

Hope Montessori Infant-Toddler Community Policies

updated 2/1/2019

Welcome to our community of educators, parents, and children working collaboratively to create secure, loving, interesting, safe environments for our children. We are here to support working parents with extended hours and comfortable, home-like environments. Thus we have prepared our Children's House with comfortable child-sized furniture, quality foods in generous quantities, calm and active areas, and Montessori curriculum that provides children one-to-one interaction and independence as they develop a need for it.

We are strongly committed to the value of Montessori education as an aid to life for not only the young child, but for the adult as well. We are interdependent. It is our challenge to constantly grow with the child. We learn as much from the children as they learn from us...and they bring to our community an unconditional love of life, a curiosity to explore, and contagious joy.

We look forward to having your family join us. Often there are questions that we fail to address during our visits, so these policies are for your reference. If you have specific questions, the director will always be pleased to talk to you. We hope that these policies are seen for what they are intended...to continue our safe Montessori environment in which your child can move toward becoming an independent, confident person.

Hours of Operation

We are open from 6:30 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. each day. We are closed for major holidays, one day for our staff conference, and two days mid-August for staff training and preparation of the environment for the upcoming academic year. The doors will lock at 6:00 P.M. Parents who arrive and/or depart after 6:00 P.M. are given late slips and a fee is added to their monthly charge. Please refer to the tuition sheet for a full explanation.

Checking In/Out

Upon arrival, please use the touch screen kiosk to sign in/out for the day. This allows us to monitor attendance that fluctuates throughout the day. You and your authorized pick-up persons will be given a registration number for you to register either with your fingerprint or a unique number pin/password combination. Please make it a habit to sign your child in and out every day.

Morning Arrival

Consistency and routine are very important to young children. Children use sequence the way we use a clock—to understand what happens next. The way in which your child wakes, dresses and prepares for the day, and enters the community all affect not only your child, but also our entire environment. Please assist us in maintaining a calm, peaceful environment by moving quietly, speaking softly, and following your child's routine when you are in the Children's House. If you wish to stay a while, you are welcome to observe from an adult chair. If you would like to chat with other

parents, you might get a cup of coffee and visit in the parent room. This leaves the children's environment undisturbed and facilitates conversation among the children.

Most children arrive between 6:30 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. If we are going for a walk, we will wait until 9:00 A.M. for you to arrive. After 9:00, if the class has gone for a walk they will post their location where they can be found. You are responsible to accompany your child and meet the class. Continuity in arrival time helps your child to separate because of his familiarity with the routine and what is happening at the time.

“How do I say goodbye?” is one of our new parent's most frequently asked questions. Separation is a life long experience for people, and sadness is a natural part of separation. Both you and your child experience it. As experienced parents could tell you, if your child is not having any separation anxiety, that could change in a few months. Here are some ideas that can help you and your child with separation.

First, start by letting your child walk into the building from the car. This is the most natural first step in separation. Your child will already be separate from you upon entering the school.

When your child arrives for breakfast, it is helpful to say goodbye before he comes to the breakfast table. There are two reasons for this: one is that separation can be a sad time, and it's natural to feel sad. We don't want to substitute food as a way to negate emotions. Secondly, if your child is used to sitting at the breakfast table before you leave, and the table is full on a particular day, your child will probably have a very hard time separating that morning. Successful separation requires a bit of sensitivity to the child's routine and the way it is established.

On your way to school in the morning, it may help for you to talk to your child about where they are going and whom they are going to see. Again, as soon as your child is able to walk, please let them walk to their room. Please leave food, toys and other items in the car. When you arrive there will be a Montessori educator here to greet you and your child. When you are ready to leave, a Montessori educator will be available to help you say “good-bye”. After you say goodbye, please leave promptly. Your child can go to the window and wave to you. We will help with the language—telling your child that you are going to work, but will come back just like you do everyday. This language, from infancy, assists children in understanding what is happening.

Separation can be a sad time, but the first step in alleviating some of the stress is to establish a routine. The sooner this routine is established and followed, the sooner everyone will be more comfortable.

Departure

We would like this time to be as calm and organized as morning arrival for the children who will still be here after you leave. A shout hello and a big hug are very appealing from a toddler you've missed all day, but it also disrupts the other children. As with arrival, please enter calmly, warmly greet your child, and depart. If you need help with this, your Montessori Educator or classroom assistant will be happy to help you. This is not a good time for observation since the children are ready to leave, but you are welcome to take some special time during the day to watch your child at work. Talk to your child's Montessori educator for advice on the best time. If you have another child with you please have them refrain from playing with our materials or in the atrium. The materials are designed to be

really attractive and older children are very interested in them. However, this is a Montessori school and we ask that you have siblings behave as they would in their own class. If you plan to arrive early for your child, please let us know. Our children love walking in the woods, so we will take walks daily. However, with advance notice, we will make arrangements for your child to wait for you in the office until you arrive.

If you would like someone besides a parent to pick up your child, please let us know that morning, and fill out a yellow Child Pick-Up Authorization Form. We will check the identification of the person picking up your child before letting your child leave with them. Please do not send in an older sibling. Traffic can be dangerous, and we want your child to leave safely. Also, be sure to not leave your car running in the parking lot—especially with a child in it. We hope that these procedures will make for a smooth and safe departure.

Health and Illness Policies

In a community setting, illness is an important issue. Your child is beginning to develop immunities and will be exposed to a new environment, new children, and new adults. Although we spend much time and effort on sanitation and good health procedures, your child may become ill. We ask that you weigh all these factors when determining whether your child should attend our program. If your child becomes ill, we appreciate your assistance in minimizing the exposure of other children to illnesses. We recommend that your child be kept home at least during the initial and most contagious days of a cold. This concern is for his/her comfort and for the protection of the other children in the program. Your pediatrician will tell you when it is safe to resume attendance.

In the event that your child becomes ill while at school, we will notify you. Please keep updated telephone numbers on file. We expect you to pick up your ill child within an hour. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contacts, who should be aware that you've given us their names and that they might be asked to take your child home. We ask that you have your doctor fill out a "Return to School" form to verify that your child is well and able to return to our community. However, if you choose not to see a physician, please have your child stay home until he/she is symptom free for at least 24 hours. These measures will ensure a healthier environment for your child and the other children in our community.

Outdoor play

We take walking children outdoors daily for walks in the woods, movement on the playground, and to get fresh air. The Department of Health supports this policy.

If you are thinking about bringing your child back at the end of an illness, please be sure they are well enough to be outside.

As working parents, we realize how difficult it is to miss or leave work to care for your children on such short notice. If we work together as a community to solve these problems, absenteeism can be minimized.

These policies have come directly from the Licensing Rules of the Missouri Department of Health, legal advice, and common sense.

Children must be sent home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 99.0 degrees (under the arm)
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea-more than one abnormally loose stool
- Severe coughing
- Excessive and/or discolored nasal drainage
- Difficult or rapid breathing (especially important for children under six months)
- Yellowish eyes or skin
- Pinkeye-tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, followed by swelling or discharge of pus
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- An infected skin patch-crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of the skin
- Unusually dark, tea-colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Headache and stiff neck
- Severe itching of the body or scalp

All medication must meet the following requirements:

1. A current prescription specifically for your child in the original container with pharmacy label, doctor, type of medication, child's name and date.
2. Over the counter medication is only given with written permission of the doctor.
3. Please be sure to check for the date of expiration on your child's medication. Medication bottles left behind this date will be discarded to assure the children's safety.
4. No over the counter medication may be given without written permission from your doctor. If you foresee the use of Tylenol for temperature or discomfort due to teething or immunization, we will give you a form in the office. This will be kept inside your child's file and can be updated when dosages change. We will administer this only after receiving a telephone authorization from you.

All medication will be given only one time each day—at noon. "Medication Authorization" forms are available at the front desk. These must be completed and signed for us to begin medication. The adult dispensing medications will sign the slip each day. We will do our best to dispense medications to non-contagious, recovering children.

Medical forms for the Department of Health

The Department of Health requires a complete Medical Examination report and up-to-date vaccine records to be in your child's file upon enrollment. Since infants and toddlers have frequent immunizations, please keep the office up-to-date on changes. From time to time a public health nurse will visit to check our records. If a child's immunization record shows your child to be out of compliance, the nurse will send him/her home until evidence of proper immunization is received. So please help us keep this record current.

Immunization Exemption

In accordance with State law, the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in our school may request notice of whether there are any children enrolled who have an immunization exemption on file. Please note, however, the names of individual children are confidential and cannot be released.

Safe Sleep Policy

Safety is always our priority at Hope – during the busy and inquisitive waking hours of our infants AND during times of sleep. To insure best practices in the safety and care of sleeping infants at Hope, we have implemented the following Safe Sleep Policy, which will be provided to parents of all our infants, upon enrollment.

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and as required by the State of Missouri, our caregivers will participate in training on Safe Sleep practices within the first thirty days of working in our school and every three years, thereafter.

All infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their backs to sleep. We can make exceptions to this practice if parents provide detailed, written instructions, signed by a physician. When infants can turn over on their own, they may then establish a preferred sleep position.

Sleep clothing designed to keep an infant warm may be used, so long as the head and face remain uncovered at all times. Infant sleeping equipment will feature firm mattresses, tightly fitting sheets, and all equipment will remain free of loose bedding (i.e. bumper pads, pillows, and soft toys, etc.). Our sleeping equipment will not be covered by blankets or bedding.

Our caregivers will be well-positioned and in close proximity to napping infants in order to provide constant care and supervision, in addition to conducting frequent physical checks to insure infants are safe and comfortable. Light and sound levels in the infant nap room will be carefully monitored to maximize infant safety by insuring caregivers' ability to easily see and hear infants at all times.

Hope schools are smoke free environments.

Feeding and Eating

Infants: The adults in our community have a profound respect for the importance of the mother in the infant's world. Breast-feeding is strongly supported. We will communicate with you throughout the day regarding your child's schedule and assist you in determining when your child is ready to nurse. If you are unable to be here physically, your child can still receive your breast milk, which can be expressed and stored in either the refrigerator (for the day) or the freezer (up to 180 days).

If your child uses formula, we request that you bring in empty bottles and formula to be prepared as they are needed. Please clearly label each bottle.

We have observed that the introduction of solid food begins as early as four months of age and as late as six months. We request that you bring in a box of cereal and jars of food; these too should be labeled. We have observed that most infants desire soft table foods by nine months, even without

many teeth. The chewing of food is possible with the gums alone. Out of respect for each infant's individual needs, we will feed on demand unless otherwise directed by your pediatrician.

Most infants begin drinking cow's milk around twelve months. We will provide whole milk for your child when that time comes. Babies often lose interest in bottles around nine months so this is a logical time to begin the weaning process. The process is simple. Offer the cup first, then the bottle. Gradually your infant will receive more in a cup and less in a bottle. By twelve months, most babies are getting their liquids from the cup at meal times.

We are eager to communicate with you regarding this most important issue of feeding. We rely on you to inform us of any changes in diet. Please label all bottles, cereals, and jars.

When the child begins to eat table food, we will work closely to modify our menu to meet your child's needs. Copies of the menu are available from the office. When your child begins to eat table food he will be offered utensils. The more they practice, the better they get.

Toddlers: The children are offered a warm breakfast as they arrive. Breakfast is served from 6:30 until 8:00. Individual snack preparation is offered as soon as 9:00. The morning snack is usually fresh fruit. The children choose when they want a snack, how many times they wish to return, and have the freedom to prepare it themselves. Lunch is a very nutritious, warm meal that the children love (see the attached menu). When children awaken from nap, a snack is available to them to prepare. As you can see the children are offered generous quantities of food throughout the day, therefore most children eat quite well. Since food is plentiful, please do not bring food into the building with your child. We work hard to offer nutritious and appealing meals for your child to enjoy while in our care. If food is used as an incentive to separate, please speak to your Montessori Educator for ideas.

Supplies Needed:

Infant Program

Sleep sack
Bottles
Formula or Breast Milk
Cereal and/or baby food
3 complete outfits (including socks with grippers)
Flexible shoes for outside
Mittens
Diaper ointment
Diapers
Diaper wraps*

*We offer a cloth diaper service to all who are interested for a minimal monthly fee. In our community, we strongly encourage the use of cloth diapers. Through their use the children are able to feel when they are wet or soiled which later helps when the child is ready for toilet learning. The children using cloth diapers tend to have fewer diaper rashes and cloth diapers are environmentally safe.

Toddler Program

Pants with elastic waists
Tennis shoes (no high tops please)
Toothbrush
Blanket or quilt for nap
Diapers (no Pull-Ups please)
Diaper ointment
Boots (both rain and snow)
Mittens on a string (with a thumb, no gloves please)
3 complete two-piece outfits
Snow pants
Sunscreen
Raincoat

After one year of age, your child is welcome to bring a favorite stuffed animal and/or blanket to use during their nap. Since there is no developmental reason to use a pacifier after your child begins to chew we ask that you please leave them at home. We assist the children in learning self-calming skills.

We have many activities designed for the children. Please do not bring toys from home; we cannot be responsible for items of personal or monetary value. Food and belongings brought from home will be put away by the staff and will be kept until the end of the day for you to reclaim, after that they will be disposed of.

Appropriate Clothing

Your young infant will need sleepers with undershirts or onesies underneath in the winter. Diapers and t-shirts are fine in warm weather.

As soon as your baby begins to creep and crawl, it is important that their legs are exposed to grip the floor. Dresses, although cute, are often impractical at this stage of development because the babies' knees and feet are easily tangled in loose clothing.

When your child begins to toddle, we will begin changing their diaper while they are in a standing position. When we continue to change them in a lying down position we are treating them as an immobile infant. By this time, the child tends to be moving around too much to lie safely on an elevated changing table. Through standing up, the child becomes an active participant in the diapering process; they are able to see what is going on (or coming off as the case may be). This also is a natural progression towards pulling up their pants. At this time we will ask for two-piece outfits, which make diaper changes easier for standing toddlers. Onesies are no longer appropriate because they get in the way. Likewise, one-piece outfits with snaps (including overalls) make this process difficult.

When your child begins to take walks, tennis shoes are requested. Sandals are not appropriate for climbing hills and running. In cooler weather we require the children have jackets.

Laundry/Lost and Found

We will launder all of your child's dirty or soiled clothing throughout the day for two reasons. First so the children will have clean, dry clothing when needed. Secondly so you won't have to take more work home with you. Between eight and twelve loads of laundry are done here each day and needless to say we don't always know whose clothing belongs to whom. For this reason we **request that you label all of your child's clothes clearly with a permanent marker** (one will be provided for you on the home visit). This includes blankets and other items used at naptime, shoes, boots, mittens, hats, socks and coats. Because some of the children have the same first names or initials we ask that you use their first and last names or all three initials.

If you notice that you are missing clothes, we keep a cubby of unlabeled clothing in the laundry room. Periodically the piles get so large that we will put them out on a table in the parent room for you to go through (we will post a sign in advance so you can make a last search for that missing item). After a week or so, all unclaimed clothing will be donated to a local charity. Please check the lost and found regularly.

Toilet Learning

After years of observations, we find that success in toileting is often closely linked with the ability to express personal needs and desires. This happens most often after a period where the child observes others using the toilet. Observation and expression of personal needs are encouraged in our program.

As Montessorians, we follow the children. That means we wait for the child to show an interest in using the toilet. At that point, we facilitate this interest to meet his or her needs. Our language and affect is positive. We use this experience for language development by providing the proper biological labels and non-biased terms. We do not use guilt or bribery as a motivator.

The transition from diapers to underwear is usually very, very easy for the child when he or she is fully prepared. Just as in other areas of learning and discovery, children are often the best teachers. Pressure for children to become "toilet trained" often results in frustration over inappropriate expectations on the part of the adult. Ignore advice from others who insist that all of their children were "trained" by twelve months because that is a physical impossibility. Toileting is a process of physical maturation, emotional readiness, and cognitive awareness. Power struggles *always* result in the parent losing. We like to avoid that situation by trusting the children to let us know their needs.

In our culture, parents often have many questions about what is traditionally been called "Toilet Training". If anyone is "trained", it's probably the parents—that is trained by their child to respect his/her interest and timetable. Our Montessori staff is very experienced and available to offer suggestions, to talk and to offer reassurance.

Communication

As we are all very busy with our work and our children, communicating events and policies become somewhat difficult. We are available throughout the day to speak with you on the phone, though for

the toddler Montessori Educators naptime is most convenient. If you do happen to call and we are busy with the children or otherwise unavailable, we will return your call as soon as possible.

Home visits provide an opportunity to gather more information about a typical day in our school, about the Montessori process of education, and we benefit too by getting to know you and your child better. These written policies are a supplement to our visits. A calendar is printed and distributed yearly to announce major holidays and events. Our monthly newsletter is emailed on at the beginning of every month, which provides information on last minute changes and necessary notes. Please be sure to save your calendar and policies and read the newsletter each month. We welcome comments and ideas for the newsletters.

Conferences and Evaluation

For a community to work together, there must be good communication between the parents and the lead teachers. If you would like to arrange an extended conversation with your Montessori Educator, you are welcome to come in during naptime or call and schedule a convenient time. We schedule formal conferences three times a year, in the summer, winter and spring, with the parents to discuss their child's development. Do not feel you need to limit your comments or questions to just these scheduled occasions, we are always available to talk.

Should a problem arise at any time, please call the director immediately to discuss it. We want you to be completely informed and satisfied with your child's day.

As part of the Montessori process, we are always observing and analyzing the children's behaviors. If we see anything that we feel you need to be aware of we will speak to you or send a letter home. The first thirty days of your child's enrollment are probationary. If necessary, we may ask you for a conference to suggest alternatives to our program.

Observation

We look forward to your visits during the school day. If you would like to see your child at work please take some time to come by, if not for the whole day, then come for lunch. Since this is a children's house, we ask that our visitors act as their child's guest and take special care not to interrupt an activity, a child's concentration, or the flow of their movement. We think you'll enjoy what you see!

Celebrations

Holidays are very abstract and thus children this age have various understandings of the celebrations. Since we have children representing a variety of religious and ethnic groups, we respect the right of each family to teach their child about their own holidays. Here we will celebrate together life, nature, and the changing of the seasons.

Toddlers think that every day is their birthday and so we sing the birthday song almost daily. When your child does celebrate a birthday, we will celebrate with singing and a snack. If you wish to provide a special birthday snack we suggest a healthy treat of fresh fruit or vegetables, small boxes of

raisins or muffins. Many of our parents wish to limit the amount of sugar in their child's diet so we ask that you avoid bringing in treats containing large amounts of sugar.

Another way to celebrate birthdays, holidays, or children moving on to other schools is by donating a book in honor of your child. We can suggest appropriate books to you, these gifts are always much appreciated, and will bear a nameplate inside the front cover honoring your child.

Babysitting

Hope Montessori employee policies prohibit our staff from babysitting for the children in our community. When a child has moved on to the preschool, you are welcome to ask employees to sit. We ask that you please arrange babysitting outside of school so that our staff can give their full attention to the children.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition statements are not mailed send. All tuition and other applicable fees are due during the first five days of the month. A one and a half percent late fee will be added to fees paid **after** the fifth of the month. Further information, including late departure fees, is available on the tuition sheet.

Our tuition is broken down by month for ease of payment. No credit is due for missed days, holidays or scheduled closings. Children that are enrolled full-time are allowed two weeks of vacation credit after one full year of enrollment. Please speak to the administration to confirm when your vacation credit is available, or when you would like to use the credit. Credit for extended illness or hospitalization, will be considered by the Board.

For tax purposes, our Federal Tax number is: 23-7240338.

Thank You

We appreciate your interest in Hope Montessori Infant-Toddler Community; over the years we have had the privilege to serve some wonderful families. Our staff is well educated and very experienced with young children. From our experiences, we have learned that each child is capable of teaching us something not only about themselves, but about ourselves as well. We look forward to enjoying and sharing in this wonderful time of life with you and your child. Thank you!