

Eastlake Montessori Parents Handbook

Welcome

Welcome to Eastlake Montessori School! We are glad to have you and your child become a part of our school family.

Our school was started in 1980. The same staff has been with the school for a number of years. This provides a safe, stable and nurturing learning environment for the children.

Children attend five days a week during the regular school year. A morning class, an afternoon class and a full-day program are offered. Some space is available for half-day students to stay for lunch. We also have a summer program for new and returning students.

Our Purpose

Our purpose at Eastlake Montessori School is to provide a quality education experience using the Montessori Approach. We do this in a small, cozy home-like environment. Children ages 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ through 7 are encouraged to learn and thrive at their own pace. A love of learning is enhanced and strengthened.

The Montessori Approach

The Montessori method is very individualized. Lessons are given one-on-one or with a small group of children. Children are then invited to repeat the lessons. So children choose their work from the lessons they have received. Repetition leads to mastery of a skill. Freedom to choose encourages independence, self-reliance and self-discovery. Many of the materials are designed with a control of error so the child can discover and correct on his own. Also materials are designed to isolate the skill to be learned and are sequenced so mastery of one skill leads to learning another. Montessori students learn through hands-on experience, investigation and research. They become actively engaged in their studies.

Montessori classes bring children together in multi-age groups, rather than classes comprised of just one age level. So the children at our school are all grouped together just like siblings in a family. The younger children learn from the older children who serve as teachers and role models. Children stay with their teachers for three years. This allows teachers to develop close, long-term relationships with their students, allows them to know each child's learning style and encourages a strong sense of community.

How to Contact the School

The phone number for the school is (303)452-3835. This number should be used only for urgent messages DURING class hours. Non-urgent calls can be made from 8 - 8:30 AM, 11 - noon, or after 3'oclock in the afternoon. You can also e-mail the school at either questions@eastlakemontessori.com or lory_mcdonald@eastlakemontessori.com

Most of our communication with you will be done via e-mail including our monthly newsletter.

Requirements for Entry

A child should be fully potty trained before attending our school. Of course from time to time accidents will happen and a change of clothing is kept at school for just that purpose. But we do not have the staffing personnel to change a child on a recurring basis.

The Student Enrollment Agreement and the Registration fee must be received before a child can be registered for school.

Once your child is registered, you are given an Admissions Packet. That packet includes:

- Parent Welcome letter with check-off list
- Parent Handbook
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- School Calendar
- Student/Parent Information Form
- Child's Emergency Card
- Doctor's Health Record
- Health Care Authorization Form
- Permission Forms
- Immunization Card

Most of these forms must be completed before the first day of school. Please turn in these forms as soon as possible. The Doctor's Health Record and Immunization Card must be turned in within 30 days of your child's first day of school.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due the first of each month. A late check fee of \$5 per day for every day past the 7th of the month will be assessed. A \$50 fee will be charged for every bounced check.

No deductions can be made for non-attendance for any reason, since the budget is predicated on full tuition. Similar to your household expenses, our bills must be paid.

Driveway

Please enter the driveway on the southeast side of the school and exit on the northeast side. Park your car towards the inside of the driveway loop so that other cars can get by. If you will be coming inside for an extended time, please park either on the street in front of the school or on the gravel in front of the school's playground.

Authorized Pick-up

Only authorized persons may pick up a child from school. These persons should be listed on your Child's Emergency Card. If, at any time, another person is to pick-up the child, a parent needs to inform the school. Let a staff member know if you need to update the emergency card to authorize someone to pick-up your child on an on-going basis.

Any person picking up for the first time or unknown to the staff members must show a valid driver's license. This is a safety issue.

What To Bring On First Day

On the first day of school, each child needs to bring a 2-pocket folder with pockets at the bottom to hold the child's art work and written work. Every Friday folders are taken outside so the child's work can go home.

A shoe box filled with a complete change of clothes with the child's name clearly labeled on the box should also come on the first day of school. All removable clothing such as coats, hats, and mittens should be marked with the child's name.

What NOT to Bring to School

Children should not bring jewelry, toys, gum, candy or money to school. Such precious items might get lost or broken. They can also be distracting.

Visitors

All visitors to the school are required by the Colorado Department of Human Services to sign in and show identification.

Observations

Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress by visiting the classroom. In order to limit the number of extra adults in the classroom we

would like for you to schedule when you will be coming. Also please wait about a month following the start of the school year so the children become used to the routine and environment.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. Once prior to Thanksgiving break and then in the spring prior to Spring break. Conferences are held WITHOUT the child being present.

Good parent/teacher communication is important to us. Please contact the school either by phone or via e-mail with questions, comments, concerns or information you feel we should know. A change in a child's routine at home can have an affect on a child's behavior at school.

Parents Night

In early October, a Parents Night is offered for new parents to our school. This program offers an opportunity for you to meet our staff, look more deeply at the lessons your child will be receiving, learn more about the materials he will be using, answer general questions you might have and get a chance to get to know the other parents. This is an adult program only. No children are to attend because space is limited and children may not be able to sit through the presentation. We do NOT provide child care during this event.

Formal Complaints

To file a formal complaint about this school, you may call the Division of Child Care at (303)866-5958. You may also file a written complaint by writing to: Division of Child Care, 1575 Sherman Street, 1st Floor, Denver, CO 80203.

School Routine

Both our morning and afternoon classes follow the same general format. We begin with a brief line time (circle time). Then a work period that lasts usually 1 hour and 45 minutes. This is followed by a second line time that lasts between 15 to 30 minutes depending on the weather. The morning and afternoon ends with outside play time if weather permits. If the weather doesn't allow us to go outside, the children are given a choice of playing inside with toys or participating in active games indoors with a teacher.

Following a 30-minute lunch period children who stay all day are invited for a 15-minute rest period. The remaining 15 minutes is spent usually in outside play time.

T.V. and videos are not available at this school. The children are supervised by adults at all times.

Drop-off and Sign-In

When your child arrives at school, please accompany him in and sign the parent sign-in sheet with the current time and your initials next to your child's name. Please don't linger by the door or visit with the staff. Long good-byes and long visits with a teacher make it hard on others who are arriving. It also communicates to your child that you are uncertain about leaving him/her in our care.

Roll / Attendance Checking

During first and second line, each morning and afternoon, the number of children present will be verified and checked with the sign-in sheet. If a child should be lost, the parents will be notified immediately so that we can obtain a complete and accurate description and the police will be called.

Sharing Time

Part of our second line is a time for the children to bring items or news to share with the other children. Children are allowed to share once a month. A record is kept to ensure each child has no more than one turn. Items to be shared should relate to the topics we are studying. They could include pictures, books or items from the region of the world about which we are talking.

Snack / Lunch

Both in the morning and afternoon snacks are provided. Snacks include fruit, raw vegetables, or crackers and cheese. Each child in the extended-day program should bring a nutritionally balanced and complete lunch to school.

Tri-County Health will no longer allow ready to eat food to be prepared with bare hands even if washed with soap and water prior to preparation. Our staff must wear gloves when preparing ready to eat foods. In the past, our school has had the children assist with food preparation for the entire class. We are modifying our approach to meet the health regulations. Now a child will help prepare their own snack with bare hands after washing but no one else's. On occasion, the children will work together on a special baking project that will be enjoyed by the entire class.

Pick-up and Sign-Out

Please follow similar procedures for driving and parking when picking up your child. Be sure to sign them out.

It is important for you to pick your child up on time after school. All the teachers have after school commitments several nights each week. There will be a \$5 charge for every 15 minutes you are late following a 15-minute grace period. If a child has not been picked up 15 minutes after class is over, we will call the parents first and then call the emergency numbers provided by the parents. If the child is not picked up within an hour and a half, the Colorado Department of Human Services and the police will be notified.

Each night after school the playground and the building will be inspected to ensure that all children have been picked up.

Transportation and Field Trips

Parents provide transportation to and from school. The school does not operate a van or other vehicle for transportation of children.

Occasionally, our class goes on a field trip requiring transportation. When this occurs parent volunteers will transport the children. Parents will be notified and must sign permission slips before all trips requiring transportation.

All drivers for field trips will be properly insured and they will be required to have each child in a car seat or booster. A minimum of 1 adult for every 4 children will attend these trips. In case of an emergency in transit, at least one driver will stay with the children and the other drivers in the caravan will seek out appropriate help. If a child arrives late on the day of a field trip, there will be no one available at the school to care for that child.

Health Information

Sick children need to be kept at home so that others don't get sick and so that the child will have a faster recovery. Every child must be kept home when:

- Fever is present
- Upset stomach with nausea
- Vomiting
- Frequent stools
- Eyes show signs of infection
- Other symptoms of illness

If any of these symptoms should appear during the day, parents will be promptly notified. The sick child will be isolated from the other children until someone comes to pick-up that child.

When a child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, the school must be notified so other parents can be notified as well as the Tri-County Health Department. Confidentiality of the child's identity will be kept. Please let us know if your child is diagnosed with strep throat, chicken pox or pink eye. Again confidentiality will be maintained but a note will go out to the other parents about the possible exposure to an illness.

Medication

Only medication prescribed by a physician can be administered by our staff. Medication should be sent in its original container. It must be accompanied by a completed Medication Administration Authorization form. This form must be completed by the prescribing physician. A copy of this form is included in the Admission Packet and is available on our website under our Parents page. All medications brought to school will be stored so that they are not accessible by the children. After medication is administered by a staff member, a note will be put in the child's file including the name of the medication, the dosage given, the time it was given and the staff member involved.

Unused medication will be returned to the child's parents when it is no longer needed or it has expired. If we are unable to return medication, we dispose of it properly and document its disposal.

Discipline

Discipline is handled first by showing the children what we expect them to do and by allowing them to practice. These are known as *Grace and Courtesy* lessons. For example, they might practice how to walk quietly or how to excuse themselves when someone is blocking their way.

A child, who is bothering another child's work, will be asked to do their work near a teacher. If a child is physically abusing another child, the aggressive child will be isolated from the other children for an appropriate period of time.

Child Abuse Reporting

We are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports will be made to both the Colorado Department of Human Services and to our local police department.

Disabled Child Accommodations

Our staff is happy to work with a disabled child if the parents and the child's doctor agree that our school environment would be beneficial.

Severe Weather

In case of severe weather (tornadoes, blizzards, etc.) the children will be kept in a safe part of the school until immediate danger has passed. Then the parents will be called. If time permits, parents will be called to pick-up their child early when severe weather is approaching. We follow Adams County School District 12 for snow-day closings.

Safety

In case of fire, the children and staff will evacuate the building. The staff will check closets, bathrooms, and all parts of the building to be sure that no children are left behind. Once everyone has arrived at our meeting place outside, roll will be taken from the sign-in sheet to make sure that every child is accounted for.

Both fire drills and tornado drills will be practiced on a regular basis to ensure staff and children know what to do. We will let you and your child know at least one day before a drill is to take place.

Birthday Celebrations

Getting one year older is very important to almost every child so we invite you to share it with us. Current sanitary standards from Tri-County Health DO allow us to have a special treat to be brought in from home to share for a celebration. Please check with us about food allergies. Large cupcakes with lots of frosting are NOT a good idea. Small muffins, cookies, rice crispy treats, or sliced fruit are better choices.

Our celebration at school involves not only sharing a treat but also a short developmental talk about how the child has grown while traveling on the planet Earth. As the child walks around a candle that represents the Sun, he carries a globe that represents the Earth. We talk about how the child started out on the planet Earth as a small baby who couldn't do much more than sleep, cry and drink milk. But as he grew, he learned how to roll over, sit up, stand up, walk, talk, feed himself, dress himself, and started coming

to school. We will also talk about what he has learned since coming to school. At the end of the ceremony, the child snuffs out the Sun candle and we sing Happy Birthday. Many parents choose to attend this ceremony and photograph it. The celebration occurs during the second line time.

Please try to let us know at least one day before if your child will be celebrating a birthday. Children whose birthday falls during the summer months can celebrate with us at school by celebrating their "half" birthday.

Parent Volunteers

There are several opportunities for parent involvement in our school. They are listed on your Student/Parent Information form. Other opportunities will sometimes arise and we will let you know of them in our monthly newsletters.

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters will be sent via e-mail during the regular school year. These newsletters will let you know what we are studying that particular month, what special events if any are planned, and give helpful parent information.

Thank You

Thank for taking the time to read this Parent Handbook. We hope you found the information useful. Be sure to sign the Parent Handbook Sign-off form.