



PARENT PARTICIPATION POLICY

Building the circular bridge of trust from home to school

A good relationship between the early childhood center and parents is vital to the well being of children. Parents often feel worried about their child's safety and well being. "How can I be sure my child is happy?" or "Why aren't they teaching him more?" are examples of the kinds of questions that worry parents of children from time to time. The key to building relationships of trust between home and school is frequent communication. Both teachers and parents must move halfway to meet the other in open two-way communication. Parents are encouraged to ask questions, make observations of classrooms and carefully read printed brochures and policy statements written about the program. Parents need to be in touch with the center before problems develop and they need to learn how to communicate effectively with school personnel.

TALKING TO TEACHERS:

Keep the teacher informed about any issues that may be upsetting to your child such as new marriages, new siblings, new step-children, moves to new homes and out-of-town trips. Talk to teachers about goals for children and how to work together to achieve these goals. Talk to teachers about discipline issues and limit setting. Avoid discussing upsetting issues in front of children. If at all possible, set up appointments to discuss problems or plans. Start with the classroom lead teacher first. Give her a chance to solve the problem with your assistance before talking to her supervisor. If the problem cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, you are invited to set up an appointment with the school director to work on solutions together.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

Keep an eye on school bulletin boards, message centers and read individual notes sent home by teachers. Please put all important communications in writing so that all staff members who work with your child will be informed. The school staff will try to avoid surprises by providing explicit parent handbooks, positive notes, hall and door signs, conferences, phone calls, accurate record keeping, posted schedules, newsletters and school and classroom calendars. Be sure to check lunch boxes and cubbies for notes each day.

PARENT ACCESS:

Any custodial parent, or guardian of a child enrolled at Montessori is permitted unlimited access to the center during the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for the purposes of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the center or evaluating the premises.

PARENTS ARE INVITED TO OBSERVE:

Parents are invited to visit their child's classroom at anytime during the day. Observers, other than parents, must observe by appointment only.

PARENTS MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES:

A Parent Orientation Meeting is scheduled for each classroom in the fall to meet the teachers and to get acquainted with other parents. This first meeting of the school year gives teachers an opportunity to present their goals and objectives for the year, to discuss the daily schedule for children, to present the mechanisms of the daily program and set the foundation for a successful parent-teacher partnership. Parent-teacher

conferences are held twice a year, mid-year and in the spring for an informal discussion of the growth and progress of the child. Other conferences will be scheduled from time-to-time throughout the year on an as-needed basis. A conference record, signed by the parents or guardians, it will be kept on file to verify that conference meetings were held.

WRITTEN PROGRESS REPORTS:

Parents of children in the pre-school receive a written progress report (check-list type) in the spring. Parents of children in the kindergarten program will receive progress reports every 10 weeks in October, January, March and June. Kindergarten progress reports must be signed by parents or guardians and returned to the school. End of the year Kindergarten reports will be sent to public schools as requested.

PARENT ROSTER:

The rosters of the name and telephone numbers of the families enrolled in the center are available upon request. The roster will not include the name or telephone number of any parent who requests that their name or telephone number not be included.

SOME GOOD IDEAS FOR HELPING AT SCHOOL:

1. Help with fundraiser.
2. Attend parent meetings and Open Houses.
3. Read newsletters sent home from classroom teachers.
4. Drive or help supervise field trips.
5. Help with a cooking project in the classroom.
6. Donate a healthy snack for your child's classroom once a month.
7. Share a special talent of yours with the children such as singing, cooking, playing a musical instrument, a fun craft or story-telling.
8. Visit a classroom and tell about your occupation.
9. Observe anytime!
10. Provide information about your child that will help us meet their needs.
11. Share appropriate books, videos (G-rate), musical instruments or tapes, paintings or software.
12. Donate articles to your child's classroom such as books, toys, and craft items for art projects.

FUNDRAISERS:

Several times a year, MCS organizes a fundraiser and asks parents to help by selling different items. Although we are a private, for-profit corporation, we struggle to meet the expenses of providing high quality care at an affordable price. We are not alone with this situation. Day care all over the country is under funded, and teachers and staff end up subsidizing the care by working for low wages. This is all more ironic because of the great importance of our work and the high level of professional behavior required.

Certainly love of work and a personal commitment to the well being of children is the primary reason for being here. But I've found it very frustrating recently after interviewing some great candidates, having them turn down the job because of money. Such hard and important work deserves the best reimbursement we can manage. A real answer to this problem must lie in the larger community because parents alone cannot afford tuition that funds worthy wages.

Our fundraisers do not raise wages but they do make a qualitative difference in the classroom. We use the funds raised to buy more educational materials or improve the classroom environment. This raises staff morale as well as making the place a better environment for your children to be. We understand that the children won't really be selling items and that the work is yours. We appreciate your effort and will use the proceeds in ways we think you would approve.