

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 1981. 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.

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 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.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due the 7th of each month unless other arrangements have been made with the director. As stated in the payment agreement form, tuition for a month must be paid in full or the child will not be allowed to attend further.

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. The monthly cost is the same every month, there is no deduction or increase because of the length of the month or because of school closures.

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 o'clock 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.

Requirements for Entry

A child should be 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 Registration fee and registration form must be received before a child can be registered for school.

Our Admissions Packet is available on-line under the Parents page on the school website or in printed form at our school. That packet includes:

- Parent Handbook
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Registration Form
- Payment Agreement
- Student/Parent Information Form
- Child Pick-up Policy

- Child's Emergency Card
- Doctor's Health Record
- Health Care Authorization Form
- Permission Forms

These forms must be completed before the first day of school. Please turn in these forms as soon as possible. Note: The child's immunization record will be obtained from the Colorado Immunization Information system.

Itemized fee schedule

Our fee schedule is posted above the kitchen stove. You can request a copy of this fee schedule.

Hours of Operation/School Closure

We offer a morning class from 8:30 to 11:30, an afternoon class from 12:30 to 3:30 or a child can attend all day from 8:30 to 3:30. Before and after school care, allow a child to arrive as early as 8 and to leave as late as 5. Morning and afternoon options can be augmented by one hour by attending lunch time from 11:30 to 12:30. Lunch time attendance can be on a regular or occasional basis. Children can attend three, four or five days a week during the regular school year. We also have a summer program for new and returning students. Currently, this program is offered three days a week, Tuesday through Thursday.

A school calendar is available that details school closures. We do follow Adams 12 Start school district's winter and spring break closure time and take their school holidays including Labor Day, Thanksgiving, New Year's, Martin Luther King Jr., President's Day and Memorial Day. During the summer we take Independence Day off.

School Routine

Both our morning and afternoon classes follow the same general format. The children start out their time on the school playground unless the weather doesn't permit this. We then ensure all students are signed in and go into the school for 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 play active games with a teacher or with toys indoors.

The hour lunch time from 11:30 to 12:30 is made up of a 30 minute time to eat. Children younger than five are invited to rest for 30 minutes and older children are invited to play quietly. If a child does fall asleep during the rest time, that child is allowed to sleep.

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.

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 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.

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. No child will be released to an adult who arrives under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. This is a safety issue.

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.

Pick-up and Sign-Out

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

When your child is picked up, the person picking up your child must write the time and his/her initials in the pick-up column next to the time. This policy includes parents. Thank you.

In order to keep children safe, we ask that the adult picking up the child open the gate, not the child. We never want a child to run out into the driveway. Hold the hand of the child while walking the child to the pick-up vehicle. Please do not allow your child to place outside the gate while you visit with other adults. We want all the children to be safe. Thank you.

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 per the rules and regulations of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDOHS), both the CDOHS 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.

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 and written work. On the last day of a child's school week, their folder is placed for pick-up. At that point, the papers are removed to take home and the folder is returned to be used the following week.

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.

Visitors

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

No Smoking Policy

We believe in protecting children from second-hand smoke so smoking is prohibited on school property. This includes smoking cigarettes, cigars, pipes and other lighted objects that give off smoke.

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.

Official Rules Regulating Day Care/Preschools

This school is regulated by the Colorado Office of Early Childhood, Child Care Division. Official rules and regulations can be obtained at their website: www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/rulesandregulations

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: Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Early Care and Learning, Attention: Complaint Intake, 1575 Sherman Street, 1st Floor, Denver, CO 80203.

Withdrawal From School

On rare occasions, a student may be asked to leave before the school year is out by the school staff. Prior to this notification several observations of the child will be made and several private conversations with the parents expressing concern will take place. If no resolution is made, the parents will be asked to withdraw their child as soon as the staff deems it is necessary.

Usually parents withdraw their child from our school because their financial situation has changed and they are no longer able to pay tuition. Please contact the school if you are having financial problems and we will do our best to work with you so your child can continue to come. A month's notice is appreciated if a child has to withdraw.

Sharing Time

Part of our group time (also known as line time) provides time for the children to bring items or news to share with the other children. Children are allowed to share once a month with any item they would like such as a favorite toy or book. A record is kept to ensure each child has no more than one turn.

Children are also allowed to share once a week an item related to what we are studying for example, if we are studying about dinosaurs or the continent of Africa a child could bring in a dinosaur toy or a stuffed gorilla. Children should not bring jewelry, toys, gum, candy or money to school unless they are sharing them at line time. Such precious items might get lost or broken. They can also be distracting.

Electric Devices

T.V. and videos are not available at this school. The children are supervised by adults at all times. Older children using our classroom computer are limited to 15 minutes during any one work period.

Snack / Lunch

Both in the morning and afternoon snacks are provided. Snacks include fruit, raw vegetables, or crackers and cheese. An alternative snack will be provided for any child whose food allergies prevent him from having the snack prepared for the other children.

Each child who is attending lunch should bring a nutritionally balanced and complete lunch to school that meets the USDA standards.

Tri-County Health will no longer allow food to be prepared with bare hands even if washed with soap and water prior to preparation. Our staff must wear gloves when preparing food. 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. The baking process eliminates germs that might enter the food prior to baking so children can participate without using gloves.

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. Please call the school if you are keeping your child home. We ask that you let us know the type of illness so we can inform other parents and possibly Tri-County Health department. At all times, the identity of the child will be protected.

Every child must be kept home when we feel a child is too ill to attend school in order to maintain the good health of our children within our school, we will not accept children if:

- Elevated temperature over 100.5 within the last 24 hours
- Just began taking an antibiotic for a contagious illness within 24 hours
- More than one episode of vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Frequent stools (diarrhea)

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.

We immediately notify parents or legal guardians when their child is involved in an accident or is injured and requires emergency medical care while at school. All non-emergency or minor accidents and injuries will be treated with first aid and TLC by a trained staff member then the accident or injury is documented and parents are notified upon picking up their child at the end of the day.

Medication

Only medication prescribed by a physician can be administered by our staff. This includes over-the-counter medication. Medication should be sent in its original container. It must be accompanied by a health care plan complete by a doctor. All medications brought to school will be stored so that they are not accessible by the children. A log is kept with the medication to track when it was given, by which staff member, and the dosage given.

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.

Immunization

Colorado law allows for medical exemptions to be signed by a healthcare provider and non-medical exceptions (religious or personal) to be submitted by a parent/guardian. However, an unimmunized child may not attend school when there is a possibility of exposure to an illness that can be provided by a vaccine such as chicken pox.

Our school is part of the Colorado Immunization Information System. This system allows us to check your child's immunization record. We are required by law to let you know when recommended vaccinations are due within fourteen days. You are required to let us know in writing when those additional vaccinations will take place. The law does not allow your child to attend our school if plans for needed vaccinations are not made except as noted above.

On a yearly basis, we are required to report the percentage of children attending who are vaccinated within the recommendations.

Discipline/Guidance

Guidance 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.

We strive to create a positive environment that promotes positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction and overall social and emotional competence. Often times young children learn to communicate their feelings with the help of a teacher modeling how to explain to another child how they are feeling and what they want the other child to do.

Communication with a parent is very important too. We will strive to keep you informed of any social/emotional problems that we observe, how we are addressing those problems and solicit any ideas you might have.

Additional outside assistance such as a mental health consultant or other specialist may be beneficial to a child. Our staff will sometimes recommend seeking help from a specialist. Parental consent is required prior to getting outside help.

Child Abuse Reporting

We are required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports are made by calling the child abuse and neglect hotline 1-844-COKIDS (1-844-264-5437).

Disabled and Developmental Delayed 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. We are also open to work with a child with developmental delays having social,

emotional and behavioral needs. However, we do not have any special training in these areas and would want to work with a mental health consultant.

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 First

Drills and procedures are in place to make sure all children and staff are safe at all times while attending our school. Any child needing additional help because of a disability or functional need will be assisted as needed.

Fire Drills

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

Fire drills are done on a monthly basis to ensure all children and staff are familiar with the evacuation plan.

The file containing the children's emergency cards and children's medication will be carried out by the staff. The emergency cards contain contact information for parents and other authorized individuals. These contact numbers will be used in the unlikely event there was a fire that requires the children to leave the school premises. A staff member carries a cell phone to be used to contact parents for pick-up.

Emergency Off Site Evacuation

In the unlikely event, that a fire or disaster requires children and staff to evacuate the school property, the children will be escorted to the Eastlake post office located one block south of the school.

Tornado Drills

Tornado drills are practiced in the spring. Children evacuate the school building using the kitchen exit. The staff escort the children around the building to the storm cellar. Children and staff go into the cellar. A staff member will carry a cell phone in order to check local weather information and to be used to contact parents if pick-up of the children is needed. The sign-in board, emergency contact file and medication will also go with us to the storm cellar.

Lock down

When there is a threat inside our school building, children and staff will shelter in the office area. The door will be closed and children and staff will remain in place until law enforcement notifies us that the danger is past.

Lock out

When there is a threat outside the school, all exterior doors will be locked. The blinds to all the windows will be closed. The children and staff will be invited to sit on the floor in the front room.

Inclement weather

If the outside temperature is below 30 degrees Fahrenheit or there is on-going precipitation, the children will be kept indoors.

Excessively Hot weather

If the outside temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, the children will be limited to only a few minutes outside.

Sunscreen

Since our outdoor time each morning and afternoon is limited to 10 - 25 minutes and a large portion of our playground is shaded, we do not routinely apply sunscreen to the children.

If your child has special needs in this area, we will be happy to accommodate. Please bring a bottle of sunscreen to be used for your child with your child's first and last name clearly labeled on the bottle. You will need to sign a permission form as well.

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 and are not attending the summer program can celebrate with us at school by celebrating their "half" birthday.

Parent Volunteers

There are several opportunities for parent involvement in our school. As these opportunities arise we will let you know of them in our monthly newsletters.

Newsletters

Monthly newsletters will be posted on our school website. They will also be e-mailed to you. 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.