they can, but we wonder if they are being dressed by an adult at home.

If a child is not allowed to exercise a skill within their grasp but instead is always dressed, carried, and buckled in, etc., they will not learn to be independent. The adult's role must be to teach the skill, allow enough time for the child to do it alone and then step back and allow the child the dignity and self-esteem that comes from being able to take care of his own needs.

Academics

The aim of Montessori is to teach the children academics at an early age.

Wrong! The aim is what Montessori called the *normalized child*, which is a child who is centered, well balanced, and free of “issues” to act out. A normalized child is calm, hardworking, motivated, self-directed, able to make reasonable choices, joyful, helpful, respectful, non-possessive, and obedient to reasonable authority. When all these characteristics are in place, we see a byproduct of accelerated learning that seems to happen effortlessly.

Parenting

The following resources are part of this Handbook as an educational source to all Discovery Garden Montessori School parents. (**Note:** Adapted with permission from *Redirecting Children's Behavior* by Kathryn J. Kvols (Parenting Press Inc., Seattle, WA). 1998.)

100 Things Parents Can Do to Help Children (Compiled By Barbara Hacker)

1. Read about Montessori education and how it applies to your child.
2. Take the time to stand back and observe your child carefully and note the characteristics they are displaying.
3. Analyze your child's wardrobe and build a wardrobe aimed at freedom of movement, independence, and freedom from distraction. (See *Clothing* section on page 41 for guidelines.)

4. Make sure your child gets sufficient sleep.
5. Make both going to bed and getting up into a calm and pleasant ritual.
6. Teach grace and courtesy in the home. Model it. Use courtesy with your child and help your child to demonstrate it.
7. Refrain from physical punishment and learn ways of positive discipline.
8. Have a special shelf where your child's books are kept and replaced after careful use.
9. Make regular trips to the public library. Become familiar with the librarians and how the library works and enjoy books together. Borrow books and help your child learn the responsibility of caring for them and returning them.
10. Read together daily. With younger children, stick to books with realistic themes.
11. See that your child gets to school on time—that is, by 8:30 a.m.
12. Allow sufficient time for your child to dress themselves.
13. Allow your child to collaborate with food preparation and encourage your extended day child to take at least some responsibility for preparing their own lunch.
14. If possible, allow your child a plot of land, or at least a flowerpot, in which to experience growing things.
15. Take walks together at the child's pace, pausing to notice things and talk about them.
16. Help your child be in a calm and prepared mood to begin school rather than over-stimulated and carrying toys or food.
17. Eliminate or strictly limit TV watching and replace it with activities that involve the child, rather than making them a passive observer. When the child does watch TV, watch it with them and discuss what you see.
18. From the earliest age, give your child the responsibility to pick up after themselves. For example, teach them to: return toys to their place, put dirty clothes in the laundry basket, clear dishes to the appropriate place, clean off the sink after use, etc. These activities require preparing the environment so that children know where things go.
19. Hug regularly but don't impose affection; recognize the difference.
20. Assign regular household tasks that need to be done to maintain the household to your child as age-appropriate. (See the Encouraging Children section on page 19 for examples)
21. Attend school parent education functions.
22. Arrange time for both parents to attend parent-teacher conferences. Speak together in preparation for the conference and write down questions to ask.
23. Talk to your child clearly without talking down. Communicate with respect and give the child the gift of language, new words, and new expressions.
24. Talk to your child by physically moving to their level. Be still and make eye contact.
25. Sing! Voice quality doesn't matter. Sing together regularly and build a repertoire of favorites.
26. Refrain from over-structuring your child's time with formal classes and activities. Leave time to "just be," – to play, explore, and create.

27. Teach your child safety precautions (deal with matches, plugs, chemicals, stairs, the street, how to dial 911, etc.)
28. Teach your child their address, phone number, and parents' names.
29. Count! Use natural opportunities that arise.
30. Tell and re-tell family-based stories. For example, "On the day you were born..."
31. Look at family pictures together. Help your child be aware of their extended family, names, and relationships.
32. Construct your child's biography, the story of their life. A notebook is ideal, so that it can be added to each year. Sharing one's story can become a much loved ritual, which can also be shared with the child's class at birthday time.
33. Assist your child to be aware of their feelings: to have a vocabulary for emotions and to be able to express them.
34. Play games together. Through repetition, children learn to take turns, to win, and to lose.
35. Together, do things to help others. For example, take food to an elderly neighbor, contribute blankets to a homeless shelter, give toys to those who have none, etc.
36. Speak the language of the virtues. Talk about patience, cooperativeness, courage, ingenuity, cheerfulness, helpfulness, kindness, etc. and point out those virtues when you see them demonstrated. (For further information, look up *The Virtues Project*.)
37. Refrain from giving your child too much "stuff." If there is already too much, give some away or store some and rotate the selections.
38. Memorize poetry, teach it to your child, and recite it together.
39. Put up a bird feeder. Let your child have responsibility for filling it. Together, learn to be good watchers and learn about the birds you see.
40. Whenever you go somewhere with your child, prepare them for what is going to happen and what will be expected of them at the store, restaurant, doctor's office, etc.
41. Express appreciation to your child and others, and help your child to do the same. Send thank you notes for gifts. Young children can dictate or send a picture while older children can write their own. What is key is learning the importance of expressing appreciation.
42. Help your child to learn to like healthful foods. Never force a child to eat something they do not like, but offer healthy alternatives! Make trying new things fun. Talk about foods and how they look or describe the taste. Introduce the word "savor," and teach how to do it. Engage children in food preparation.
43. When food shopping, talk to your child about what you see, from kumquats to lobsters. Talk about where food items come from. Talk about the people who help us by growing, picking, transporting, and displaying food.
44. Provide your child with appropriately sized furniture: their own table and chair to work at; perhaps a rocker in the living room to be with you, a bed that can easily be made by a child; a stool for climbing up to sink or counter.
45. While driving, point things out and discuss them. Things like construction work, interesting buildings, vehicles, bridges, and animals.
46. Teach the language of courtesy. Don't let your child interrupt; teach how to their turn and to use phrases like "excuse me" and "thank you"

47. Analyze any annoying behavior of your child and teach from the positive. For example: door slamming suggests teaching how to close a door; running in the house, teaching how to walk, a runny nose, and teaching how to use a tissue.
48. Spend quality time with people of different ages.
49. Teach your child about your religion and make them feel a part of it.
50. Help your child to have positive connections with people of diverse ethnicity, languages, and beliefs.
51. Laugh a lot. Play with words. Tell jokes. Help your child to develop a sense of humor.
52. Share your profession or occupation with your child. Have them visit at work and have some appreciation of work done in the world.
53. See that your child learns to swim—the younger the better.
54. Have a globe or atlas in the house and whenever names of places come up, locate them with the child.
55. Make sure your child has the tools they need, including: a child-size broom, mop, dust pan, whisk broom, duster, etc., to help maintain the cleanliness of the household.
56. Learn to say “no” without anger, and with firmness and conviction. Not everything children want is appropriate.
57. Arrange environments and options so that you end up saying “yes” more than “no.”
58. Refrain from laughing at your child.
59. Alert children to upcoming events so they can mentally prepare: for example, “in ten minutes, it will be time for bed.”
60. Help children to maintain a calendar, becoming familiar with days and months, or counting down to special events. Talk about it regularly.
61. Get a pet and guide your child to take responsibility for its care.
62. Refrain from replacing everything that gets broken. Help children to learn the value of money, and the consequences of actions.
63. Take a nighttime walk and listen to sounds, observe the moon, and smell the air.
64. Take a rain walk. Wear coats and boots to be protected, but then fully enjoy the rain.
65. Allow your primary-aged child to use their whole body and mind for active doing. Save computers for the lower elementary years and later, when they become a useful tool of the conscious mind.
66. If you must travel without your child, leave notes behind for them to open each day you are gone.
67. Expose your child to all sorts of music.
68. Talk about art, visit statue gardens, and make short visits to museums to look at a couple of pictures. Make it meaningful, enjoyable, and don't overdo.
69. Help children learn to sort: the laundry, silverware, etc.
70. Help them become aware of sounds in words. Play games: “what starts with *mmmm*?”, “what ends with *t*?”
71. Organize the child's things in appropriate containers and on low shelves.

72. Aid the child in absorbing a sense of beauty. Expose them to flowers, woods, and natural materials, and avoid plastic.
73. Help your child start a collection of something interesting.
74. Talk about the colors (including shades), textures, and shapes you see around you.
75. Provide art materials, paper, appropriate aprons, and mats to define the workspace. Provide tools for cleaning up.
76. Evaluate each of your child's toys. Does it help them learn something? Does the child use it? Does it "work," and are all pieces present? Is it safe?
77. Refrain from doing for a child what they can do for themselves.
78. Provide opportunities for physical activity: running, hopping, skipping, and climbing. Go to a playground if necessary.
79. Teach children how to be still and make silence. Do it together. Children love to be in a meditative space if given the opportunity.
80. Teach your child their birthday.
81. Read the notes that are sent home from school.
82. Alert the teacher to anything that may be affecting your child: lack of sleep, exposure to a fight, moving, a relative visiting in the home, a parent out of town, etc.
83. Provide a place to just dig. Allow your child to get dirty sometimes, without inhibitions.
84. Refrain from offering material rewards or even excessive praise. Let the experience of accomplishment be its own reward.
85. Don't speak for your child to others. Give space for the child to speak for themselves, and if they don't, it's okay.
86. Apologize to your child when you've made a mistake.
87. Understand what Montessori meant by *sensitive periods*. Know when your child is in one and use it.
88. Learn to wait. Some things people want to give their children or do with them are more appropriate at a later age. Be patient; the optimal time will come. Stay focused on where they are right now.
89. Play ball together: moms and dads, boys and girls.
90. Tell them what you value in them. Let them hear you express what you value in others.
91. Always tell the truth.
92. Go to the beach and play in the sand.
93. Ride the bus or take a train at least once.
94. Watch a sunrise. Watch a sunset.
95. Share appropriate "news" from the newspaper: a new dinosaur was discovered, a baby elephant was born at the zoo, a child was honored for bravery, the weather forecast, etc.
96. Evaluate your child's hairstyle. Is it neat and not a distraction, or is it always in the child's eyes, falling out of headbands, etc.?

97. Let your child help you wash the car and learn the vocabulary of the parts of the car. With this and other tasks, take time to focus on the *process* for the child more than the end product.
98. Talk about right, left, straight, turns, north, south, east, west, in a natural way so your child develops a sense of direction and the means to talk about it.
99. Place a small pitcher of water or juice on a low refrigerator shelf, and a glass in a low place, so your child can be independent in getting a drink.
100. If your child is attached to things like pacifiers, start a weaning process.

Enjoy life together!

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