

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. Parent Handbook

Welcome! We are so happy you are here with us at Montessori School of Aberdeen. Parents are the most important teachers in the lives of their children and are an important part of our school, giving of your time and experiences to share with the children to build this community that is so special. We are honored to be partners with you in the growth and development of your child. We rely on your communication, energy, support, and involvement to ensure a successful experience for your child. Montessori School of Aberdeen can benefit your child best when you understand the roles played by parents, teachers, and children. As we begin this new year we are delighted to share the many wonderful things about Montessori School of Aberdeen and to orient you to our policies, procedures, resources, and events.

Please carefully review the information included in this handbook. It is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the school. It is important that you read it thoroughly.

We do our best to remain in close communication with our families in a number of different ways:

- You may visit our website at www.montessoriberdeen.com for more information about the school.
- You will be invited to join our school on Brightwheel. This is our main communication tool that we use for our students and their families. This app is an easy communication tool for us to share photos, videos, and daily notes about your child. Communication between teachers and parents may also be used for student's absences, early pick-ups, school closures and other notifications deemed urgent or timely.

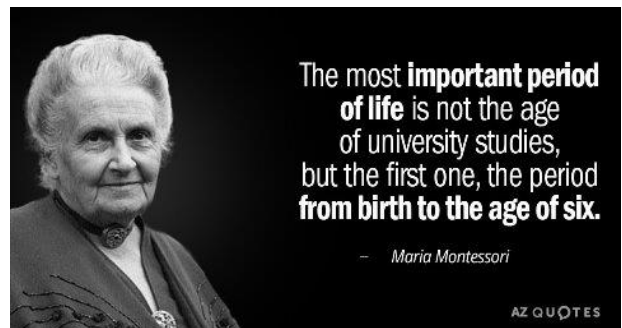
Miss Susan 605-228-6655, Miss Kelli 612-986-0215 and Miss Tiffany 605-237-8826

- Questions about billing can be directed to Susan through Brightwheel, E-mail montessori.aberdeen@gmail.com, or by phone 605-228-6655.

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. was established in 2009. We have 2 different classrooms, at 515 8th Ave NW; Pre-Primary classroom, ages 1 – 3 yr, Primary classroom, ages 3-6 yr. Surrounded by a beautifully prepared Montessori environment, the school provides children with a rich source of educational materials to facilitate individualized learning through the senses.

We look forward to all it can offer us for another wonderful productive year.

Susan Dalager –Director



The Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. is an affiliate member of the American Montessori Society and the International Montessori Council. The South Dakota Department of Education has accredited our school as a certified private school for kindergarten. We are also licensed by the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

I. SCHOOL HISTORY

Susan Dalager started the first Montessori School in Aberdeen in 1985 with the opening of the Montessori Educational Center. The school held full day classes with an after school program. The school hosted Montessori training workshops through the Great Plains Montessori Training Program in Omaha, NE and was a placement site for student teachers in the NSU Early Childhood program. The director moved in the late 80's and returned to Aberdeen in 2009 to establish the Montessori School of Aberdeen at 702 South Harrison Street. The school is now located at 515 8th Ave NW which started in January of 2018 and allows us to offer additional educational and developmental opportunities for the children.

II. The Director

The school director is Susan Dalager. Her credentials include: a B.S. Degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Early Childhood Education from Northern State University. Her Montessori training involved a two year program completed through Mid-American Montessori Teacher Training Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. Upon completion of the program a Pre-primary credential was issued from the American Montessori Society. Susan also holds an Infant/Toddler Montessori teaching certificate from the Center for Guided Montessori Studies. Susan has been involved with Montessori education since 1979. She has had the opportunity to visit and teach in various Montessori schools throughout the United States during her 30+ year career. Susan holds a South Dakota teaching certificate with a Kindergarten and Early Childhood Endorsement. Susan is a member of the American Montessori Society, the International Montessori Council, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

III. OBJECTIVES

We believe Montessori education begins with a deep respect for children as unique individuals and concern for their social and emotional development. Children attending the school will be exposed to a method which will facilitate the growth of inner discipline and later more complex reasoning through the free choice and organized use of didactic material within an atmosphere conducive to these ends. Thus, the goal of Montessori education is to help children achieve their highest potential without pressure or competition, to challenge them at their own pace, and to respond to each child's individual needs.

IV. EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Montessori School of Aberdeen aims to provide high-quality comprehensive education that fosters your child's love of learning and addresses the whole child academically, emotionally, and socially. Our goals are:

- To enter a partnership with parents in the education of their children
- To lead children toward mastery of individually identified intellectual, social, physical, and daily life skills
- To foster in the children deep and persistent curiosity that will lead to lifelong pursuit of knowledge
- To help children develop self-confidence
- To assist each child to develop a habit of order, coordination, concentration, and independence.
- To foster in each child respect of self, others, and the environment.
- To instill in each child a sense of personal responsibility for the world in which we live
- To spark in our children wonder, imagination, and joy

V. Educational Goals for the Pre-primary (Toddler) Program

Specific goals for the Pre-primary (toddler) program are as follows:

- To assist the child in a positive separation from parents in order to facilitate individuation.
- To provide an orderly environment in which toddlers may explore and experience concepts and skills through manipulation.
- To provide a language-rich environment through precise nomenclature, books, nursery rhymes, and music.
- To give the child opportunities for practical life – care of the self and environment – so that the child understands that each person has an important function. This encourages a positive self-concept and confidence.
- To provide a social environment for the fostering of community and respect.
- To create an aesthetic environment through art work and objects from nature that call to the child's love of beauty.

- To encourage a supportive community for parents through education and participation.

VI. OUR CORE VALUES

We believe the pedagogical principles and practices developed by Dr. Maria Montessori fundamentally respond to the developmental characteristics and needs of children. We seek to utilize her educational principles and methodologies in Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc.

- We believe all children deserve to develop in an environment that is nurturing, safe and intelligent.
- We believe parents are the principal teachers in the child's life. The school provides a secondary supportive role to the home. It is a cooperative relationship between home and school which serves the best interest of the child.
- We believe role modeling of our own behavior serves as the most distinct teacher to the child.
- We believe every member of our community has a fundamental right to be treated with respect regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, sexual preference, religion, race or disability.
- We believe intelligence is not rare, but a state of the healthy mind. As such, it can and should be nurtured and encouraged.
- We believe wisdom can be nurtured and cultivated in a positive, affirming and intelligent learning environment.
- We believe development of whole, healthy individuals requires our many dimensions to be nurtured, including the spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional.
- We develop our programs and curriculum of the Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. on the natural needs of human development.
- We believe the first six years of life are critical to the development of one's life.
- We believe children can learn constructive modes of problem-solving and conflict resolution, thereby creating a more peaceful learning and living environment.
- We believe we are intimately interdependent with other life forms on this planet. As educators, it is our responsibility to foster knowledge of, interest in, and responsibility for the natural world we inhabit.

- We believe all forms of expression and communication should be nurtured. Art, music, literature, drama, and other forms are fundamental modes of expression for the human spirit.
- We believe we are a dynamic member of our community. We nurture and promote “outreach” activities that involve the children in community interests.
- We nurture an extended family community within the school whose participants are supported at all levels by the whole community.

VII. PHILOSOPHY

Our school accepts children 1 year to 6 years in our Pre-primary and Primary classrooms. The young child's ability to effortlessly absorb information from his environment is only possible during this window of time. Dr. Montessori observed that during these early months, which she called *sensitive periods*, a child's entire being is molded: his intelligence itself is being formed.

Our specially trained teachers nurture and cultivate each child's curiosity while providing a strong foundation for continued academic success. The Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. provides a warm, vibrant, peaceful, educational environment designed to foster a love of learning and help all children reach their fullest potential at their own unique pace. We strive to educate the whole child and to inspire children to be caring, socially responsible participants in their environment, their community and the world. Our multi-age environment allows the children to learn from one another and to be valued contributors to the classroom community.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to be an active part in their child's education. In addition to monthly newsletters, Brightwheel, active Facebook pages, and a website, we invite parents to observe in the classroom, join us on exploratory field trips, help us organize school events or fundraiser, and connect with each other informally, creating a network that links the classroom to the community, and in turn, to the world.

At the Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., we are committed to creating respectful relationships among guides/teachers, administrative staff, parents, and children. We appreciate and celebrate diversity and recognize how we as a school benefit from the array of cultural backgrounds and traditions that families and staff members bring to our community. We work to provide an inclusive environment and do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, handicap, or sexual orientation.

Our approach to education is based on the philosophy and methods of Maria Montessori, the first Italian female physician who founded the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907.

Dr. Montessori believed the goal of the educational process was to cultivate a child's natural desire to learn. Dr. Montessori observed all children have the same basic needs:

- The need for order – to organize, classify and interpret reality
- The need for independence – the impulse to act personally upon and within reality
- The need for social relationships
- The need to experience reality through imagination

The Guide carefully prepares the classroom environment and directs the activity of the classroom, but it is the child who learns. Dr. Montessori observed that children are motivated through the work itself and that children, like adults, learn best by doing and working with real materials. Order, coordination, concentration, and independence along with determination, and purpose established in early childhood lead to confident, successful learning later in life. At Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. children learn how to observe, think, and evaluate and experience the joy of learning. The Montessori approach is not a tweaking of traditional models of education, rather it is a completely different way of learning and teaching designed to prepare children for success in an increasingly complex world. In fact, Montessori is an approach to life.

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., is an advocate for the child, developing education programs that follow the natural needs and development of the child. We believe each person has the potential to achieve success through an ordered, challenging, nurturing educational environment that includes the whole person – intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and physical. At the center is the child, whose needs are the focus of the learning process. It is the role of the School's staff members not only to observe, but also to know and defend the rights of the child as he/she proceeds through the learning process.

VIII. SCHOOL OVERVIEW

A. Campus and Classroom Space

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. is located at 515 8th Ave NW. This campus houses our pre-primary and primary classrooms.

Our Pre-primary classroom is designed for children ages 1-3. This environment is led by Tiffany.

Our Primary classroom is designed for children ages 3 to 6. This environment is led by the director, Susan and Kelli Malsom. Elizabeth Santos assists in the classroom and provides instruction in Spanish.

Each of the classrooms is thoughtfully arranged and offers an inviting space for activity that is focused and calm. Learning materials are displayed on shelves that are accessible to the children to foster independence as the students go about their daily work. The space allows for children to work independently on a mat or a table, or for group

activity. The classroom is open and spacious to allow the children to lay out strands of beads for counting and ample room for group “line” time. There are well defined spaces for each part of the curriculum, such as Practical Living, Sensorial, Language Arts, Math, Culture and Geography. Each of these areas features shelves or display tables with a variety of inviting materials from which students can choose.

B. CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS

The term “Montessori” implies both philosophy and a method of education philosophy based on the research of Dr. Maria Montessori – an Italian physician and educator. At its heart, the Montessori method emphasizes independence, freedom within limits, and a respect for the child. Classroom spaces are purposefully designed and materials carefully curated in pursuit of an education partnership. The multi-age classroom provides benefits that are readily apparent when visiting the classroom. Younger children in the classroom have an opportunity to observe and imitate the older students as they work. Older students have an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by explaining what they are doing and assisting and mentoring younger children. Each child can learn and develop at his own pace within a classroom that accommodates many levels of ability and complexity.

The head guides (Miss Susan, Miss Kelli, and Miss Tiffany) are referred to as Lead Guides. Our Guides use both concrete teaching materials and a well-defined innovative curriculum tailored to the child, and through each multi-year cycle (Pre-primary Environment 1 yr – 3 yr; Primary Environment 3 yr – 6 yr.) The Montessori Guide is specially trained to observe each child and design lessons based on that child’s natural curiosity and love of learning. The Guide is responsible for preparing the educational environment within each classroom and for presenting lessons in that environment. During the course of a day, the Lead Guide will demonstrate a wide array of concrete sensorial materials and sequential activities through individual instruction. The child soon learns to associate abstract concepts with hands-on experience.

1. Staff Qualifications and Requirements

The head teacher of the 1-3 yr and the 3-6 classroom in the Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., must hold a Montessori teaching certificate or in the process of attaining one (internship). Classroom assistants will work directly under the Lead Guide and be at least 18 years of age. The assistants need to have a love and respect for of children. Any secondary assistant (any staff under the age of 18) must work directly and constantly under the Lead Guide and must be at least 14 years of age.

This secondary child assistant cannot be left alone in the care of the children. All staff must have a cleared background check.

2. Volunteer Requirements

Any and all volunteers for the Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., must meet the same requirements as a staff member.

C. FAMILY COMMITMENT

Parents are a fundamental part of the well-being of our school and of a successful educational experience for their child. As such, we have the expectation that all members of the school community participate and support the school whenever possible.

It is the hope and expectation of Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., that parents make every effort to understand and embrace the objective of the school. To that end, we aim to help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education.

Additionally, we expect parents to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in this Parent Handbook and other school publications, including our regular email and Brightwheel communications.

We have parent volunteers and several committees set up which offer opportunities to support the school throughout the year such as field trips, various programs and concert setups, fundraising events and other special functions.

We are a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation and rely on our parents and alumni families to help ensure the successful future of our school.

IX. ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

A. ADMISSION GUIDELINES FOR PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY

To be considered for enrollment at Montessori School of Aberdeen Inc., Pre-primary Environment, children must be at least 1 year of age and in the Primary Environment, children must be at least 3 years of age and independently use the bathroom. Enrollment preference will be given to families with a firm commitment to Montessori philosophy and the three year commitment. Class is multi-age, and the school will make every reasonable effort to balance each class with respect to age and gender. Montessori School of Aberdeen is open to all children regardless of race, sex, religion or creed, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, handicap or sexual orientation.

B. ADMISSION PROCESS

1. Parent and Student Meeting Once a completed application is received, a meeting will be scheduled with you and your child. This meeting is an informal way for prospective parents and Miss Susan to become acquainted with each other and to share pertinent information. Your child will have the opportunity to explore the Montessori classroom materials with the guidance of Miss Susan.

2. Application Interested families are encouraged to submit a completed application form accompanied by a \$75 non-refundable fee per family.

3. Enrollment If accepted and space is available, the remaining enrollment forms may be given to you at that time or you may be directed to the website for the online forms. (Intake Information, photo, and field trip waiver, sunscreen and insect repellent form, FERPA- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, & medical authorization forms). An Enrollment and Tuition Agreement will then be issued. The child's enrollment will be accepted only for the entire forthcoming year or for the remainder of the school year if the child is accepted and enrolled after the first day of school. Pro-rated tuition allowance will be made only if the student is accepted after the first 2 weeks of school. The signed Enrollment and Tuition Agreement and all waivers and Intake Information, along with the application fee are due back to the school within 7 days to hold your child's spot in the classroom. If your child is accepted but there are no openings, he or she will be placed on a waiting list until an opening exists.

All children are accepted on a six-week trial basis. If either party deems this program is not a good fit for the child, the parties agree they will give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice prior to withdrawing the child from the program.

4. Tuition Assistance and Scholarships If the cost of the tuition is a concern, you are invited to fill out an application for Child Care Assistance for qualified families through the SD Child Care Services. dss.sd.gov/childcare/childcareassistance

Kindergarten scholarships are also available through SD Partners in Education, www.sdpartnersinedu.org . To determine if you qualify, go to www.tads.com to create an account under Family Login and fill out the Financial Aid Assessment. For more information and a SD Partners in Education handbook, please contact Miss Susan.

C. Withdrawal

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., is dedicated to maintaining a safe, harmonious environment for the optimum development of all our students. Parents of children with excessively disruptive or harmful behavior will be asked to seek professional assistance.

1. Enrollment Termination Process

- The Lead Guide will observe the student in the classroom and/or on the playground. The Lead Guide may also consult with other Montessori trained guides to identify any at risk behaviors.
- Staff will document specific incidents of behavior that are worrisome or problematic.
- If needs or problems are significant, the Director of the school, Miss Susan and/or Miss Kelli and Miss Tiffany will meet with parents. Using observations about patterns of behavior, a plan will be created to address the needs of the child. The need for specific professional consultation may be identified. If the need for professional support is requested, parents are expected to respond in a timely manner to acquire those services.
- A written statement of goals and strategies for achieving goals will be created with parents, Montessori School, and consulting professionals if needed. A date for a progress review will be set.
- If support from the family is not forthcoming and/or the problems are of such severity that the climate of the classroom and safety of the other children is in jeopardy, parents will be given a date by which the student will be removed from the classroom and parents will need to obtain alternate care for their child.
- If either party (school or parent/guardian) deems this program is not a good fit for the child, the parties agree they will give a minimum 2 weeks' notice prior to withdrawing the child from the program. Tuition will be pro-rated if yearly tuition was paid. If tuition is paid monthly and past the 1st of the current month, that month will not be refunded. The application fee is non-refundable.

2. Other reasons for withdrawal

- The school operates on the tuition and fees paid for services. If a family's account is 60 days or more past due, the school has the right to withdraw the child from the program until the account has been brought up to current status. Written notification for intent to withdraw a child shall be made at least 2 weeks prior to withdrawal.
- Children who are not fully toilet trained in the Primary Classroom will be withdrawn from the school.

D. PROGRAMS AND TUITION

The tuition charged each year is for the academic year September through May (see school calendar at <http://www.montessoriberdeen.com/>) A \$75 application fee is due

upon enrollment. In the event you withdraw your child from the school mid-year, the application fee is nonrefundable. Please refer to your Enrollment & Tuition Agreement for the current year's rate and additional information.

Once the application fee is paid, there are three options for paying the balance of the tuition: 1) A single lump sum prepayment in August; 2) Three semester payments due by Sept 5th, Dec 5th, and March 5th; or 3) monthly payments due by the 5th of each month.

1. Pre-Primary School Hours

Pre-Primary Program 8:00-11:45

Dismissal 11:45 am – 12:00

Full Day 8:00 am – 2:45 pm

Full Day Dismissal 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

2. Primary School Hours

Primary Program 8:00 am – 11:45 am or 12 - 2:45 pm

Dismissal 11:45 am – 12:00

Full Day 8:00 am – 2:45 pm

Dismissal 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm

The regular Montessori School year schedule is from September 1st through mid-May. Montessori Summer Program is available from June 1st through August 31st.

3. Accounting Policies

Monthly Invoices & Payment – Invoices for tuition installment payments will be emailed to each parent/guardian through Brightwheel and are due on or before the 5th of each month. Payments are made online directly through the Brightwheel Online Payment Program. You will receive the link to make the payment on each invoice. There is a choice of auto payments for your convenience. Any tuition not received by the 5th of each month will incur a **\$5.00 per day late fee charge**.

Overdue Accounts – After 60 days past due, you will be required to withdraw your child unless other arrangements are made with the school. Enrollment in other programs, e.g. summer program, enrichment classes, next academic year and application fees for the following year will not be accepted unless your account is current. If your account is past due, all monies paid will be posted to the outstanding balance. Thereafter, monies paid may be used to secure future enrollment, provided

they are accompanied by a signed re-enrollment contract demonstrating your intent. Accounts that remain unpaid will be referred to collections.

X. SCHOOL POLICIES

A. No School/No Childcare Days

*School is closed on the following days: *(see school calendar for specific dates)*

Labor Day
 Native American Day
 Thanksgiving Break
 December Holiday Closure
 President's Day
 Spring Break
 Easter Friday and Monday
 Memorial Day
 Juneteenth
 4th of July

B. Attendance

Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for your child to receive the full benefit of the Montessori program. Parents should notify the school by 8 am if a child is unable to attend school. Children with a contagious disease must be kept home for the health and safety of the other children. ***Please inform the staff if your child contracts a contagious disease.*** More information can be found under the "Health Policies" section.

Daily attendance is vital for your child's development. If a student must be away for any length of time for reasons other than illness, parents should contact the school in advance to discuss the situation.

C. Arrival and Dismissal – Pre-Primary and Primary

1. Arrival 8:00 – 8:15: When arriving at the school, parents should drive up to the east door, coming from the north entrance in the parking lot. A teacher will greet you and your child at your car.

Children who are dropped off before 8:00 am will be charged for before school care unless other arrangements are made.

2. Dismissal 11:45 – 12:00 & 2:45 – 3:00 pm: Follow the same procedure as arrival. Please pick up your child at the designated time. **If you will be late, please send a message through Brightwheel.**

Children who have not been picked up within the designated time will be charged for after school care.

3. After School Program 3:00 - 5:30 pm: Follow the same procedure as arrival. Please pick up your child at your designated time. **If you will be late, please send a message through Brightwheel.**

Children who have not been picked up by 5:30pm will incur a \$1/minute fee at each occurrence, to be billed at the end of each month.

D. Late Arrival

It is important that children arrive on time, as the beginning of the school day sets the tone for the classroom. Children who are rushed and arrive late may not be in the right frame of mind to begin their activities. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child has the opportunity to begin his/her work at the start of class. Parents should not enter the classroom or disturb teachers once the day has begun. On the rare occasion your child may be late, after you have called the school to inform us, please quietly leave your child in a teacher's care and quietly dismiss yourself.

E. School Closings

Montessori School of Aberdeen, will notify parents through Brightwheel if there is inclement weather or an unforeseen school closure. Please check the site at www.hubcityradio.com or tune in to 94.1 or 97.7 or 103.7 or 107.1 FM or 102.1 FM, or you can sign up for Hub City Text Alerts at www.hubcityradio.com in the event of a school closure. We will send a message ALERT which will be sent through Brightwheel and will text directly to your cell phone

F. Health Policy

1. Immunizations - According to **SDCL 13-28-7.1 (Rev. 2016)** before a child may be admitted to a program, the child must be adequately immunized, or show progress toward achieving adequate immunization levels as recommended by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, certified nurse practitioner, or community health nurse. Exemptions to these requirements are granted for medical or religious objections. Forms for these exemptions are available at <https://doh.sd.gov/documents/Family/Immunize/CertificateOfImmunization.pdf>.

2. Illness – The school prohibits attendance of a child during an illness. Infections can spread very quickly in a school.

CHILDREN MUST NOT BE ADMITTED TO MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF ABERDEEN, INC., WITHIN 24 HOURS OF SICKNESS OR DIARRHEA AND PARENTS/CAREGIVERS SHOULD NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF ANY SUCH CASES IMMEDIATELY.

Any ill child should be kept home. Children should not be brought to school if they:

Have vomited within the last 24 hours

Has had diarrhea in the last 24 hours

Require more rest time not able to be given at school.

Are running a fever of 100.4 or more

Has pinkeye

In addition, if your child has a communicable disease e.g. chicken pox, mumps, strep, chicken pox, hepatitis, pneumonia, measles, rubella, scarlet fever, scabies, pertussis, influenza type b, encephalitis, meningitis, or hand foot and mouth disease, you **MUST** report this to the school office as we are required by SDCL 34-22-12 and ARSD 44:20 to report the diseases to the SD Department of Health.

Parents should be aware of the risk to pregnant mothers of diseases such as Rubella (German Measles).

For the protection of all the children at the school, the Director reserves the right to send a child home whose health (according to Dept. of Health guidelines) poses a threat to other children in the program.

If a child becomes unwell during a session at Montessori School of Aberdeen Inc., their parent/caregiver will be contacted and requested to pick up the child. (Contact information is in each child's file). Sick children will be isolated in the office area and cared for by a staff member.

PLEASE INSURE YOU ARE AVAILABLE TO BE CONTACTED AT ANY TIME OR HAVE MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO BE AVAILABLE AS EMERGENCY CONTACT.

If you have any questions regarding health issues and Health Department Guidelines, please ask.

3. Medications - When you have verification of the fact that your child has a communicable disease, please call the school immediately so that we may contact the other parents immediately. **Please keep your child home until 24 hours after medication has been started. We DO NOT administer medications.**

4. Hand Washing – Children and staff wash their hands before eating, and after using the bathroom and blowing their noses.

5. Handling Bodily Fluids – All staff members are trained in universal cleaning procedures to protect the children and themselves from possible contamination from bodily fluids.

6. Cleaning and Sanitizing – Equipment is regularly cleaned and sanitized to minimize the spread of disease.

G. Child Safety

1. Parent Notifications – Parents or their authorized emergency contacts will be notified immediately of any accidents, injuries, or illnesses. Behavioral incidents will be communicated on a case by case basis depending on the seriousness of the incident. The classroom teacher will determine this and will communicate with you either immediately by phone or through Brightwheel.

2. Child Abuse & Neglect – All schools, child care centers, physicians and others who work with children are required by law to inform the Department of Social Services or local law enforcement of any suspected abuse or neglect of children. By law, a suspicion of child abuse generally means the reporter has “reasonable cause to believe” or “reasonable cause to know or **suspect**” that a child is being maltreated physically, emotionally or mentally.

3. Employee Screening – All employees are subject to criminal screening and fingerprinted as mandated by the State of South Dakota. All volunteers are screened for abuse and child neglect.

4. Building and Emergency Preparation – Fire Safety inspection is done on a yearly basis. The Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., conducts fire and tornado drills regularly throughout the year. We follow safety and emergency plans that are reviewed on an annual or as needed basis.

5. Visitors – We welcome and encourage visits to the school from parents, outside teachers, prospective families, and the larger community. Although we have an open door policy, we encourage you to sign up for an observation/visit with Miss Susan to avoid any conflicts of times/field trips/double observations.

6. Weapons – No weapons of any sort – including play or pretend guns, knives, and similar items, are allowed in our school.

7. Transportation - Transportation is the responsibility of the parents. If you have arranged with another parent to be involved in a carpool, please let us know. If someone other than a regular driver is to transport the children, a written note must be sent to inform us. **CHILDREN WILL NOT BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.** The safety of the children is our first concern.

H. Communication

Most of the communication coming from the school will be disseminated electronically. It is essential we have your email address and that you keep us current if that address changes. ***Please make certain to read the electronic monthly newsletter which you can find on Brightwheel under either newsletters or documents. It will contain important information about your child’s classroom as well as upcoming events and information.***

1. School Calendar The calendar of events for the school year is available on Brightwheel. Changes and updates are communicated to you through our monthly newsletter and the front door message board.

2. Messages - Please send any messages through Brightwheel. They can be designated for all staff to see or for Parent/Administrator only.

3. Emergencies/Calls During Field Trips_- For emergencies or calls during nature walk or field trips, please call **605-228-6655**. **FYI - our school number 725-2269 has calls automatically rolled over to the 228-6655,**

4. Email - In our ongoing efforts to be more conscientious in the use of resources, most communication between the school and home will be made electronically. All regular correspondence from the school will be sent via email or brightwheel. If you are not receiving messages or invoices from Brightwheel, please let us know.

5. Brightwheel Messages – Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. encourages brightwheel messages between parents and teacher to be used for student’s absences, early pick-ups and other notifications deemed urgent or timely.

6. Website – Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., has its own website. General information, the calendar of events, important forms, and other useful Montessori links can be found at our site: www.montessoriaberdeen.com

7. Monthly Newsletter - found on Brightwheel under newsletters or documents.

8. Social Media – Social media can serve as a bridge between the school and the broader Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., community. Montessori School of Aberdeen provides information about school events as well as other items of interest to the community via an active Facebook page. We have two Facebook pages; Montessori Aberdeen and Montessori School of Aberdeen. We encourage you to “Like” us on Facebook and to share our information with your community of family and friends.

9. Changes of Address or Emergency Contact Information – Whenever you change address, cell phone, work phone or emergency notification information, be sure to let us know immediately so that we can change all documentation throughout the school. This includes our Intake Information, billing information, mailing address changes, emergency contacts, and classroom files. The Emergency records need to be up-to-date. This is a SD Social Services requirement and of course, for your child’s safety and protection.

10. Problem Resolution – We believe open communication and supportive relationships between home and school are imperative for the full development of the child. However, we know that we are all human and things don’t always go perfectly to everyone’s satisfaction. Occasionally there might be issues, misunderstandings, conflicts, or communication confusion between parents and the school. If you have

questions or concerns you want to address, please contact your child's Lead Guide. You may schedule a meeting if you wish.

At some point, the Lead Guide may feel a need to meet with you about your child's development. If so, she will arrange a meeting time with you that is convenient for all parties.

I. Clothing and Footwear

1. Clothing and Extra Items – Dress should allow children freedom to engage in a wide range of activities. Please help your child select clothing and shoes that allow freedom of movement. All children have outdoor playtime and/or physical education every day and should dress accordingly. Children should wear clothing that enables them to dress themselves easily. **Pre-primary students** should not wear overalls or anything that would make toilet training more difficult for the child. Elastic waist pants work best for them. Students should be sure to have a full set of extra clothing, including socks and underwear. Please put all items in a Ziploc plastic **bag labeled with the child's name.** A "wet bag" may be useful for those toddlers who are working on toileting.

2. Outside Wear – All students go outside most days. Outerwear should be appropriate to the weather. Appropriate shoes for school are sneakers or other casual shoes that may get dirty. The best sneakers for outdoor activities have laces that must be tied. Clogs, party shoes, or open-toed sandals are not appropriate for safe outside play. When there is snow or mud, boots are required. When it is very cold, snow pants, mittens, and hats are required.

3. Indoor Shoes – All children wear indoor shoes while in the classroom for several reasons. The Montessori method recognized the child's need for quiet and order in the classroom to allow him or her greatest opportunity for concentrated work. The opportunity to take off and put on shoes increases their level of independence and dressing skills. The children use mats for a great deal of floor work and indoor shoes help to maintain the cleanliness of the environment, alleviating mud and dirt being tracked into the classroom with street shoes. We ask you to provide indoor shoes to be kept at school. Please encourage your child to choose simple and comfortable ones. Clogs or backless type shoes tend to fall off frequently and are a distraction. Please mark the child's name on both shoes.

To avoid confusion and prevent loss of clothing, please label all garments with your child's name.

J. Allergic Reaction Policy

Children with life threatening allergies should be known to all staff. An emergency action plan will need to be filled out by the parent/guardian of the allergic child.

K. Nutrition: Lunches and Snacks

Our school is dedicated to installing healthy eating habits with our children. Healthy food not only enriches the body but also the mind. We strive to make healthy choices at school and ask that you do the same at home as well.

Our Goal: We strive to provide our Children with snacks free of preservatives, food colorings and refined sugar. Please help us to reach those goals.

Snacks – A monthly snack calendar will provide names of children who are in charge of bringing snack during the month. Please allow the children to bring healthy snacks to share. Fresh fruits, canned fruit in juice, not a sugar syrup, vegetables, crackers, string cheese, yogurt, cereal & dried fruit mixes, low sugar muffins, pretzels, and other similar items.

As part of Practical Life, the children are also given the opportunity to prepare breads, fruits, and vegetables to share with others throughout the day.

Lunches – Hot lunches are prepared and delivered by Kesslers. The lunches provide items from all the food groups and are a wonderful way to introduce new foods.

More Ideas for Healthy Foods

Breads – bagels, bread sticks, crackers, English Muffins, Pita bread, bread, rice cakes, sandwich bread, tortillas.

Spreads & Condiments – almond butter, apple butter, avocado (mashed), banana (mashed), cashew butter, Brie cheese, low-fat cream cheese, goat Cheese, Honey, Hummus, Jam (spreadable fruit), peanut butter, pesto, pizza or tomato sauce, pumpkin butter

Fillings – carrots (shredded), cheese, (low-fat), hard-boiled egg, nitrite-free hot dogs, lettuce, sliced avocado, sliced cucumber, smoked salmon, sprouts, tofu.

Fruits (fresh & dried) – apples, apricots, Asian pears, avocado, bananas, blueberries, cherries, dates, figs, mango, papaya, pears, prunes, raisins, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, melon, nectarines, orange sections, peaches, pineapple, plums, raspberries, strawberries, tomatoes.

Vegetables – asparagus, beets, bell peppers, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, green beans, lettuce, mushrooms, seaweed (nori, wakame, hijiki), shelling peas, snap peas, edamame, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, yams, zucchini.

Treats – applesauce, baked chips w/ salsa, dried fruit, real fruit bar, real fruit leather, granola, popcorn, pretzels, trail Mix, yogurt with fruit, cheese sticks,.

L. Birthday Parties

We enjoy celebrating your child's birthday with a very simple party and a candle-lighting ceremony. If you wish to do so, kindly send low sugar muffins/cookies – (preferable “healthy” cookies which you have made with your child) and party napkins for the number of children in the class. As an introduction to history, we ask you to make a “timeline of life” for your child to bring to school on their birthday. Please send in a picture for each year of your child's life for the “timeline of life”. You may join us at 10:00 or 2:15 that day for the ceremony. Picture or videos may be taken at that time.

Please send all birthday party invitations through the mail unless you are planning to invite every child in the class. We only ask this to prevent hurt feelings of the children who were not invited. Thank you.

M. Outdoor Play

Our program is designed to include outdoor play in all seasons. Children need fresh air, exercise, and free time on the playground. We maintain a ratio of one adult for every 10 students. Therefore, we are not able to have a staff member stay inside with one or two children who are sent to school with a cold, lingering ear infection, etc. Your child should be well enough to participate fully at school if he/she is in attendance.

In winter, the children play outside as long as the wind chill factor is above 0 degrees; if it is below that temperature, they will stay inside.

Please be sure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play: sturdy, warm and easy to put on. Also, **label....label...label**. Please label everything you send to school. Children often do not recognize their own clothing. Labeling helps your child and us to sort out the myriad items that come into the school each day. Use names, not initials, and mark in an easily read place. Sharpie markers work best.

N. Personal Possessions

Candy and gum may not be brought to school. Toys and jewelry should remain at home since they tend to distract the children and are sometimes taken home by other children or lost. Please assure your child that his toys are for home use and that at school he has special “work” to do.

Please check your child's pockets to see what they contain before school. Check especially for the small “home” items and kindly check when he returns from school for unfamiliar objects. These items may be a part of school equipment. Many of the Montessori materials are imported from the Netherlands and this loss of one small party may mean the material cannot be used. Cost of replacement is very high. Do not think your child is stealing. The children think of this as “my school” and sometimes they feel they can take things from school to home.

Please DO allow the children to bring in very special items such as rocks, shells, caterpillars, etc. that relate to school work or are educational in nature. Please send a note if these items need to be returned right away as we would like to keep them so each child gets a chance to observe and explore at their leisure.

O. Child Custody Issues

Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. is dedicated to the total development of each unique child. We believe all children need a loving, supportive family. When a family separates, it is especially difficult for the children. Their loyalties are torn as they love and need both parents. The school will be supportive, open, and welcoming to both parents. We will remain neutral in conflicts between parents.

School records, conference, meeting information, educational materials and similar items are available to both parents. Parents should try to schedule joint conferences with the teacher, but accommodations can be made for separate conferences. Parents, regardless of the custody arrangement, are entitled to information about the activities of the school and access to certain records. These records include: medical, dental and school records, day care provider's records, and notification of meetings and regarding the child's education. Billing information is made available to any person who has signed the Enrollment & Tuition Agreement.

The school will not limit a parent's access to his/her child unless there is a court order on file in the child's records at the school limiting or specifying particular conditions for a parent's access to the child.

P. Academic Readiness

Academic readiness is not an issue at Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. Your child will not be evaluated as one of the criteria for enrollment. Whether your child knows colors or numbers is irrelevant. Of greater importance, the teacher is concerned about the whole child: his/her ability to communicate and to cooperate, and eagerness to accept and seek out new experiences. DO NOT attempt to push your child into "readiness". Make new experiences available, but do not attempt to force him/her inappropriately. This kind of pressure can produce anxiety and cause some fear.

If your child is new to our school, a special orientation session will take place which allows the teacher an opportunity to get to know your child. It also provides the perfect climate for your child's introduction to Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc.

Q. Special Information from Home

In the event a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the Director as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes which may affect your child's behavior,

security, and general well-being. Common causes of distress include: either or both parents being away from the home; illness of either parent; illness of a sibling; any hospitalization; accident or death in the family; new caretaker, or any new employee, move or death of a pet.

We will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment which may affect your child as well.

R. Special Services

Occasionally a child may evidence the need for special services. These needs may be physical, developmental, or psychological. We have been working with children for a long time. We are trained to spot needs that affect the child's ability to learn and socialize successfully in a classroom setting. We will recommend evaluation and professional consultation. The school does not contact or contract for outside services. It is the decision and responsibility of the parents to make those arrangements.

All children who receive special services from the Aberdeen School District (Dial Screening), Birth to Three, Scottish Rite Speech, or Northeastern Mental Health, are required to sign a Consent for Release of Information form to help us better meet the needs of your child.

S. Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)

Parents have the right to access their children's educational records. Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., has the obligation to inform parents annually of their right to this access.

Parents have a right to:

- Inspect and review the student's educational records.
- Seek amendment to the student's educational records that the parent believes to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in a student's educational records.
- File a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

XI. SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

A. New Student Orientation

The first week of the new school year is devoted to the children transitioning back into the classroom after summer break. Orientation is a crucial component in your child's

successful introduction to the class. Please plan vacations, appointments, etc. around these important days.

B. Parent Education

The school holds an orientation meeting for all parents in August. Additional parent education meetings are held two to three times during the year. Please see the school calendar or newsletters for dates. There are also opportunities for helping with additional school activities and special projects throughout the year.

C. Donations of Time

The school would benefit greatly by each family choosing a way to donate their time and or services in helping the school with special projects. Involvement in the school will give you a better understanding of the Montessori environment and the activities your child is involved in. Our school is a nonprofit corporation supported entirely on tuition, donation, and fundraisers. Donations of time help us keep our tuition costs down and are very much appreciated.

D. Parent Observation

All parents are welcome and encouraged to observe our classrooms. Seeing the children at work is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful: take a look around the room and notice the amount and diversity of activity; the range of ages; the types of materials, the individual and group activity; and the interaction of the children. Focus your attention on the Lead Guide and notice the composure, the teacher as observer, and the respect the teacher and assistants show each child. Focus your attention on your child and notice the succession of activities; the concentration on work; enthusiasm and self-satisfaction in each activity; and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the adults.

If you would like to observe a class, we ask you to make arrangements with Miss Susan in advance to minimize disruption to the classroom and to make sure the students will be in the room when you visit.

During a formal in-class observation, we request you adhere to the following guidelines: sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated; try not to make your presence felt; do not initiate conversation; and do not handle the materials. We recommend these guidelines to minimize interference in the children's peaceful environment. Feel free to make notes of items you would like to discuss during your conference with the classroom teacher.

E. Parent Orientation

At the beginning of each year each classroom holds an informational meeting for new and returning parents. These parent-only evenings are an opportunity to explain the school and classroom plans, policies and procedures for the new year. Parents have an opportunity to get acquainted, meet all classroom staff, and learn about the specifics of their child's classroom. The Lead Guide and teaching assistants will answer questions about field trips, classroom procedures, volunteer opportunities, etc. Dates for the informational meetings can be found on our Brightwheel calendar

F. Conferences

Conferences are scheduled for each child twice a year. These are of one half hour duration. Please respect the time allowed for your appointment. If additional time is needed, a further conference may be scheduled. IF YOU WISH TO TALK TO A TEACHER AT ANYTIME, KINDLY CALL TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT. If a teacher feels she needs information from you or wishes to give you information, you will be contacted for a conference. Conferences are at all times highly confidential conversations between the school and you. No written evaluation of your child will be offered except at the end of the year or upon your request when your child leaves the school. Finally, all information concerning your child is confidential and will not be released to anyone unless we obtain written approval from you prior to the release. See the Family Education Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) in section "S" of School.

H. Social and Fundraising Events

February Rummage Sale

Mother's Tea

Golf Tournament Fundraiser

Harvest Day (pumpkin picking and garden harvesting)

Small Hands Fundraiser (Sept, Oct, Nov)

Stone Soup Feast

Gingerbread Making Gathering

Cultural Night and Potluck Dinner

End of Year Celebration

Dollars for Scholars Kessler's program – Save your Kessler's receipts from Sept 1 through May 31st. We turn them in for a 1% rebate on the receipt totals. Please turn them in to us on a monthly basis.

Box Tops for Education - Look for the pink Box Top on hundreds of participating products. Each is worth .10 for our school! Buy your favorite product, Scan the Box Top or your receipt! Our school gets cash! They all add up fast!



Also, you can help us earn even more cash for our school needs through the **Box Tops for Education Bonus app**. Turn your everyday receipts into cash for our school. 1. Find offers on app. Buy products. 2. Scan your receipt. 3. Watch earnings stack up! And if it's a Kessler's receipt, remember to turn that in after you scan it! That's called Double dipping!

Give Back To Schools - Office Depot/Office Max - Our school will receive 5% back in credit for FREE supplies when you make a purchase of qualifying products and provide our school ID at checkout. School ID is 70240361

I. Field Trips

Field trips and excursions will be planned to enhance the child's learning from time to time. Transportation will be provided by our buses and by volunteer parents. Our Yellow School bus has 3 point harnesses for all 14 children on the bus.. Parents will be required to sign a field trip release form.

XII. The Three Year Cycle

Dr. Montessori observed children and defined four stages of development (0-6, 6-12, 12-18, and 18-24); each stage is approximately 6 years and has its own developmental characteristics and challenges. The Montessori approach was developed in response to the needs and characteristics of the evolving individuals at each plane. In a Montessori environment, children are grouped in mixed ages and abilities in three to six spans: 0-3, 3-6, 6-12 (sometimes 6-9 and 9-12).

The three year cycle is an essential element to Montessori education. Allowing children to stay in the same Montessori environment with the same group of children and teachers through the full three year cycle is critical for teachers and children to build a very strong, stable and consistent community. Children can concentrate on the learning process without worrying about the transition and spending time to adjust to new teachers and new environment. Our teachers are able to make strong connections with children during these several years and give them better support based on their individual needs.

During these three years, children experience different roles, responsibilities and expectations. The first year children are the beginners. They not only get lessons from teachers, but also learn from the older ones by observing and listening to their work. With the help of the older ones, younger children usually learn quickly and enthusiastically. The second year children are more independent and comfortable in the classroom. They learn how to interact with both older ones and younger ones, while developing their knowledge and skills in all different areas. The third year children have the unique opportunity to be role models and community leaders. Their knowledge is reinforced and their skills are strengthened by practicing and sharing with the younger ones.

A mixed age group environment also contributes to the moral development of children as they learn and practice to respect others, be sensitive to their needs, and to collaborate and build a community spirit.

The third year children excel in our classrooms, and experience the full benefit of Montessori education. As an authentic Montessori school, we are committed to offer the best possible Montessori education to each child. During the admission process, all prospective parents are asked to commit to the three year cycle in the Montessori environment in order to reach the optimum results in our classrooms.

XIII. A Guide to the Pre-Primary (Toddler) Classroom

A. Program Description

Maria Montessori described *The Secret of Childhood* as the existence of powers and potentialities within the child that previously were not known or were ignored by her contemporaries. The task of the teacher, or guide, according to Montessori, is to observe the child's pattern of development and to provide what is necessary for the secret to be revealed. Montessori proposed the idea of the absorbent mind, meaning that a child's mind is like a sponge, busily soaking in everything from the environment.

Thus the Pre-Primary Community is a prepared environment for children 1 year to 3 years old. It is designed to assist the child toward independence, social awareness, respect, and the development of motor skills and language. The beginning of the school year brings the parent and child together until the child feels trust to positively separate from the parent. Only then may the child independently attend an environment especially set up for his/her developmental needs.

Dr. Montessori asserted that human beings develop with the greatest intensity during the first three years of life; therefore, the pre-primary (toddler) classroom is prepared to provide nurturance, security and challenge in an orderly environment.

The Pre-primary school day begins with independent work and play in both the indoor and outdoor (when applicable) environments. Pre-primary children choose to work independently, in small groups, or with a teacher who guides as necessary.

The children gather in small or large groups for snack time. They assist in the preparation of the snack and table setting. They serve themselves and clean up after themselves. Grace, courtesy, and table manners are modeled and encouraged by teachers. Parents take turns providing a healthy snack each day for the entire class. A pitcher of fresh water and cups are available to the children throughout the school day.

Music and circle time are an important part of the curriculum. At circle time we engage in musical activities, often using tapes, CDs, and various musical instruments. Circle time activities also include phonemic activities, movement and dance, stories, and songs.

For the last twenty minutes of the day, the class moves outside, weather permitting, for play and outdoor gross motor activities. Those children who stay for lunch return to the classroom to eat a meal brought from home, followed by toileting/diapering and additional independent work.

B. Pre-Primary Curriculum

1. Social Development - Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc. uses a process called "Separation Environment" to slowly acclimate the child to the classroom, teachers and peers. The Montessori Separation Environment, the transition period from home to school, is created to support the parent/child bond and to develop trust in the new class environment and the teachers. This process promotes security and independence while respecting the emotional needs of the child. The Separation Environment is an individual process, and the duration varies for each child and family.

Once the child has successfully gained confidence and trust in the teacher and the environment, they can work on developing social values, independence, cooperation and respect. The classroom environment provides opportunities for conversation with teachers and peers, and fosters appropriate interactions in a group setting. The child is able to hone in on social skills in a nurturing environment that promotes independence.

2. Language Development - Language is covered in the curriculum through linguistic, auditory, and visual development. Linguistic development is promoted by working on listening skills in stories, poems, nursery rhymes, songs, spoken social graces and conversation. Communication skills are developed through constant exposure to language and opportunities for expressive speech. Receptive language promotes auditory development with the ability to recognize sounds, follow directions, and follow a sequence of two different directions. Visual development, including visual memory and discrimination, is assisted by recognizing colors, shapes, sizes and patterns.

3. Physical Development - When toddlers join our classes, they are at individual stages of physical development. Some have mastered walking, climbing stairs, using a crayon and putting on their own shoes. Others walk unsteadily, are tentative on stairs, lack the fine motor skills to effectively use a crayon, and need our assistance with dressing and undressing. Gross motor development occurs naturally when given the appropriate environment at each developmental stage. The use of steps, ramps, balance beam, rakes, wheelbarrows, balls and wagons all provide opportunities for gross motor exercise based on each child's ability. Working with crayons and markers, shovels, tongs, lacing activities, utensils and bead-stringing exercise fine motor development. Self-dressing and self-feeding require well-developed motor skills, and it is during the toddler years that these skills are learned.

As children gain motor skills, they also learn vocabulary related to body awareness and body parts. For example, "I use my feet to kick a ball", "I use my fingers to string beads", and "I exercise to stay strong." Along with these lessons we provide experiences and activities to promote healthy eating. We grow plants, and read books and sing songs about keeping our bodies healthy. In addition, we manage the environment in such a way that we maximize the children's safety while giving them ample opportunities to exercise their developing motor skills.

4. Practical Life – We not only practice the skills, we also play games, read books and sing songs that promote these important concepts. For example, at snack time, the children eat "family style" and learn to ask one another to "Please pass the apples". If a child is using a material and another child desires to have it, the teacher helps the children learn to ask, "May I use that when you are finished?", then respect the other's answer. As toddlers learn to defend their personal space and bodies, teachers give them appropriate language, ("Please do not touch me" or "You may touch me gently"), and assist with appropriate actions and behaviors.

5. Sensorial – Sensorial materials and experiences are aplenty in the Montessori School of Aberdeen's Pre-primary environment. The outdoor environment is accessible several times per day, as weather permits, allowing for endless naturally occurring sensory experiences. Indoor and outdoor experiences such as sand and water play, experimenting with textures, using a variety of art materials, food preparation, and comparing qualities such as smooth, rough and soft give toddlers an opportunity to learn about their world through their tactile sense.

Activities that exercise and strengthen the visual sense include working with materials that teach color recognition, and materials that demonstrate size and shape. Books and phonics materials offer opportunities for children to begin to learn that the letters they see on a page represent sounds and words. In addition, they begin to learn that the numerals they see represent sounds and words. In addition, they begin to learn that the numerals they see represent quantity. Experiences with a variety of fruits,

vegetables, herbs and spices, as well as flavors such as sweet, bitter and salty give the children opportunities to identify food through the use of their sense of taste. The olfactory sense is developed through experiences with a variety of food and flavors, and naturally occurring scents such as flowers, rain and compost. Listening to a variety of music genres, (jazz, classical, etc), tempos and volumes, and exposure to naturally occurring sounds (birds, wind, etc) are methods by which the children develop their auditory sense.

The development of the proprioceptive sense is important as children learn how to move their body safely through their environment. The children's independent access to steps, stools, chairs, climbing equipment, and ride-on toys gives those opportunities to build strength, coordination and balance while gaining an awareness of where their body is in space, and how to maneuver with confidence.

Experiences such as manipulating objects with their hands, while eyes are close, helps them learn to discriminate size, shape, weight, density, etc while exercising the stereognostic around exposure and experiences. Books, songs, materials and field trips offer the children opportunities to personally meet and interact with community helpers. Police officer, firefighters visit us each year, and help the children begin to understand that members of our community work to keep them and their families safe. In addition, we invite our Montessori families to share their cultural and family traditions with us, including the holidays, food, language, costumes, and music that is part of their heritage.

The teachers (guides), model behavior regarding respect for self, others, and the environment. Children quickly absorb the language associated with social graces such as "please", "Thank you", "I am sorry", "excuse me", etc, and as empathy develops they begin to demonstrate the behaviors that coincide with these terms. Role modeling is also used to help children learn appropriate behavior regarding interactions with others. For example, a child who attempts to take a material from a peer may hear a teacher offer appropriate language such as "You may say, 'May I use that please?'" Children learn to defend their bodies and personal space with phrases such as "No, this is my body", or "Please wait until I am finished". A child who often uses "why"? as a means to gain knowledge, is encouraged as a positive characteristic of the child's development, thereby, the child begins to learn that being an inquirer is beneficial and valued.

The importance of respecting the environment is demonstrated in many ways. For example, brooms, mops, cloths, etc are available at all times and the children learn to use them in order to take responsibility for their actions (spills, etc). In addition, we compost, recycle, care for plants and pets and use the language associated with these activities ("Let's put the peels in the compost.") Through cultural studies toddlers

become active members of the classroom community and begin to realize the value of an individual's contribution to a group.

6. Science – The Pre-primary Montessori environment provides real-world opportunities to become aware of the natural world with hands-on experiences with weather, animals and plants. Recycling, composting, and harvesting food from the summer garden demonstrate our relationship to the natural environment. Casual experiments provide opportunities for an introduction to biology, physics, and weather systems. Lessons and activities that include science are introduced simply in the Pre-primary program, then reintroduced with more complexity and abstraction in the following years.

7. Math Readiness – The Pre-primary environment lays a foundation for math with the use of manipulative materials, fingerplay, songs, and language to explore math concepts. In the environment the child will begin to explore spatial relationships such as long/short, big/little, and less/more. Toddlers begin to recognize quantity and its relationship to symbols. There is a growing awareness of one to one correspondence. Lessons and activities that include math are introduced in the Pre-primary program, then reintroduced with more complexity and abstraction in the following years.

8. Instructional Aides – The primary instructional tool in a Montessori pre-primary environment is the teacher. Each classroom has one AMS certified Lead Teacher and one assistant per 12 children. The teacher and assistant model appropriate behavior, respect, language and values to the toddler. The teacher models peaceful interactions, respect for one another and educational use of the materials. Proper nomenclature is used throughout lessons and casual conversation to model language. The teacher models values such as empathy, compassion, and acceptance of individual differences.

While Montessori did not specifically design materials for use by toddlers, there are certain types of materials which are key in a pre-primary environment. The materials move from concrete to increasingly abstract and generally isolate one concept to be mastered at a time. All materials on the shelves are rotated regularly, according to the children's interests and developmental needs. Materials increase in challenge as children become older and more capable. They need to meet the child's needs, which change with each developmental stage. They are kept clean and safe by way of daily cleaning and checking for broken or missing parts. Children are encouraged to carry activities either to tables with sturdy chairs or to mats for use on the floor. Other inside areas include a puzzle shelf and a snack area. Our environment also includes direct access to outside, weather permitting, for additional exploration and activities.

Within the environment, the shelves contain beautiful materials that are specifically chosen and organized according to student interest and developmental levels within each area of the curriculum. The art shelves hold clay work and other elements to explore, design, and experience basic motor skills, (cutting, gluing, painting, using

stickers, etc). The art shelf may include glue, crayons, chalk, and clay. The manipulative shelves hold materials that provide opportunities to explore shapes and textures and to manipulate objects through posting, stringing, stacking, and sorting. Fine motor activities include nesting objects, vertical and horizontal ring posts and hammering, opening and closing containers, bead stringing. The sensorimotor shelf may include geometric shape boxes and puzzles, mystery bag and geometric solids, as well as simple sound-matching materials and a music box. The language shelves contain materials designed to assist children in classifying and identifying objects such as object-to-object and object-to-picture matching, language cards, books, and puzzles. The materials on the language shelf also provide opportunities for music, rhymes, and language acquisition. The practical life shelves hold activities for the care of the classroom as well as activities to practice daily living skills such as spooning and pouring, preparing snack, dressing frames, hand washing table, polishing metal and glass, brooms, dustpans, dusting mitts, flower arranging, and watering cans. The imaginary play shelves hold dress-up clothes, animal models, dolls, etc.

The Montessori Pre-primary environment is a dynamic entity, and the teacher continually prepares an appropriate environment with materials and lessons that capture each child's attention and entices him to learn. The teachers carefully and frequently observe the children and consider their development and interests in order to decide when materials need to be removed, replaces, or extended upon.

XIV. A Guide to the Primary Classroom

A. Principles of the Classroom

The most important time for learning is the period between birth and six year of age. Children are eager to learn from new people and experiences. They absorb all the environment has to offer and it is our responsibility to ensure the world they experience is rich, safe, nurturing, and intelligent. The foundation of self-esteem and all future learning is constructed during these early years and the Primary program is designed to take advantage of this powerful, formative period. The Primary program runs five days a week (Monday through Friday). This offers your child a step toward independence in an environment specially created for the developing young learner. This happy and intelligent setting offers your child an opportunity to develop strong social skills as well as explore language, music, practical life skills, art, math, geography, science, culture and large motor activities.

In the primary classroom, your child will be introduced to many different concepts and will learn both through observing and through direct interaction with our beautifully crafted materials.

B. The Three Year Cycle – Primary

The Montessori primary program is a three year cycle. Children begin at three years of age in this program. We have found children adjust and access the Montessori environment much more successfully when they attend five days a week. Pre-school aged children especially need consistency. They bond socially more readily with the other children. They also tend to progress through the full spectrum of materials in the five day format. Developmentally it is beneficial for children to experience the full three year cycle. The third year of leadership for the child gives him or her immeasurable self-esteem and intellectual confidence.

C. Curriculum

1. Practical Life – Dr. Montessori structured exercises for the classroom to help children satisfy the need for meaningful activity. We refer to these as “exercises of practical life.” They include those daily activities which adults perform to maintain the environment and promote cohesive human relations. The Montessori practical life area is designed to allow the child to practice skills that will lead to greater independence and self-control. This area provides the child with the opportunity to engage in tasks associated with the real world of home, garden, and self-care. This work allows the

child to develop concentration and attention to detail. Fine motor skills are honed, as the child gains a sense of satisfaction that comes from completing a task. They cultivate a deep joy for caring for themselves, others, and their environment through exercises that develop their sense of **order, coordination, concentration, and independence**. There are four distinct groups of practical life exercise:

* **Care of the Person.** Children learn hand washing, fastening buttons, zipping, tying, combing, and other personal hygiene skills. First children have to take care of themselves, and then reach out to the environment. We help guide the children to gradually develop **independence** from their parents.

* **Care of the Environment.** With these exercises, children take responsibility for the space they use and enjoy. The Montessori classroom is kept clean and tidy and the children are, large part, responsible for its maintenance. They delight in washing windows, tables and chairs, sweeping floors, dusting shelves, polishing, and gardening. In addition, each child is responsible for returning his/her materials to the shelf upon completion.

* **Grace and Courtesy.** Through classroom activities and modeling by teacher, children develop the necessary skills for conversation, conflict resolution, greeting, and thanking. By participating in Grace and Courtesy exercises, children learn to positively interact and to problem solve.

* **Concentration, Coordination and Order.** The exercises in practical life are among the first presented. These preliminary exercises include spooning, pouring, using tools, opening and closing bottles, folding and matching. These lessons help the child develop

his/her gross and fine motor skills as well as develop a sense of order and concentration. In addition, there are groups of exercises that involve the analysis and control of movement to facilitate coordination. There are exercises that are essentially designed for this purpose, such as walking on the line and the silence game.

2. Sensorial Exercises – Maria Montessori believed that nothing exists in the intellect that was not first experienced in the senses. The materials in the sensorial area are designed to help children sharpen their senses by isolating particular qualities such as size, shape, composition, color, flavor, smell, pitch, texture and weight. Each of the materials in this area is autodidactic and allows the child to work at their own pace with minimal interruption from the teacher. Children enjoy working with these materials repeatedly and often develop their own variations on the standard lesson.

3. Language – Language is an integral part of the entire Montessori preschool curriculum. Stories, songs, poems along with conversations with adults and peers help children increase their vocabulary and develop oral language skills. Written language is taught through a specific progression of lessons that engage the senses – children learn letters and sounds through seeing, hearing, and touching them – and through immersion in a linguistically rich classroom environment. Children first learn the phonetic sound of each letter. Using inviting, hand-on materials, the children progress by classifying objects based on their sounds and then begin putting these sounds together to create words. Once they have learned to create their own words, reading follows quickly. The children work with increasingly more challenging materials. As they progress with their reading, the focus turns to comprehension and grammar. With the development of language, children develop a greater ability to organize their thoughts and express themselves.

4. Mathematics – The materials in the math area are designed for the development of a concrete understanding of abstract mathematical concepts. The hands on materials in the math area help the child sequentially progresses from basic comparisons of different quantities and their numeric symbols, through addition and subtraction and on to the combination of numbers, multiplication, division and fractions.

5. Science – The objective of science in the Montessori classroom is to develop each child's natural sense of wonder and invite them to find answers to some of their "Why's". Each classroom contains many materials with which to explore various aspects of science.

6. Geography and Cultural Studies – Maria Montessori believed it was important to study what humans have in common to instill in the child a greater sense of belonging to the universe. By examining the similarities and differences of humans around the globe, we build a sense of connection to all human beings. Children in the Montessori classroom begin by looking at the world as a whole. Children are first introduced to the ideas of air, land, water, and continents. They then begin the study of local regions,

cultures, and geography of the United States and all the continents. Colorful puzzles provide extensive hands-on exploration world geography. Boxes containing a variety of items from each continent give the children a concrete link to peoples in other lands. Students at Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., come from a variety of rich cultural backgrounds. This allows us a unique way to introduce students to other cultures and customs and to study countries in a variety of different ways.

7. Special Offerings – Students also have experience with art, music, languages, and physical movement as part of the Primary program. Regular experience with art, music, languages, and physical movement is offered to all children in both large and small groups.

8. Enrichment Activities – Montessori School of Aberdeen, Inc., incorporates Spanish into the classroom on a daily basis with Miss Elizabeth. We participate in the Northern State University’s STEM Integration (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) program. The school offers Chinese lessons from the Confucius Institute. The Kindergarten children also participate in horseback riding lessons and gymnastics classes.

D. Kindergarten

The third year, or Montessori kindergarten year, is when all the learning that has taken place in the previous two years reaches fruition and a child’s knowledge begins to fall into place. Your child will be challenged to reach his/her potential by his/her Montessori teacher who knows your child incredibly well and so can provide precisely what is needed next. Children build upon what they have learned, experience rapid academic and social growth and their skill level dramatically increases when they are given the opportunity to consolidate their knowledge within the Montessori classroom. Third year students are ready to explode into more complex learning and discovery and they delve into a wealth of new and interesting materials.

They are guided to take on more and more complex work, begin to learn time management skills and have an increased set of expectations and privileges in the classroom. These older children also reinforce their academic skills by helping another child, a well-documented way to consolidate knowledge.

Your child has been unconsciously looking forward to being one of the “big kids” in the classroom so when he/she is put into a school where the kindergartners are looked down upon as being in the “baby class” his/her cycle of maturing is interrupted. It is especially unfortunate for a child who is a younger sibling at home to miss this opportunity to shine. This year of leadership gives a child immeasurable self-esteem and intellectual confidence.

A key advantage of staying at our school is that your child's teacher already knows your child very well so no time is lost at the beginning of the year trying to assess him/her. Be sure to speak to your child's teacher about kindergarten during conferences. The gift of this third year can never be taken away and it sets up a child for future academic and social success.

As you plan for your child's future schooling we encourage you to view a [video from American Montessori Society](https://vimeo.com/109029560) - <https://vimeo.com/109029560> . We hope this video will provide more information about the benefits of having your child stay in a Montessori classroom for his or her pivotal kindergarten year.

E. Extended Day

The extended day program is available to all children who are enrolled in the school. This program is a natural extension of the student's morning session. It allows children to continue the exploration began in the morning. The children work at their individual pace. This extra time also allows the Kindergarten children to progress toward more advanced materials. This is not a "drop-in" child care option. Admission to the Extended Day program is based on the child's development, not on chronological age.

Instead of their school day ending at noon with the other children, Extended Day students continue to work with teachers until 2:45 pm. During this time, the children build upon the activities of the morning and undertake projects and field trips that are typically more challenging.

Extended Day students stay in the same room with the same teacher and children and take on the leadership role in the classroom community. This continuity is developmentally appropriate and beneficial to the child's sense of security and well-being.

Extended Day, like all Montessori programs, emphasizes active rather than passive learning. Children learn by actively participating in their environment, mastering many skills, and experiencing explosive learning during this time. Like other Primary students, Extended Day students participate in music, language and cultural study, outdoor time, and other enrichment activities.

F. Summer Program- Pre-Primary & Primary

Our Montessori Summer Pre-Primary and Primary Program is available to currently enrolled students 1 year through six years of age. Enrollment information is distributed in March. You are encouraged to reserve a place for your child early in the spring because space is limited.

G. Typical Daily Schedule

Morning Program

8:00-8:15 - Arrival (Put coats away and sanitize hands)

8:15-8:30 – Line (Welcome song, job chart, calendar, new activities demonstrated, children share news, songs, books are read)

8:30-10:15 – Individual work choice time. The children are engaged in a wide variety of activities working individually, in small groups, or the whole group together. The teacher meets with individual or small groups of children throughout the morning. Children also participate in music time and snack.

10:15-10:45– Outdoor Play

10:45-11:00– Story/Circle Time

11:00-11:15- Dismissal

Extended Day & Kindergarten

11:15-11:45 – Lunch time

11:45-12:00 – Clean up from lunch, Library time (look at books, chapter book listening, or reading)

Afternoon Program

11:45 – 12:00 – Arrival

12:00-12:10- Line (Welcome song, job chart, calendar, new activities demonstrated, children share news, songs, books are read)

12:10-2:30 – Work Time, introduce projects, extensions of materials, use of planner/schedules.

2:30-2:45 – Outside play

2:45-3:00 – Dismissal

- *This is a tentative schedule – times may vary slightly. Use of bathroom, hand washing, and sanitizing as needed.*

XV. Absolute Ground Rules

The school operates on the assumption that everyone in the school will take good care of every person. To this end, these basic behaviors are forbidden:

- **No child or adult will hurt another in any way.**
- **No child or adult may disturb the work of another.**

The purpose of the ground rules is to aid the development of self-respect and respect for others. The child who is not able to abide by the ground rules will be isolated from the activity to watch the other children who are in the room abiding by the ground rules. When the child feels he can participate and is ready to use ground rules, he may rejoin the class. No physical punishment is used. If the removal time does not work and the behavior continues to be detrimental to the class, there is a clear method of procedure, which is as follows:

1. The parents will be called for a special conference with the teacher/Director.

2. The conference will serve the purpose of exchanging ideas to help the child. If there is a serious question of whether the child can function happily in this school, the school may set a limited “probationary” period of one to four weeks to try to work out the problems.
3. At the end of the probationary period, the parents and the Director will then hold a personal conference to make the decision as to what further action should be taken to best meet the needs of the child.

XVI. Positive Approaches to Discipline

Montessori School of Aberdeen Inc., grounds its entire program in the significant relationship between adult and child. A positive, supportive and loving bond promotes the child’s self-esteem and a sense of security. The role model provided by the adult teaches children positive problem-solving techniques and courtesy. Children are continuously taught how to solve problems, deal with frustration, and express feelings in a manner that is growth-producing and positive. Some examples of positive methods of discipline include:

- Redirection/distracting the child from the unacceptable activity to a constructive one
- Planning ahead to prevent problems
- Encouraging, teaching, and modeling appropriate behavior
- Setting consistent clear rules
- Talking to the child about the feelings he/she is having
- Offering alternative solutions to the problem
- Involving children in solving the problem
- Ensuring a relationship between the behavior and the discipline method
- Tailoring the method of discipline to the individual child
- Removing the child from the source of conflict

Students who are disruptive or hurtful to others will be asked to reflect on their choices. Parents of children with excessively disruptive or harmful behavior will be asked to seek professional assistance. Parents may be required to remove their child from the class if his/her behavior significantly disrupts the harmony of the group. (See withdrawal and enrollment termination).

XVII. Resources

Resource Books

- Positive Discipline for Preschoolers – Nelsen
- How To Talk So Little Kids Will Listen – Joanna Faber & Julie King
- How to Talk so Kids Will Listen – Faber/Mazlish
- Parent Talk – Chick Moorman
- Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius – Lillard
- Touch Points: Your Child’s Emotional and Behavioral Development – Brazelton
- Montessori: A Modern Approach – Lillard
- The Absorbent Mind – Montessori

- The Secret of Childhood – Montessori
- Simplicity Parenting - Kim John Payne, M. ED. with Lisa M. Ross
- How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way - Tim Seldin
- Diaper Free Before 3 - Jill M. Lekovic, M.D.

Resources Online

www.amiusa.org

www.michaelolaf.net

www.montessori-namta.org

www.mmsoc.org

www.montessoriservices.com

www.amshq.org