



# Welcome Parents! Parent Orientation 2023-24 school year

Children's Garden Montessori School

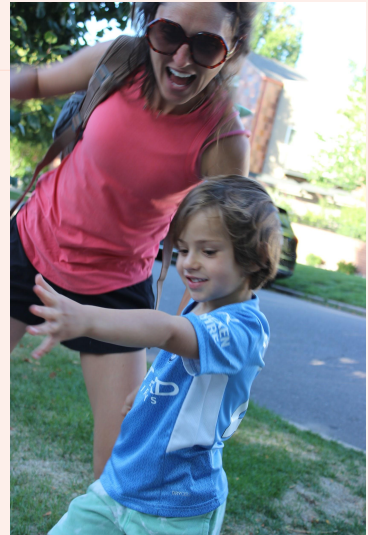
Welcome and Introductions Welcome to the Children's Garden and Parent Orientation for school year 2023-2024.

- This is one of several opportunities to get acquainted with the school, routines, staff, and fellow CG parents ahead of the new school year.
- Goal today is to give you information to get you started thinking about what to expect, to know where to turn for details and help, and to tide you over the summer when we are scattered in all directions. This is based on questions we've heard in the past as parents are thinking about school over the summer. Refer to this Slide Deck and Parent Handbook if questions come up during the summer hiatus. See website: [cgmontessori.com](http://cgmontessori.com) > Parents > Forms and Information
- Overview of all-school routines and logistics, as well as the usual routines for guiding and promoting independence and classroom community.
- Much in common between Toddler and Primary programs.
- Casual- Please feel free to ask questions

## Before School Starts

### *Getting Acquainted* with children and families

- Home visits for new children
- Meet and Greet at school - Friday, 8/25
- Back to School picnic - 1st week of school
- Things happen!
- Parent gatherings - sign up to help arrange
- Fall Fundraiser



### **JB/BH**

#### **Before School Starts - "Getting Acquainted"** Building relationships with Children/Families.

- Home visits for new children – Teachers will arrange to meet with parents and child for an in-person visit at the family home. WHY: meet child in comfort of their surroundings supported by parent, and to touch base with parent. WHEN: Takes place close to the start of school. A teacher will contact you in August to make arrangements. Plan for the visit to take place mid-August up to the week before school starts.
  - Teacher will bring a Student Profile for you to fill out in your own time (or found on website-"forms and info") and return to school when we start. Nice time to reflect on your child and serves as a touch point as teachers are just getting acquainted with your child.
- Classroom Visits (meet and greet). Child and parent visit classroom briefly to have a look around, locate cubby and view highlights of the spaces. Not a social event.. Friday before children's orientation week. August 25th. Details sent with Start of School info in August.
- Back to School Picnic. Thursday of 1st week of school. Often at a local park. Bring a picnic, casual, families welcome. Details sent with Start of School info in August.
- Things happen! Summer availability is quite limited for teachers and staff.

- Keep this in mind regarding expectations around these events. Teachers may not be available to arrange outside of designated windows. And you may have plans arranged too. Things happen - to get in the way of coordinating and in the sense that it will all work out! If you are not able to attend something or schedule during the allotted times it is not the end of the world. Your child will be fine, and we will help them ease into school life.
- Parent gatherings, meetings, and events throughout the year with other families and as a school community. Some social focus and fundraising, other parenting topics, and school events. Parents will have the opportunity to volunteer to help arrange gatherings and events. **The Fall Fundraising Committee is looking for people to join the team! Mike McSweeney (current parent)**
- Summer availability may be quite limited for teachers and staff. Keep this in mind regarding expectations around these events.

## Before school starts



### *Supporting the transition* to school life *Suggestions:*

- Walk by the school
- Positive messages
- Try some new routines
- Empower

### **JB/BH**

What can or should you do over the summer to prepare your child for school?

Suggestions for supporting the transition into school life, before the children come to school.

- Think about casual ways to gently introduce upcoming changes in their routines.
- Take a moment to walk by the school – there is your school, here is your gate.
- Positive talk about opportunities – new people, new adventures
- Introduce and practice new and simple routines - washing hands, hanging up a jacket/put on shoes, put a toy away in designated spot after using.
- Practice independence with toileting, and managing clothing for self - Primary
- Self-regulation - try to practice gently building self-soothing and separation skills
- Empower and practice patiently asking for help - teachers as resource as child attempts.
- A little low-key discussion/preparation fairly close to the start of school. Remember, a young child's sense of time is quite different than our own. Weeks of thinking about something that is not happening for quite some time can actually build tension and anxiety.
- Casual meet-ups with other children/families - parks, playing alongside others. Don't need guided activities.

## Settling in

### Orientation/Phase-In

- Abbreviated schedules for children to phase-in
- Build success and comfort level
  - Gradual transitions and daily routines
- Different schedules for different needs
  - Toddler
  - Primary and XP
  - Week 2



**Settling in takes time.** Be prepared for settling-in time, gradual transitions and adjustment

#### Orientation/Phase-in Schedules for children

- August 28 - Week 1: Abbreviated schedules for all. Shortened periods of attendance  
(4-day week - Inservice Friday)
- Gradual transitions, daily routines introduced to help build success and comfort level.
- Different schedules for Toddler and Primary programs – different needs!
  - Toddler: Regular days, shortened times. - Toddlers attend their regularly assigned days with gradual increase in time at school. All about daily routines!
    - Week 1: 1 and ½ hours: AM 8:30-10:00, PM 12:30-2:00
    - Week 2: 2 hours - AM 8:30-10:30, PM 12:30-2:30
    - Week 3: Full 2 and ½ hours - AM 8:30-11:00, PM 12:30-3:00
    - Continue gradual intro for children who could use added phase-in to full schedule.
  - Primary and XP: Regular times, fewer days. - Half of class attend Mon/Tue, other half attends Wed/Thu. Smaller mixed age group learn routines from each other. Lots to learn in an environment of autonomy within a community!

- September 5 - Week 2

(4-day week - Labor Day)

- Toddler: Continue phase-in of gradual increase of time at school.
- Primary children attend their regular days and schedules Tuesday - Friday. Lots of introductory activities with short work cycles and breaks built in.
- XP students rest between morning and afternoon sessions.

**JAMIE** will send Start of School Schedules for each class/child sent with Getting Started information and Primary class assignments during the summer, ahead of the start of the new year (Early August).

# Adjustment in Process

## Patience Required!

### Adjustment in Process!

- Being in school takes A LOT of sustained energy for young children. There are routines to learn or re-adjust to, lots of people, activity and emotions! For returning students too, adjusting to shifts in expectations, and for some, a longer day.
- We meet each child where their needs guide us. Some need extra cuddles or guidance, and some want space to process their emotions. This is ok, we expect this and we respect children's right to their feelings! We want to honor each child's individual process.
- We will call if it seems like your child would benefit from an earlier pick-up. And, work with parents to create a more graduated transition for a child who may require a longer period of time to adjust.
- First 6 weeks is considered an adjustment period. Expect varied responses, tired, hungry, moody, and changes! Travel - may want to reconsider any travel plans during this time as it will affect your child's adjustment to school life.

## Coming and Going

Arrival and Pick-up at your child's classroom gate.

Parking, drop-off/pick-up time

10 minute window

Staggered

Loading zone use

Parking patrol and street sweeping



### Coming and Going

Arrival and Pick-up - Will go over briefly to give you a sense - you will want to come back to this when school starts!

- Parking, drop-off/pick-up time windows
  - (10 minutes) and staggered (Primary and Toddler) to help alleviate congestion and potentially dangerous situation.
  - Want to stress that the loading zone is for the most immediate drop-off/pick-up happening. Do not linger or wait for your "window" in the loading zone if there is another program which needs it. Times are printed in the Parent Handbook.
- Parking patrol and street sweeping. May not be most ideal or convenient, it is a neighborhood impacted by our presence.
- Park and walk is a nice way to start the day, set the tone with calm and relaxed approach to school. There are often spaces on the south side of 4th ave within a block or two of school, as well as along 5th just east and west of Detroit St.
- Detroit street gets busy! Please hold your child's hand and keep them close by.



## At the gate

Sign-in with a teacher at your gate

Be mindful of space and time for others

Saying goodbye - confidence!

Please don't linger



Pick-up - at classroom gate

Thoughtful departure is part of the plan

Sign-out & written permissions

Time of reconnection

## Separating and Reuniting

### At the Gate

#### Gate Process and etiquette

- Sign-in with a teacher at your classroom gate. Should be done as indicated - state regulations
  - Protocols: As did most schools, when COVID entered daily life, we employed a wellness check before coming into to school. Since then we have moved to an "honor system" of daily wellness check by parents/caregivers before arriving. It is a practice that we maintain and ask all of our parents to be aware of how your child is feeling. Continue to err on the side of caution and keep sick and potentially sick children home. Check the Handbook (website > parents > forms and Information) for a comprehensive list of symptoms that indicate your child should stay home.
  - A transition time for children. Please be mindful of giving space and time for those ahead of you at the gate. Taking turns and learning to be aware and mindful of others are all part of school life.
  - Refrain from lingering. Not only congested parking, but children also need a confident, clean break for separating successfully.
  - Primary - if late, still use classroom gate and walk to office door. The center gate is reserved for Toddler class - especially when Toddlers are present.

- Pick-up is similar: Help to maintain thoughtful departure.
  - Teacher or staff will walk your child to gate.
  - Written permission to pick-up a child. ID is required for unfamiliar faces.
  - One at a time – teachers must have eyes on children as they are released.
  - Patience and awareness of others at this important time of reconnection.
- Separating and Reuniting - Variety of responses to separation and reuniting – children and parents! All are quite normal.
- Supporting emotions along with independence and confidence. Tip - the simpler the better! Doesn't require lots of discussion. Practice.
- Good neighbors. We are part of a neighborhood. We ask that our school community help us be good neighbors. Mind your children outside of the gate and keep them off flower beds and neighbors yards. Please keep them close by and within the school boundaries.

# Life At School

School and Classroom Environments

Designed for young children and their growing independence.

**Life at School** - Next slides about Life at School. Remember your OpenHouse/Parent Preview? Quick Review

## **School and Class Routines**

- Designed for young children and their growing independence...
- Environments -- from the cubbies and bathrooms, to tables, chairs, furnishings. Within reach, accessible and orderly
- Scale and set-up for child's use,
- Introduction to routines and processes,
- Then room and time to learn through daily experience. Practice/repetition.
- This is to allow children to learn to do and learn to be responsible for things for themselves - within suitable, age appropriate expectations of course!
- More to come at Parent Back to School Nights in September.

## Events and Routines

Daily events

Outside time

Practices and routines

Consistency and classrooms



### Events and Routines

Something frequently asked about is the timeline of the day. As with much of life as school topics you will hear much more about what the children do during their time at school once school gets going.

Brief outline of day – events during the day (not specific schedule for all classes).

- Daily Events. Outside time, cubbies/lockers and slippers, open work time - including snacks and studio available on arranged days, clean-up, group time.
- Outside time – we have used staggered times of free play periods outside. There are times when classes will be together outside as well. We want to have a balance of by-class and combined-classes so children come to know one another as a whole community.
- Practices and Class routines – putting things away, handwashing at transitions, using the bathroom/diapering...

**Consistency:** These things are true in all the classes and programs. Consistency of routines and ways of being.

And in our preparations for the coming year, planning class rosters and routines.

Consistency of experience for children, balanced with enrollment/placement considerations, is part of the picture.

- Classes are built with a balance of ages and experience in mind as well as classroom social dynamics. Returning Primary children - We may change some student class assignments in order to balance classes and for optimal classroom communities.
- The Extended Primary children (oldest, and only full-day children) will stay in

- their room all day with AM children and PM children.

# Studio learning

## The Studio Classroom

- Lab learning
- Questions and observations lead study
- The studio is a classroom, wherever it is!



## The Studio Classroom - Zach's Place

- Extension of children's "homeroom" classrooms - Toddler, WH, BJ's. Studio is experienced by all. Zach's Place is our Reggio homepage.
- A laboratory for learning through the lens of curiosity, play, and creative expression. Social constructivism important--a place where children collaborate and the teacher scaffolds their interests and explorations.
- Inquiry learning. Questions and observations lead learning, and frequently more questions.
- Not a separated, pull-out program
- A classroom environment wherever it is!
  - Zach's place is to be used by all the Primary children. And the studio experience may extend to a home classroom or in an outdoor space; or it may be on the move!
- Angelina shares via videos, images in documentation at curators talk. Please understand this when authorizing permissions.

## *Toileting, it's a thing*

Toddlers

- Learning about toileting and managing clothing

Primary

- Practicing independence



### **Toileting for Independence**

- Toddlers - learning about toileting and managing their clothing. Brief description
- Primary – practicing independence. Brief description
- Creating relaxed, non-fearful experiences around toileting
- Easy to manage clothing helps children with independence and be successful

# Dress for success

## What to wear

- Exploring and messes
- Independence
- Shoes
- Weather

## What to bring

- Extra clothing
- Slippers
- Backpacks

*Label - Label - Label!!*

## What to Wear to School

- Clothing, Weather – Dress for Success - when helping your child select their clothing, keep in mind...
  - Children get messy and wet. Classrooms and outdoors designed for exploration and independence means lots of opportunities for testing and trying new things. There will be mistakes and accidents with water, paint, dirt, etc. to get on clothing. **We plan for this, you should too!**
  - Manageable for your child. Clothing should be practical and easy for your child to manage (independence).
  - Shoes - for playing and for independence
  - Weather – we are outside every day in all types of weather. Dress for success!

## What to Bring

- Extras. We ask parents to provide 2 complete changes of clothing to be kept at school. Send in replacements next day that child attends – ready for the next time!
- Slippers or indoor shoes – kept at school.
  - Toddlers: waterproof, styles such as Native or Croc types recommended.
  - Primary: focus on manageability by child and activity. Native or Loafer type.
- Backpack – For Toddlers and XP. These children bring extra supplies.
- What NOT to bring - toys (except when specified - sharing), pacifiers,



- money, sweets, lotions, lip balm, medications. Cubby area is a shared space!!

List of items will be sent home with a teacher introduction letter over the summer.

**PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING** – Community with lots of children, much looks the same – we cannot track individual items.

# Eating

Snacks, “food prep” and cooking

Water

Lunch - XP only

Allergies!!

Guidelines



## Snacks and Food

- Snack – snack calendar – rotate providing – with children bringing snack for their class. Healthful options please! School provides elements and families provide elements. Pre-packaged.
- Food preparation. Part of regular class activities. Briefly describe.
- Water is available all day, indoors and outdoors. No need to send water bottles. Easily mixed up.
- XP Lunch – in addition, XP students bring a daily lunch in a separate container/lunchbox – this may have a drink.
- Allergy We are a peanut and tree nut free school. Do not send products containing these items for snacks or lunch.
  - How allergies are managed in classrooms
  - Awareness and precautions
- Birthdays - Depending on each classroom's guidelines, families may provide unique (pre-packaged) snack for birthdays. While this is a special occasion for your child it does not have to be marked with sweets at school to be a celebration. Keep in mind that there are as many birthdays as there are children and this can quickly add up in days of “special treats”. We are respectful of parents wanting children to have healthful options at school.
- Guidelines. Children have varying interest in foods. We want to balance choice and independence with limits We will send home guidelines for food items to be brought to school.

## Communication flow

### Conversations

Helps to keep us in the loop

Casual at the gate

Email

Phone

### School Life

Friday email news

Classroom news

Virtual

Touch Base calls

Formal conferences

### Keep communication flowing

#### Conversations

##### Communication with parents about your children.

- Helpful if parents can keep us informed. Let us know when your child will not be at school. Also when you are traveling, of changes, disruptions in child's/family's life. We do not want to pry; we just are better able to support a child if we know what is happening outside of school.
- Conversations at the Gate – is minimal. Keep it casual: Mindful of talking in front of child and others, maintaining social distance. Time for transition in a child's day, this will be our focus. Honoring the moment however brief.
- Email - reach out. Classroom, administration.
- Phone calls - to school phone, messages
- You don't always see Bekke or Jamie around at the gate. Please be in touch! If you have questions, concerns or topics of interest. We really do want to hear from you and talk with you.

#### School Life

- School Newsletter – Friday Family Update. Comes from Bekke's email, is a compilation from several of us. Let us know if you would care to contribute!
- Authorizations related to publications - newsletter, photos, videos, studio blog, print, social media. We don't tag - anonymity.
- Classrooms - Toddler monthly and Primary (?)
- Touch Base calls – 4 to 6 weeks into school year.
- Formal Conferences - twice a year. Preschool appropriate expectations.

## *In sickness and health*

When to keep your child at home

Policies

Allergies and emergency medications

No medications brought to school

### **Wellness and Sick Policies –**

- Keeping the spread of germs to a minimum. Covid certainly brought heightened attention to this – and we learned that mitigation works – for Covid and for stemming the spread of other illnesses. We will continue to keep our strict wellness attendance policies.
- When to keep your child at home; policies; consideration of your child's experience – when children don't feel well, they do not handle the expectations of school life well.
- Outbreaks of widespread illness such as Covid, RSV, and Flu are tracked and policies are updated as needed. We will inform the community of policy changes.
- Allergies – turn in your forms and drop-off medications. Must be properly labeled, documented and authorized.
- No medications may come to school with your child.

## *It's official*

- Parent Handbook
- Registration and records
- Health forms
- Accounts
- Directory
- Calendar
- Closings
- Stay informed!

### **Business Information:**

- Coming in August:
  - Registration: forms and records
  - Health and immunization records by the start of school and incrementally based on age and birthdates
  - Authorizations - Print, website, social - photos, videos. Often used for newsletters, studio blog and documentation. Not tagged with names.
  - Parent Handbook – We are touching on just an overview. Please read, sign acknowledgement, and Keep handy!
- Accounts – Catherine manages accounts, contact her with questions, changes to banking and so forth.
- Brightwheel - billing now, more capacity down the line perhaps. Notifications have to be set up by you.
- Directory of families will be emailed (hard copy upon request) around time of Back-to-School nights—mid September.
- School calendar of major dates was sent to families this spring or upon enrollment and, along with a stream of upcoming dates and events, is on the school website.
- Website has a Parent section. Please take some time to acquaint yourself with items there - which will be updated before the new school year and ongoing as appropriate. <https://www.cgmontessori.com/parents/forms-and-information/>
- Closings communicated via email or texting program to all families and is posted on local television, school voice message and the website homepage.
- Help us keep you up to date. We work hard to keep you informed and we

- need your attention to the information shared and knowing what is happening! Look for newsletters – if you don't see them, check promotions, spam, etc. and let us know in case we have inaccurate email addresses. We use the "preferred emails" information provided on your enrollment and contract. Be sure to include or inform Catherine of any email contact you want newsletters and information sent!

# Parents at school

## *Parent participation and connection*

Participation signup sent over the summer  
Opportunities posted in the Friday newsletter  
Connecting with others  
Be in touch with us



## Parent Involvement

- Be on the look-out for opportunities to be involved.
- Sign-up opportunities posted in the Friday all-school newsletter and link sent in email. New families will be included in newsletter emails just ahead of the start of the new school year.
- We encourage parents to stay in touch with their teachers and the administrative staff.
- We invite you to participate in ways you are comfortable and to partner with us and other parents in creating ways of connecting as a community.
- Reach out with ideas, contributions, resources for being/getting involved.
- Community Fall fundraiser is coming in October.

**October 21, 2023, Glenmoor Country Club. Save-the-Date for our Annual Fundraiser. Be on the lookout for ticket purchasing opportunities when we return to school. In the meantime, consider becoming a sponsor or donating items/services for our silent auction. Reach out directly to either Colin Joel (girlcolin@gmail.com) or Susannah Hutchins (smybos@gmail.com) if you have something to give away.**

# Summer Mode

## Summer Mode

Limited availability

Check your email

Community contacts

## Getting started

2nd week of August:

- Start of School Information
- Primary classes
- Teacher letters
- Registration
- Class contacts

## Summertime - Summer mode

The school goes into quiet mode for periods of time over the summer.

- School closes for the school year on June 2nd.
- Bekke and/or Jamie can be reached on a reduced schedule throughout much of the summer, with the better part of July being especially quiet. Please expect delays or lag time in communication. Email is the better choice for messages over the summer as phone messages are only checked periodically.
- A community document for families to share contact info over the break:  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rYImYXfa3p1IGusoft-dvo3ui3d9BHoAhTM4UkHXhQY/edit#gid=0>
  - (Class lists and contacts will come once school starts).
- Summer Camp (check availability) is in session 2 weeks, July 17-28th, Monday – Thursdays, 9:00-12:00. All Primary students who are not XP graduates are invited to attend. No Toddler camp this year.

**Stay informed by checking your email!** Please be sure to check spam folders and add the various Children's Garden addresses to your contacts.

Back to School and Getting Started information is prepared over the summer and sent via email in early August. This will include your registration instructions and materials, Classroom assignments for new Primary students are also finalized and sent at this



time.

- Our teachers have multiple families to arrange with as well as busy summers and preparations for the start of school. We know that August has many of you and us traveling and out of office. If you are out of town during allotted windows for a home visit or miss other start of school events, there is no cause for concern. Your child will be in good hand when they arrive at CG and will be supported in getting settled in - teachers may arrange an alternate phase-in time for your child if late start.
- Save your notes from this meeting to refer to if questions arise over the summer.

*Class dismissed!*

Comments and Q & A

Let's go see the classrooms!

- Rose will be in the Toddler room
- Claire will be in the BJ's room
- George Michael will be in the WHobbs room
- B, J, C will be here in the studio/Zach's place.

Enjoy your evening!