



MONTESSORI CASA  
INTERNATIONAL

PARENT HANDBOOK

144 Rampart Way

Denver, CO. 80230

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Montessori Casa International (MCI) Preschool. We are proud to bring high quality Montessori education and care to your family.

Parents are an integral part of a successful preschool program and it is through parental involvement that we are better able to meet the needs of the children. This handbook is designed to answer your questions concerning the school and its programs. Please keep it handy for reference. If you have further questions or need clarification, please ask, as ongoing communication between parents and staff is vital for an excellent school experience.

Regular Office Hours: 8am to 4pm

Phone Number: 720.532.0391

Website: [www.mcidenver.edu](http://www.mcidenver.edu)

## **I. SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

### **a. Mission Statement and Vision**

Our mission is in the words of Dr. Maria Montessori “to educate the human potential”. We strive to cultivate each child's innate desire to learn and to foster his/her independence, natural curiosity and love of knowledge.

Dr. Montessori saw that children held within them something wonderful, something so special that it could be the key to changing the world. She saw that they were inherently good and that, if allowed to develop freely, they felt connected to everything and were naturally caring to each other and the world around them. The more that she worked with the children, the more convinced she was that they had precise inner guides and that the work of adults was to help them to be all that they could be. She felt that it was the spiritual nature of children that had been forgotten and denied and that children could therefore show adults the way to return to a more meaningful, holistic way of living.

Montessori saw that children underwent extraordinary transformations in overall happiness, self-confidence and self-discipline when they were allowed to follow their innate needs. She saw that the work of a child,

therefore, was fundamentally different to that of the adult: that the child worked for the joy of the process rather than for the end result, that the child had a need to repeat activities over and over until an inner need was fulfilled, and that the child was excited and energized through work, rather than burdened and fatigued by it. She felt that children only stopped loving learning when they were forced to go against their natural impulses.

Montessori schools believe that children are at their happiest when they are busily involved in processes. Children are natural learners who, if left to follow their instincts, will want to constantly explore the world. All too often what stops children enjoying this natural curiosity are external demands that don't fit with their needs. The only results young children are interested in are the ones that end up making them feel good about themselves and their abilities. When they learn, instead, that there are unacceptable results that make them feel bad about themselves they start to fear the processes. And that fear can cut them off from the joy of learning forever.

Montessori schools therefore believe that each child is an individual and should be encouraged to work at the pace that is right for him or her. There are no grades or tests. Children are never in competition with each other.

In MCI we will continue to fight to preserve the rights of each child to be protected from undue pressure.

**b. Non-Discrimination Policy**

MCI is a non-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization. It does not on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers, selection of vendors, and provision of services.

We are committed to the active pursuit of an equal opportunities policy which addresses the need and right of everyone in the school to be treated with respect and dignity, in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experiences is valued.

Our teachers speak English, Spanish and Chinese. In case of a language other than these, the director will seek an interpreter to facilitate.

**b. Guidance**

We believe in primary caregiving and continuity of care practices. Our teachers are trained, knowledgeable and experienced. Adult child ratios are well maintained, and we have no job roster or rotation. We believe in

putting the individual needs of each child first. We strive hard to maintain staff continuity and each child stays with the same primary caregiver in the same peer group for at least two years. This helps to build trust and establish an environment in which meaningful and lasting relationships can develop between the teachers and the children as well as the teachers and the families. Primary caregiving also allows for quicker, smoother and more efficient communication between the teacher and the parents. This enables prompt and appropriate responses to a child's needs resulting in better experiences and developmental outcomes for the child.

At MCI we believe that every child has the right to an education and that every child has the right to be safe. Our guidance policy is based on the principles of respect for each child and respect for the rights of all members of the classroom. Appropriate use of non-violent communication is expected, and students are taught that there is zero tolerance for violence or bullying. A significant portion of the MCI curricula involves the development of personal responsibility for actions and a respect for others as members of a common and shared environment.

MCI has set ground rules that are positive and that place the responsibility on the participants of the program to:

Take care of themselves

Take care of others

Take care of the environment

If a child is disruptive or endangers others, staff immediately intervene in as positive a manner as possible.

If a child has trouble settling into the class on any day, the child is redirected to an activity by the teacher.

If the child is still unable to settle down, the teacher will intervene and may have the child remain in close proximity until the child is able to calm down.

When an incident occurs, the teacher or staff person involved will submit a summary of the incident on an Incident Report form.

If behavior becomes extreme, the teacher will schedule a meeting with the parents and, depending on the circumstances, with the director while the incident is still fresh in the child's mind. Staff, parents, and child will



work together to modify behavior. If no improvement is seen, the child may be withdrawn from the program.

### **When More is Needed**

Occasionally a child's behavior is excessively disruptive or harmful to individual children or the class. This could include but is not limited to the following:

- Overly aggressive verbal or physical behavior
- Repeated physical assaults to children and/or teachers
- Constant overactivity, undirected toward any specific activity
- Inability to focus on any activity or encounter during the day
- Inability to follow safety rules
- Uncontrolled emotional state when spoken to
- Destructive to the room and the materials
- Inability to separate from the parents after one month in school

If the teacher and director concur that they need additional support and expertise to best meet a child's needs, some or all of the following steps will be required of the family:

- *Additional parent/teacher conferences* will be held. The purpose of the conference is to clearly define the problem, re-examine possible causes,

brainstorm any changes the staff and/or family can make and reinforce consistency between home and school.

- *Community Resources*- Professional support may be sought. The director facilitates the referral process, working with parents, staff, and specialists.
- *Schedule Adjustment*- the director and teachers may determine that an adjusted schedule (for example, shortened hours or different arrival time) is in the best interest of the child. Families may be requested to come to the school to speak directly to their child about expectations for behavior at school or may be asked to take their child home for the remainder of the day. Typically, these are interim measures until there is a resolution of the issues.
- *Withdrawal from the program*-If after a reasonable time, these adjustments are unsuccessful at remedying a child's behavioral issues, then, in our sole discretion, we may withdraw the child from the program.

Notwithstanding the above procedures, we reserve the right to promptly withdraw any child who endangers the safety and wellbeing of other students and staff. If a child is withdrawn from the program, there is no guarantee that the child may be readmitted on a later date.

We appreciate your cooperation and support of these disciplinary procedures, which are intended to ensure the safety and well-being of all children and staff.

### **Biting Policy**

One of the most upsetting yet normal behaviors of early childhood is biting. Infants may bite because their gums hurt, and to bite down hard on something gives relief. With toddlers and young preschoolers, social skills are still limited. It is difficult for young children to distinguish between what is loving and what hurts. When an older child bites, it is usually a means of expressing emotions. Young children do not have a social conscience as we know it. They may fully understand that when they bite, someone cries; but they have not yet connected all of the social consequences.

- Parents will be notified if their child has been bitten and of the procedure's teachers have taken. The name of the child who did the biting will not be included when informing the parent of the incident. If the bite has broken the skin, it will be washed with soap and water. Both parents will be notified immediately and requested to call their child's physician for further instructions.

- If biting becomes an ongoing behavior, the director and the child's teachers will talk with parents and together they will carefully analyze the circumstances. Anecdotal information noting when the incident happened, where it happened, what precipitated the bite, who was involved, and the times of day the biting occurs will be recorded. A teacher will be assigned to stay in close proximity to the child to interrupt the biting behavior before it happens and to provide needed support. Reasonable action will be taken to modify the environment, routines or interactions within the group, to help diminish the biting. If further action is needed, please consult the "When more is needed" section of the guidance policy.

We ask for parents to work cooperatively and closely with the teachers so that peaceful behavior becomes an expectation both at home and at school.

### **c. Resources**

MCI provides a list of materials and resources for parents seeking advice and guidance on health care services, nutrition, medical and dental resources, physical fitness, etc. within the community. Please contact the Director.

#### **d. Program Description and Daily Schedule: Primary**

MCI is committed to creating a community where the highest ideals of the Montessori philosophy are implemented. For the preschool aged child, we foster the process of self-creation by providing an environment in which the child can develop independently at his or her own pace while still gaining those social, physical, intellectual and emotional skills needed to function at best in society. It is composed of all of the instructive materials developed by Maria Montessori with additional supplemental materials with music, art and language components. The MCI primary program involves a series of sub sequential, developmental, manipulative and sensorial activities that are designed to ultimately bridge the gap between concrete and abstract learning. The materials contain within them a control of error so the child can self-correct without adult intervention. The children learn through doing, experiencing the joy of individual discovery and mastery on their own terms, at their own speed.

#### **Mandarin Integrated Curriculum**

We will be working at simultaneously laying down the patterns of a secondary language to establish bilingualism. As a character and tonal based language, Chinese develops both sides of the brain as opposed to English. As a result, children will have an easy time with language acquisition – be it

Spanish or Arabic throughout their lives.

In our school the emphasis is on environmental acquisition and a seamless integration with English. This begins in the Pre-Primary classroom. We are developing verbal as well as writing and reading skills simultaneously.

Learning becomes fun and effortless as children are shown brush strokes and how the characters come together and later finding hidden meanings in the characters.

During the entire duration of the school day, there is a native Mandarin teacher in both Primary and Pre-Primary classrooms who speaks to the children only in Mandarin.

### **Practical Life**

On first entering the Montessori school children are given the opportunity to develop important life skills, which will allow them greater freedom in the classroom. They learn to manage their own clothes using dressing frames to practice buttons, zips and bows. They are taught how to use real cutting implements such as scissors and graters and knives as well as how to handle glass plates and cups. This is all done under the close supervision of their teachers. They are also shown how to care for their classroom, using child-sized brushes and dusters. Developing practical skills - like pouring drinks from a jug and laying tables - and social skills with friends and teachers, enable them to feel capable, self-reliant members of the community.

## **Sensorial**

First learning is through the senses, so Montessori schools use a range of well thought out exercises to help children sort, match and compare objects by shape, size, touch, taste and sound. These early sensorial impressions boost children's powers of observation and discrimination, broaden their vocabulary and contribute to their later understanding of formal educational concepts.

## **Language and Literacy**

Montessori's language materials are based on a carefully structured phonic approach to writing and reading. Recognized for their excellence, they are used widely in many non-Montessori schools and settings where special help is required. First, children learn sensorially by tracing sandpaper letters with their fingers while they are told the sounds. Soon they are writing simple words with moveable letters, matching words with objects and reading their first stories in phonic readers. When asked how they learned to read and write Montessori children will often answer, "I did it myself."

## **Mathematics**

Essentially mathematics is about understanding relationships in the environment and being able to express them in mathematical terms. Montessori materials, like the number rods, golden beads and spindle boxes, are simple and interesting and provide step-by-step learning. They are also self-correcting, which means that children can see at a glance if they have made a mistake and can put it right without a teacher's help. This enables them to progress at their own rate and understand each stage thoroughly before they move on to the next stage.

## **Cultural**

In the Montessori classroom children use globes, puzzle maps and flags to underpin activities, which build their understanding of other countries, cultures and people. Children are also taught to match, classify and name the elements and species of the natural world using picture and name cards. Classroom plant growing and caring for pets help to form a bridge between the child's knowledge of the immediate environment and the wider world.



### **Our goals for the child area:**

- To develop a positive attitude toward self, other and the environment.
- To develop a high sense of self-esteem
- To develop a habit of concentration for lifelong study skills
- To develop and foster curiosity
- To acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.
- To foster inner discipline and sense of order
- To develop habits of initiative and persistence
- To develop socially acceptable behavior-To develop the child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectation.

### **Sample Daily Schedule**

7:45am – 8am: Carpool – arrival at school

8:00am – 11:00am: Montessori work cycle

11:00am – 11:45am: Outdoor play

11:45am – 12:30pm: Lunch

12:30pm – 1pm: Rest time

1pm – 3:30pm: Montessori work cycle

3:30pm – 4pm: Outdoor play and dismissal

It is very important that you drop your child off on time. The morning work cycle begins promptly at 8am and coming in late means disturbing the entire class. Ki

#### **e. Program Description and Daily Schedule: Pre-Primary**

The Pre-Primary Program at MCI is a home-like environment in which children ages 15 months to 3 years explore their independence and develop self-esteem and social skills. Montessori indicates in *The Secret of Childhood* that it is during this period that the child's sensitive periods for movement, independence, order, small detail and language unfold, and that it is the adults' duty to support them. In the classroom this translates to providing the children with:

- "I can do it" experiences to build their self-esteem
- Endless opportunities to walk, run, push, pull and carry.
- Time to experience and explore materials and textures.

- Opportunities to learn the names of and describe the objects being explored through books, songs, games and outings
- Practice social interactions
- Adaptation.

### **Transition to Pre-Primary**

We have a very gentle process of transitioning a child into the preprimary classroom. It begins with a letter from the lead teacher welcoming the family and scheduling the initial interview. During the interview, she observes and evaluates the child and speaks to the parents about herself and her experiences. She asks parents about their expectations and gets to know the family. She then explains how the adaptation process works and why it is important to treat it delicately. It takes from 3-5 days for a child to be able to stay the full day and this is totally dependent on the child. Some children need more presence of parents/caregivers and some less. We are sensitive to the child's needs as s/he transitions to the school.

### **Diapering**

Parents are often curious about the standing diaper-change they observe in Montessori classrooms. Allowing children to stand during a diaper change engages them as active participants in caring for their bodies

and sends the message that taking care of our bodies is not a passive act. As soon as children can support their own weight on their legs, they can begin to participate in standing diaper-changes.

### **Toilet Training**

We wait to receive readiness cues from the child to begin toilet training. At that time, we will meet with the parents and go over the plan so that it can be reinforced at home.

### **Sample Daily Schedule**

7:45 – 8am: **Arrival time.** Parents are asked to help their child get ready to enter the classroom by taking their extra clothes off and putting on their smock and slippers followed by a quick and sweet goodbye at the door. A teacher would be happy to help with the transition and preparation.

8:00- 10:30am - **Work Period** The kids spend the full time working with Montessori materials. The teachers encourage the children to spend this time working independently but are available to work with each of the children individually if they need it.

10:30am – 11:00am – **Outdoor Activities** This time includes gross motor activities, gardening, appreciating nature and oxygenating their brain.

11:00-11:30 am - **Lunch preparation and lunch.** Setting the table, hand washing, food preparations are some of the activities involved.

11:30pm - 11:45- **Cleaning and personal care activities.** Mopping, wiping tables, dressing and undressing and wiping their face to be ready to go home and take a much-needed nap.

### **Pre-Primary to Primary Transitions**

**A child is considered for a Primary Montessori classroom when he/she shows readiness in the following areas:**

1. The child has the ability to dress/undress self.
2. The child uses the toilet without adult intervention (of course, this is subject to an individual basis, and we are aware that accidents are common upon transition).
3. The child is capable of verbalizing wants/needs.
4. The child no longer arranges the environment to fit his/her internal sense of order.
5. The child is capable of being part of a group at "circle time" and is able to maintain some amount of focus for this duration.
6. The child stays at the table for snack/lunch until he/she is finished eating; the child is beginning to show table manners and skill with utensils.
7. The child spends more time working while seated or standing than engaging in activities where he/she is running or walking.
8. The child's movements begin to show refinement.
9. The child is able to inhibit aggressive impulses and can accept help with language/social skills when a conflict arises.
10. The child has resolved separation issues.
11. The child is capable of completing a work cycle.

Once the Pre-Primary teacher determines that a child is ready for the transition to the Primary classroom, she informs the Director. The transition is a slow and gentle process which involves the child visiting the Primary

classroom with its teacher; the Primary teacher visiting the Pre Primary classroom and making contact with the child; a meeting with the parents to explain the process and then the slow transition into the new classroom with visits that gradually get longer until the child is ready to spend the entire duration.

## **II. CALENDARS AND SCHEDULES**

*Long Range General Calendar/Special Events/School Closures/Parent Education*

You will receive a calendar that reflects school closures for major holidays, staff development in-service days and parent teacher conferences.

Seasonal celebrations and major parent education events are also listed.

While major events will be included on the calendar, other events may be added through the year. We recognize many families rely on the school for quality early childhood Montessori education but also for childcare while working, thus we try to keep the days closed to a minimum.

*Monthly Calendars and Reminders*

A monthly calendar is distributed at the beginning of each month. This calendar will include the snack menu with family assignments, new events

and activity updates. The teacher's letter sent weekly will give you classroom details. To save trees each family will be e-mailed a copy.

### **III. PARENT INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **a. Volunteering (dependent on COVID safety protocols)**

Family involvement in the school is crucial to both the effective running of the program and, of course, provides you with a chance to spend time with your child and learn more about MCI. An average family volunteer commitment is between 2 -4 hours per year and can be accomplished through teacher coordinated activities or all-school volunteer activities. Some people volunteer much more, and we are glad to have their help.

Your child's classroom is enriched by your assistance. Parents are needed to help make holiday and cultural events happen. They assist by taking pictures, helping with food, creating holiday projects, etc. Parents can also volunteer time by sewing special projects such as tablecloths and napkins, or by helping to make materials like play dough. We also welcome you to volunteer your time by sharing your special talents, travels, skills, hobbies and cultural traditions with the students. Please

Speak with the lead guide for more information on these volunteer opportunities.

**b. Observing and Visiting the Classroom (dependent on COVID safety protocols)**

Observation is an excellent way to discover what your child is interested in and to work with the staff to help him/her address any difficulties.

*Observation Guidelines*

We welcome you to observe through the windows into the classroom and/or visit the classroom. Some guidelines include:

- Use of cell phones is prohibited
- Please be unobtrusive – enter the classroom with quiet movement and voice
- Please avoid extensive conversation with any of the children
- Please discuss your notes and observations of your child with his/her teacher at a separate/future date

**c. Parent/Teacher Conferences**

MCI wishes to maintain excellent communication between home and school as we believe that it enhances a student's education.



Conferences are important times for parents and teachers to touch base about the progress of students and to establish plans for the following term. Parent/teacher conference days are listed on the school calendar- one in October and the other in April.

Teachers will meet with parents at times other than regularly schedule conferences. If a teacher is unavailable to meet with a parent who initiates an impromptu conference, the teacher will work to schedule another mutually convenient conference time with the parent. Parents are kindly requested to respect the need for our teachers to be focus on students when conducting a class. If parents desire to meet with a teacher who is unavailable, please leave a message for the teacher in the teacher's voice mailbox or contact the teacher via e-mail.

When parents have concerns, they are expected to speak directly with the teacher most directly involved with the concern. Constructive feedback is welcomed, and teachers will make an effort to address the concern in a manner that works for both the parent and the school. The school expects that its staff will handle concerns and comments with professionalism and in turn protects them from undue harassment. It is also expected that complaints will not be vented to office staff, other parents, or anyone else not directly involved with the matter.

Harm can be done to a child, a class, a teacher or the school's reputation by the perpetuation of half-truths or unfounded allegations. For this reason, parents are urged to address concerns regarding a teacher or the school by doing the following:

**Listen** to what your child has to say, but remember it is only one side of the story.

**Discuss** the situation honestly and directly with the teacher and the child together whenever possible.

**Confer** with the appropriate division head when the situation involved more extensive decision-making, or you are not satisfied with the resolution between the teacher and the parent.

There may be an occasion when the parent does not agree with an action taken by the school on behalf of the child. If after discussing the situation with the teacher involved and the appropriate division head, the Executive Director is available to discuss your concern with you.

#### **d. Quality Improvement Plan**

We are always working to improve our program. If you would like to see our Quality Improvement Plan, please ask the school office.

## **IV. TRADITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS**

### ***In – Class Daily Activities***

#### **Birthday – Celebration of Life**

Each person at MCI has a celebration of life, which is either celebrated on their birthday or the closest day that relatives can attend. The families are asked to make a story board with pictures and captions representing important times organized sequentially from birth to the current day. Children will be invited to tell the story of their life if age appropriate. Children bring snack on their celebration day. Please encourage your child to help choose the pictures for the story board and invite relatives to come. Also, help him/her to prepare the snack by choosing a favorite item, but not a sweet one. Celebrations are usually scheduled at the end of morning work cycle.

#### **Annual Seasonal and Holiday In-Class Celebrations**

Classes will have simple celebrations of holidays celebrated by families in the school. Families are invited to join us to teach about special events. All holidays are celebrated culturally, not religiously.

## V. FINANCIAL POLICIES

### a. Tuition and Fees

MCI follows the DPS calendar. Monthly installments break down the cost of the entire program in equal increments from August to May. Therefore, the charge is the same regardless of the number of days of school attendance, holidays, etc. There will also be no reduction of charge if you take a vacation, as it is necessary for the school to hold a space for your return. Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. We accept payments in the form of cashier's check, money order or personal check. We also take direct deposit. Payments should be put in the Tuition Box outside the administrative office. Delinquency fees will be charged for late payments as follows:

- Payments after the 2<sup>nd</sup> and through the 10<sup>th</sup> ----- \$25
- Payments after the 10<sup>th</sup> and through the 15<sup>th</sup> ----- \$50
- If the amount is not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month and arrangements are not made, services will be terminated, and the outstanding balance will be given to a collection agency.
- \$30.00 fee for returned checks.

Prior to your child joining MCI you will be required to complete an enrollment application. The application is submitted with a one-time non-refundable application fee of \$100. An annual fee of \$300 (for new students/\$200 for returning students) is due with the first month of tuition and in the years thereafter. This fee helps to cover social events for the school, guest presenters and special materials.

### **Emergency /Drop – in fees**

Arrangements can be made with the school for emergency/drop-in care. These will be billed to you at a cost of \$15/per hour.

### **b. Late pick up fees**

MCI informs all parent/guardians at the time of enrollment that they are responsible for ensuring that their child(ren) are picked up on time. School closes at 4pm sharp. A flat pick-up fee of \$20.00 for each 15-minute increment per child after 4:00 pm will apply. All efforts will be made to contact the parent and/or responsible persons as listed on the EMERGENCY CONTACT SHEET. If the child has not been picked up by 45 minutes past closing, the Police and or the family crisis center will be called to pick up the child. The Police/Family Crisis Center will be given

the emergency contact information and will continue to try to reach someone to pick up the child.

**c. Emergency**

The Board of Directors may need to temporarily close the school due to certain extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to extreme weather conditions, an epidemic, pandemic, public health emergency, or for other compelling reasons. In such an event, the Board of Directors may decide to implement compensatory measures like extending the school term or invoking a remote/distance learning environment.

**d. Withdrawal Notice**

Although most families enrolling in a quality Montessori program such as MCI intend on a long-term relationship, sometimes it is necessary to leave the school. The financial contract binds you to payment for the school year. We request you provide the Director at least one month written notice prior to your child's last day of attendance. The school will make every effort to fill the spot but until that happens you are responsible for the tuition. Sometimes children or families may not adjust to the Montessori environment. In these cases, we may ask the parents to withdraw the

child. If we make that decision, we will give the family at least one-week notice. Certain instances may occur that would require immediate withdrawal.

**e. Extra Fees**

Smocks - \$25.00 each and available from the Front Office.

**VI. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**a. Application and Enrollment Procedure**

MCI welcomes children ages 1 year to 6 years from all ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds.

*Enrollment Process*

The following is a listing of specific steps in our admissions process:

- We ask interested parents to observe the school and participate in an informational meeting.
- When the decision to apply is made, complete the application form and send it to the school with a non-refundable \$100.00 application fee.
- Your child will then be invited to attend a school session and will work with a group of peers and teachers for approximately an hour.

In the meanwhile, the parents will attend an orientation session with the staff.

- Admission decisions are made by the administration and teaching staff. These decisions are based on an evaluation of the child's school visit and the needs of the existing classes with regard to balance of age, sex, and ethnic diversity.
- If a position is offered to your child, a non-refundable Enrollment fee of \$300- and one-month's tuition deposit will be due. Upon receipt of the fees and tuition deposit, we will hold a place for your child in our program.
- If a place is not immediately available, you may wish to be placed on our wait group. We will then notify you as soon as an opening becomes available.

### *Enrollment Papers Needed*

Once a space has been offered, parents must complete the required forms prior to the child's first day. We cannot accept a child into the classroom without these completed forms. These forms include:

- 1) Student Emergency Card – includes emergency contact; authorized pick up; child history and interest information; and permission forms for photography; class trips/walks, sunscreen application, and emergency



medical care including insurance information. In order for a child to attend MCI, s/he must carry medical insurance. For a list of medical homes and/or insurance providers please contact the school office.

- 2) Enrollment contract
- 3) Permission to administer medication (if needed, completed by physician and parent)
- 4) Child Health Information and Immunizations (completed by physician and parent). We highly recommend vision, hearing and dental screening and tracking to ensure the health and well-being of the children. A list of resources is available in the school office should you need it.

If you move, or other contact information changes, it is critical that you immediately inform the schools of these changes so that this information is available in case of an emergency. Immunization updates, discovery of allergies and other health changes must be reported to the school.

#### **b. What to bring to school and what to leave at home**

Parents will be provided with a supply list prior to your child's first day. Wet clothing will be sent home for washing. Please send clean items back and put in your child's change of clothing box. Replace the extra change collection with appropriate clothing for changes of season. Remember to

change sizes as children grow. At MCI, your child will be working with fun educational materials every day. Therefore, we ask you to keep your child's toys or special personal items at home. Please do not send money to school with your child.

**c. Appropriate school attire**

Please send children in comfortable clothing that can get dirty, as it sometimes will. Children often dress themselves which we applaud whether items match or not. As part of the child's work is to dress himself/herself, please send clothing that is loose and has fasteners that can be handled with success. Shoes need to have closed toes and good tread for success playing with balls and climbing on the playground. Please avoid shoes and slippers are overly decorated or light up as they are distracting.

**d. Hand Washing**

Children must wash their hands when they arrive, after using the restroom, after changing clothes, after blowing their nose and before handling food of any kind.

## **e. Meals and Snacks**

### *Nutrition Policies*

Parents are responsible for providing lunch. Please send only healthy food from the basic food groups in your child's lunch. Include a protein plus at least two other food groups. Please send no peanut products. Please do not send snack foods, sweets, flavored milk and desserts, as they will not be served.

### *Snack Policies*

A good, nutritious diet not only helps keep your child healthy, but can affect his/her disposition in a positive way. You will be responsible for bringing snack for a week for your child's class. Please plan a nutritious "unsweet" snack. One of the favorites is fruit - fruit kabobs, fruit and cheese, or fruit fixed almost any way. Other favorites are mini-muffins, Chex Mix, Ritz Bits, and cookies and milk. Be creative, but please do not bring gum or candy. All food needs to be prepared, with the correct supplies needed, but **MUST** be in the original packaging, according to licensing. Students who remain in the after-school program should bring an additional snack or two, depending on the time parents anticipate picking them up.

**f. Drop off and pick up of children**

MCI will provide SIGN IN/SIGN OUT on Bright wheel that **must** be completed by parents daily. We identify where children are always and maintain a head count.

Persons picking up must be at least 18 years or age or older and have written authorization to pick up a child. MCI staff must require persons whom they do not recognize and are picking up children to show a picture ID before releasing the children. MCI staff will not release children to individuals who are not authorized by the parent/guardian.

The Director and or Authorities (Police Department or 911) will be immediately contacted for individuals not authorized by the parent or guardian of a child who attempts to pick up a child.

MCI staff will not release the child to anyone judged to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If someone seems to be under the influence, the authorities (Police Dept) will be contacted in order to make a decision as to releasing the child.

We ask your cooperation in ensuring a smooth pick-up of your child when someone other than yourself will be picking up your child:

**Please:**

- Complete a form notifying the staff in writing that a different person will be picking up your child.
- Give form to Administration.
- Prepare your child, if at all possible, ahead of time by letting them know that someone else will be picking them up.
- Have authorized person be prepared to show a picture I.D.

**FIELD TRIPS**

We do not go on field trips and transportation is provided. If we did decide to go on a neighborhood walk, we will send out a permission slip for you to sign. Should the child come late to school that day, it will be the responsibility of the parent to take their child to the site.

**DISMISSAL**

- **Early:** When a student needs to be dismissed early from school, the student must bring a note signed by the parent/guardian which states the time the student needs to leave school. These notes are given to the student's classroom teacher first thing in the morning and will be delivered to the school office. A parent/guardian must sign the student out in the

main office (and the ECE classroom, if applicable) before leaving campus.

- **Going home with another student:** When plans have been made for a student to go home with another student after school, the student must bring a note signed by the parent/guardian which states the name of the student he/she is going home with. These notes are to be given to the student's classroom teacher first time in the morning and they will be forwarded to the office.
- **Inclement weather:** When it is excessively cold, rainy, or there is lightening, and inclement weather dismissal will be called. Parents are asked to remain in their cars and students will be escorted to them by the supervising teachers.
- **Tornado warnings:** In the event of a tornado warning occurring at dismissal, all students will remain the building and will not be released to carpools until an official "all clear" signal has been received by the school. Parents and caregivers are welcome to join us in the buildings for protection but will not be permitted to leave until the weather emergency has cleared.

### **g. Weather alerts/school closings**

Every effort will be made to keep school, including before- & after-care, in operation on the days indicated by the published school calendar. In the event of a major snowstorm, extreme weather conditions or emergency situations, a decision by the Director may be made to close school for the day or to delay the start until 10:00 am. We follow the Denver Public School guidelines. The considerations for such a decision are based upon the assurance of safety for our students, families and employees, and the maintenance of appropriate supervision levels of our students. School may be closed early for the day (by 10:00am) to allow employees to leave and for parents to pick up children before the roads become unsafe. However, if inclement weather conditions arise during the course of the school day, children will be supervised appropriately at school. Parents may decide to pick up students early, or in the event of poor weather, keep students' home for the day, if there are individual concerns about road and weather conditions in their area. Parents are asked to contact the school office if their decision will affect regular school hours.

## **h. Illness**

### *General Health Appraisal & Immunizations*

All children are to have a general health appraisal form from a physician prior to starting school. These must be updated annually when you complete your application.

The State of Colorado requires a certificate of immunization signed by the physician for every child. Your doctor may complete the shot record on the physician's report, or you may provide us with a copy of your child's immunization card. This must be on file before your child may begin the program as mandated by the state. As of July 2001, it is a state requirement for children to be immunized with Varicella, the vaccine for Chickenpox. If your child is not immunized for religious or medical reasons, please see the Director.

### *Medication*

The State of Colorado also requires a signed note from the physician for any medication (both prescription and non-prescription). Please give all medication directly to the Director who will lock it in a cabinet unless it requires refrigeration. The medicine must be in its original container with the physician's directions for administration. Parents, as well as the



doctor, must fill out the medication administration form. Only those authorized to administer medicine will do so.

### *Allergies*

In order for our staff to better serve your child, it is imperative that parents inform staff of any allergies that the child may have or had, for example, food, medication, sunscreen or other substance. If your child has an allergy or a special diet, it must be documented by your child's doctor, unless it is for religious reasons.

### *Illness*

Please notify the teachers when your child is ill. Watch your child for signs of illness and DO NOT send him/her to school if he/she appears to be sick. It is not fair to the other children or the teachers to be needlessly exposed to coughs or runny noses. According to state licensing requirements and for the protection of all children, MCI cannot accept children with any of the following symptoms:

Elevated temperature (fever of 101 or higher)

Severe diarrhea or vomiting

Undiagnosed rash

Sore or discharging eyes or ears, or a profuse nasal discharge

Diagnosed contagious disease such as Strep throat or Chicken pox

If a child becomes sick during the day, he/she will be provided a comfortable place to rest until he/she goes home. Parents will be notified to come and pick up their child within the hour. The child must have a normal temperature and stool, and vomiting has ceased for 24 consecutive hours before they return. It is appreciated when parents call to let us know when their child will be gone and why.

Please notify MCI if your child contacts a contagious disease, such as whooping cough, strep throat, measles, or chicken pox. It is a licensing requirement that an anonymous sign be posted to notify other families that their child has been exposed. The health department may also be notified in the case of communicable diseases.

#### **i. Accidents and emergency procedures**

All teachers are First Aid and CPR certified. We will call you or your emergency contact person to notify of an accident or injury. When there is no question that your child must be taken to the doctor or the hospital, we will call you to inform you of our course of action as soon as possible. *It*

is vital that you keep our staff updated on changes in your phone number at home, at work and cell phones.

## **Emergency**

In case of a fire, all children will evacuate to the concrete area just beyond the toddler playground and remain there until the fire department has completed an inspection of the building and determined that it is safe to return to the building. Fire drills are practiced regularly.

In case of a tornado warning, children will take cover in the adult restrooms.

We will also be practicing lock down procedures.

In case of an emergency when we are forced to evacuate the building, we will seek shelter in the Wings Over the Rockies Museum. Should you find no one in the building, please come to the Museum.

## **Lost Child**

Every effort is made to keep all children safe. In the event that a child is missing, a search will be started immediately. If necessary, the parents and the authorities will be called to assist in the search. Parents, please make sure to close the classroom door behind you upon entering and

leaving the school and assist us in educating your child of the importance of staying with the teachers.

In the attempt of an unauthorized person attempting to pick-up your child, you and the authorities will be notified immediately. We will attempt to detain the culprit.

### **Reporting of Child Abuse**

MCI is a licensed childcare facility. All staff has a legal and moral obligation to report suspected abuse or neglect. If you, as a parent, feel there is a suspicion of abuse occurring, you can seek assistance by calling the Child Abuse hotline at (720) 944-3000. If you have a concern about the Early Childhood Program not following Social Service Regulations, you can seek assistance by calling the Division of Childcare at (303-866-5958).

I have read the MCI Handbook in its entirety and agree to follow all the guidelines stated within this handbook.

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Student Name

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Parent/Guardian Signature and date