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### MISSION, VISION, & CORE VALUES

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## WELCOME

Welcome to Children's Garden Montessori School! We have created this handbook to answer many of the questions we have received over the years. We're certain, however, that you will have more questions, so please feel free to ask any of us. We look forward to working with you and your children.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 303-322-0972

Fax: 303-322-7949

Front Desk: Catherine Ramey [cramey@cgmontessori.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessori.com)

Head of School: Bekke Howell [bhowell@cgmontessori.com](mailto:bhowell@cgmontessori.com)

Director of Admissions: Jamie Boes [jboes@cgmontessori.com](mailto:jboes@cgmontessori.com)

Website: [www.cgmontessori.com](http://www.cgmontessori.com)

When your child will not be attending school, if there is a change in your child's pick-up from school, or if you have any questions related to the classroom, please email the teachers at:

[toddlers@cgmontessori.com](mailto:toddlers@cgmontessori.com)

[wham@cgmontessori.com](mailto:wham@cgmontessori.com)

[44am@cgmontessor.com](mailto:44am@cgmontessor.com)

[440pm@cgmontessori.com](mailto:440pm@cgmontessori.com)

[xp@cgmontessori.com](mailto:xp@cgmontessori.com)

Please copy Catherine and/or Bekke on these emails.

## REQUIRED PAPERWORK

Please return the following forms that were included in your enrollment packet by the start of school. If for any reason this is not possible, please notify the office as soon as possible. **The Colorado Department of Human Services requires new forms each year the child attends school. These forms must be on file for a child to begin school.**

- Emergency Authorization/Consent Form
- Physical Exam Form  
Annual exam is required for children over 2 years                      Twice annual exam is required for children under 2
- Immunization Record

If your child has a condition that requires **Emergency Medications**, we must have a **Healthcare Plan specific to their needs** (severe allergic reaction, seizures, etc.) **form their healthcare provider along with the prescribed medication/s.**

These will be mailed in early May:

- Financial Contract (due May 15<sup>th</sup>)
- Direct Withdrawal (due with contract)

The Emergency Contacts and Authorized Pick up/Contact Information Form is required by the state and is available for completion and updates on our website.

If you have questions, call or email Catherine Ramey.

## **HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S GARDEN**

Children's Garden Montessori School began as a parent co-operative in 1974. Bobbie Hobbs, Judy Ward, Jane Jacobs, and Patti Egloff, four mothers of preschoolers, were determined to provide their children with a stimulating and caring environment. They conducted school in one of the mother's basements. With a background in education and in the Montessori Method they decided, based on the progress of their children, to found a Montessori pre-school at 444 Detroit Street.

Over the years the school has been blessed with dedicated teachers committed to the education of pre-school children and to working with their parents to bring out the abilities of each child at his or her own pace. The enthusiasm of children, parents, and staff is what makes Children's Garden a healthy place to grow.

The Cherry Creek neighborhood has grown around Children's Garden, and we continue to provide an oasis of child-centered calm activity within our urban surroundings. The school is a non-profit, board governed school affiliated with the American Montessori Society.

## **THE CLASSROOMS AND FACILITY**

The main level of the building is comprised of the reception area, three classrooms and the art studio:

**Ward-Hobbs (WHAM/XP)** (north classroom) is a Primary classroom in the morning, and the Extended Primary (XP) classroom in the afternoon. In the morning, there are three teachers and up to 27 children. This room is named after two of our founders, Judy Ward and Bobbie Hobbs.

**440** (south classroom) is a primary classroom. There are two teachers and up to 20 children. The morning and afternoon sessions are both mixed age groups of 3-6 year olds.

**Extended Primary (XP)** is held in the Ward-Hobbs classroom in the afternoon. There are two teachers and up to 16 children.

**Toddler** (east classroom) is the toddler classroom. There are two teachers and up to 12 children from 18 months to 3 years old in the morning and afternoon sessions.

**Zach's Place** (center) is the studio. It is named in memory of a former student, and is used by all the children.

The second floor houses offices, teacher work space, a meeting area, parent library, and storage.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

### **IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR PROGRAMS AND MONTESSORI**

Montessori education is based on a profound respect for each child's individual path through recognized developmental stages of growth. The Montessori Method is a holistic educational philosophy and practice designed to assist the child in all areas of development.

Montessori encourages "freedom within limits," in regard to movement, socialization, and choice of materials. The child is allowed a full measure of liberty, with responsibility as a real component of freedom.

The classroom environment and activities are designed for promoting independence. Skills and materials are offered thoughtfully and carefully, highlighting the steps needed for carrying out specific tasks. We encourage individual work mixed with mutual help and support. The mixed ages of members of the class allow older children to help and set a good example for younger children.

Each child is allowed to work at his or her own natural rhythm and pace, so the child who needs more time is not intimidated by the faster one, nor is the quick child held back. We are interested in each child pursuing the whole course, not in who arrives at the finish line first.

The teachers closely observe and support each child's individual progress through the Montessori curriculum.

Each year is a building block for the next and is equally important to your child's development and growth. From the Toddler Program to the Extended Primary Program, your child is acquiring and refining skills needed to move to the next step. No one activity or teacher is responsible for all that your child learns, it is a continuous process that at times is either subtle or dramatic.

Children learn and express themselves using various tools and mediums - not only spoken and written language, but also art, dance, music and drama. The Art Studio allows children to explore their ideas in a different way than they might in the Montessori classrooms. The art teacher works closely with the Montessori teachers to coordinate their curriculum so each part of our program supports the other.

## **OUR PRACTICE**

### **GETTING READY FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

These suggestions may help prepare your child for his or her first days at school. Beginning the Montessori experience is a big step in life. Your child needs to feel your interest. A day or two before the actual date you might mention in general terms, the fun you know he or she will have in learning new things and being with other children. Mentioning specific activities may lead to disappointments, so we recommend that you talk in general terms.

#### **Home Visits for New Students**

If your child is **new** to the program, a teacher will contact you during August to set up a time for a home visit before the start of school. The visit provides you, your child, and the teacher the opportunity to begin a relationship in familiar surroundings. Home visits last about 30-45 minutes.

#### **Meet and Greet**

Parents and children are invited to visit the school on the Friday before the first week of school. Details will be mailed during the summer.

### **ITEMS NEEDED FOR ALL STUDENTS**

Please clearly label each article of your child's clothing!

#### **Toddler Students**

1 4x6 photograph of your child and family

2 horizontal 4x6 photos of your child (for labeling)

- A pair of slippers for your child to wear at school. (We have found that loafer type slippers or moccasins work best and are safest for the children.)
- If your child is in diapers, you should send them to school each day with a small backpack packed with a diaper or two and a change of clothes.
- If your child is already in underwear, you can send a couple of changes of clothes to be kept at school.

#### **Primary Students**

- 2 4x6 close-up photographs of your child for labeling
- A pair of slippers for your child to wear at school. For safety and comfort reasons, we recommend loafer-type slippers or moccasins.
- A complete change of clothes for your child to keep at school (easy for your child to manage and change themselves).

### **Extended Primary**

Children in the Extended Primary Program will need to **bring lunch everyday – please no nuts of any kind**. If you prefer that your child eat the healthy foods first, we recommend you do not send dessert - this is the first item they will choose. Although we do not monitor what foods or in what order they eat lunch, we do offer suggestions.

Children in the **440 morning class** will also need the following items for the XP classroom:

- 1 4x6 close-up photograph of your child (for labeling cubby)
- A second pair of slippers
- A second change of clothes

### **Art Studio**

Each child needs a 4x6 close up photo to be used to check in and out of the studio.

### **WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

The children are not permitted to bring gum, vitamins, candy, money, or toys to school. Bringing such items to school can be disruptive and lead to difficulties in sharing or may result in loss or breakage. Please leave food at home, except for Extended Primary lunch or assigned snack.

No medications of any kind should be sent to school with a child. Please see the "HEALTH" section of this handbook.

No peanuts or nut products of any kind should be sent to school. Please see the "SNACK" section of this handbook.

### **WHAT TO BRING FOR NEWS PERIOD (SHOW & TELL)**

In the primary classrooms, your child may bring something of special learning value to share with the class. Favorite recordings or books are welcome, as are natural items such as plants, small animals, shells, insects, and rocks. Each class will send home information on how they conduct "News."

### **SNACK**

Each child will have the opportunity to bring "snack". Your child will be assigned a day during the month to bring food in for the children to prepare and eat. A schedule and suggestions will be sent home in September.

Due to extreme sensitivity of some children, **no peanut or nut products of any kind are allowed at school.** This includes food **prepared in a facility that also processes nuts** or that **contains nut oils.** We strive to maintain a peanut/nut free environment to ensure the well-being of those with allergies. However, we **cannot guarantee that the school is completely free of nut products.**

No **POPCORN** or **CHIPS** are permitted. Health regulations require that snacks brought to school consist of foods that are **prepackaged, unopened, and prepared from commercial sources.** The occasional serving of food prepared at home in connection with an event or celebration is allowed.

## **CLOTHING**

### **Toddler Students**

Toddlers are curious, independent, ever-exploring individuals. As a result, they often become wet and soiled from washing hands, watering plants, scrubbing tables, painting, and eating.

Play clothes which are easy to get on and off are recommended. It is difficult for toddlers to remember to push their sleeves up before plunging into water activities. Short sleeved shirts are more practical. The environment is appropriately heated to accommodate the children in winter.

Send your child to school in shoes that fit and are appropriate for climbing, running and walking. Slip-on and Velcro fastened shoes with good soles are recommended.

We encourage the children to be as independent as possible and suggest you keep this in mind when buying clothes for your children. Clothes that are easy to get on and off will result in far more success. Getting dressed and undressed can be a lengthy and challenging task, yet to children it is an exciting practical life activity.

### **Primary Students**

The Montessori philosophy stresses freedom and independence for the child. Please encourage your child to wear clothing that is comfortable and appropriate for active learning and that they can easily manage themselves. Your child will be sitting on the floor, playing outside, working with water and paints, and participating in other activities. It is helpful to have your child make choices about clothing the night before and have these ready the next day.

We encourage the use of Velcro fasteners on tennis shoes for children who cannot tie yet. Please send your child in appropriate, active foot wear. Cowboy boots, sandals and party shoes are difficult and often dangerous to run and climb in.

### **Dressing for the Weather**

We go outside in all types of weather. Please send your child in the appropriate attire, i.e., rain coats, rain boots, winter coats, gloves or mittens, snow boots, sunhats, sunglasses etc. There is no bad weather, just bad clothing! Be sure to label your child's clothes.

When the temperature is above 95 degrees, the children will be kept inside or in the shade when outside; there will be no walks or walking field trips.

**Sunscreen**

Please send your child to school with sunscreen already applied. We will reapply, if authorized, with Coppertone Water Babies® SPF 45. If you prefer a particular sunscreen, please give it to the teachers and label it with your child's name.

**THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

On the first day of school, we suggest that you give your child a friendly goodbye, only once, and leave him or her in the care of the teacher. Even if your child should cry, which happens, our experience is that the quicker the break, the sooner tears will disappear. The child should feel your confidence in the teacher.

If asked, your child probably won't be able to tell you very much about his or her first days at school, but often, when your child is ready, you will be told plenty about school.

Your child will be better prepared for school if you:

- Allow enough time for dressing
- See that his/her clothes are simple, comfortable, washable, and labeled
- Be sure your child is well rested
- Be sure to have a good breakfast or lunch

**A TYPICAL TODDLER DAY**

No class day is exactly the same, but a sample day provides insight into the Toddler Community at Children's Garden:

**Arrival/Outdoor Play**

The children are greeted at the gate by their teachers and have free play out of doors until arrival time is over.

**Work Period**

The children have the option to work independently with the prepared activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

**Group Time**

This time is used for singing, rhythm instruments, gross motor activities, reading books and birthday celebrations.

**Dismissal**

The children end their session outside, either coming out just at pick-up time, or shortly before to allow for some outdoor play until parents arrive and teachers dismiss at the gate.

## **A TYPICAL PRIMARY DAY**

No class day is exactly the same, but a sample day provides insight into the work of Children's Garden:

### **Arrival/Outdoor Play**

The children may have free play out of doors, depending on the weather. The afternoon class may have outdoor play time at the end of the session rather than the beginning.

### **"Line" or "Circle" Time**

During circle time, the children sing, may listen to a story, practice simple Spanish, be shown a grace and courtesy lesson, or have a new material introduced.

### **Work Period**

The children work in the basic Montessori curriculum areas of Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, and the Cultural Areas of science, geography and art. These activities are done, at various times, individually, in small groups, with a teacher, or with an older child. The work period lasts approximately 2 hours. During the work period, children may choose to work in our art studio, Zach's Place.

### **Dismissal**

The children end their session outside, either coming out just at pick-up time, or shortly before to allow for some outdoor play.

## **Education Doesn't Stop at the School Gate**

Because Montessori is intended to provide real-life skills, your child's education will be complemented by many activities outside school hours. Some things you may want to do to continue the educational experience are:

- Take family trips to the zoo, museum, library, park, etc.
- Read to your child
- Allow your child to do things at home that are done at school, such as art work, helping prepare meals, cleaning up, and putting things in order
- Give your child a chance to express him/herself
- Answer the many questions you will be asked

## **RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The following are guidelines we stress for encouraging cooperation and creating an environment conducive to learning and growing:

- Walk while in the classroom
- Physically and verbally be kind to others

- Respect all activities in the environment
- Respect other's work
- Use inside voices while in the classroom

If problems should arise we will:

- Encourage the children to use words to express feelings and frustrations
- Help redirect the child's energy
- Stay with the child until self-control has been regained
- Encourage and assist the children in finding solutions and alternative behaviors

If problem behavior develops, we will ask the parents to meet with the teachers to help determine the best course of action. We have a working relationship with a child psychologist. We may suggest that parents seek professional guidance. If, after careful consideration and discussion between parents, teachers and specialists, we determine that we cannot meet the needs of a child or family, we may require the child to withdraw from school.

#### **TOILETING IN THE TODDLER PROGRAM**

We are here to support your family in this developmental process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of the toddler teachers. They are happy to provide information and support.

#### **Diapering at School**

Diaper changing is done in the bathroom, typically with the child standing up. The child helps undress and dress her/himself as well as removing his/her diaper. It is always a choice for the child to sit on the toilet.

#### **Toileting Readiness**

Children may show all of the following signs, one sign or a combination:

- Staying dry for an extended period of time (gaining bladder control).
- Acknowledging when s/he is wet or has had a bowel movement.
- Shows interest in the toilet. S/he may wish to sit on the toilet fully clothed.
- Interest and ability to dress and undress her/himself.

**Your child does not need to be completely toilet learned to wear underwear.** We encourage you to send your child to school in underwear when they are showing signs of readiness to increase awareness of bodily functions.

#### **LOST AND FOUND**

Lost articles may be reclaimed at the "Lost and Found" basket located in the lobby. **Please be sure names are clearly and permanently marked on clothing and other items so they can be easily identified.** At the end of the school year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

### RETURNING SCHOOL EQUIPMENT

Once in a while an item of school equipment will find its way home. Please return all such equipment to the school as soon as possible.

### DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

**Park and walk your children to the gate designated for their class.** We recommend parking on south sides of 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and taking the short walk to school. This is a nice way to ease into the school day.

CLASS	GATE	ARRIVAL	DISMISSAL
WHAM	North	8:15	11:15
440 AM	South	8:15	11:15
440 PM	South	12:15	3:15
Extended Primary	North	AM class	2:15
Toddler AM	Center	8:30	11:00
Toddler PM	Center	12:15	2:45

One of your child's teachers will meet you at the gate at arrival and dismissal. Please sign your child in and out daily. The teachers are careful to dismiss children one at a time. Please be patient.

**The safety of your child is our principle concern. Please follow these guidelines.**

- All children must be signed in and out each day.
- Do not allow your child to walk to or from the gates unattended.
- Never leave your child at the gate, in the yard, or in the class unless a teacher is present and you have signed your child in.

- No child will be dismissed to anyone other than the authorized person(s) designated on the Contact Information Card. A picture ID will be required.
- Please drive slowly along Detroit Street and watch for pedestrians.
- If the toddlers are in the front yard – which is their playground – when you are arriving or leaving school, please use the north or south gate to enter and exit.

### **Parking**

Parking on the **west** side of Detroit (and the north sides of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>) is reserved for **residents only**. Parking in front of the school is limited to **5 minutes**; the remaining parking spaces on the east side of Detroit are designated for **2 hour** parking. The parking patrols are vigilant and tickets are given on a regular basis! **Street sweeping** day for the east side of Detroit is the first Tuesday of the month April through November. You may not park in our loading zone on those mornings. We will remind you with a sign on street sweeping days.

**Over the years we have had a good relationship with our neighbors. As much as we can, we try to minimize the impact that our carpools have on the neighborhood. We greatly appreciate your cooperation when dropping off and picking up your children**

### **Late Arrival**

Please park and walk your child to his/her class and sign your child in. If the class is away from school, office staff will tell you where the class is so that you may take the child to meet his/her class. If this not possible, the child will remain with a staff member until the class returns.

### **Late Pick Up**

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for any child picked up 15 minutes after the designated dismissal time. Your promptness in dropping off and picking up is appreciated.

### **Unauthorized Pick Up**

Children are to be released **ONLY** to those designated **IN WRITING**, by the child's parent or legal guardian. A photo I.D. is required of anyone picking up a child who is unfamiliar to the staff. The name on the I.D. will be checked against the authorized list provided by the parent/guardian.

If someone attempts to pick up a child who is **NOT AUTHORIZED** by the parents, the Head of School will be immediately notified. The Head of School will contact the child's parents and if necessary, the police.

### **Child Not Picked Up From School**

In the event that a child has not been picked up, the teacher will contact the parent and request immediate pick up. If a parent cannot be reached, we will follow the call order on the child's Contact Information/Authorized Pick up Card. A message will be left for the parents to inform them of the procedure that was followed, and where their child will be. If the teacher is unable to reach a parent or other authorized person, the child will remain with the teacher or Head of School until someone is contacted.

## SCHOOL CANCELLATION

If weather conditions require, school will be cancelled. Cancelled school days will not be made up. Should the need to cancel school arise, the message on the school phone will be changed. The closure will be announced on Channel 9 News, posted on our Facebook page and the website. **Rule of Thumb:** If the Denver Public Schools are closed due to weather, we will also be closed. Please Note: We do not follow DPS school delay schedules.

## WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

The children will usually spend a portion of each day outdoors. In general, a child too ill to participate in outdoor activity should stay home that day.

If your child is not attending school, please email the child's class and Catherine Ramey.

**Please do not send your child to school if he/she has had any of the following within the past 24 hours:**

- A fever. A child must have been fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. A child taking fever reducing medication does not meet this requirement.
- Green or yellow runny nose
- A persistent cough
- Rash that has not been evaluated
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Malaise (general listlessness)
- Sore or severe red throat
- Upper respiratory infection
- Diarrhea
- Mouth sores
- Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye (bloodshot, red, swollen, eyes or eyelids or discharge from eye)
- Any communicable disease
- Or is in the initial 24 hours of antibiotic treatment for strep, pink eye, or impetigo.

Children with Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease must remain home for at least 48 hours after diagnosis and until there are no mouth sores.

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be isolated from the other children and you will be notified promptly. Your cooperation in picking your child up as soon as possible is greatly appreciated.

Please notify us of the diagnosis of a communicable disease so we may notify other parents to be alert for the symptoms. We adhere to the Colorado Department of Human Services' guidelines and recommendations for childcare centers and preschools.

If there is a question about any of the above circumstances, we ask that you contact your child's healthcare provider.

### **Medication**

**WE ADMINISTER MEDICATIONS FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY.** Only medications which have been documented by the child's healthcare provider as necessary in an emergency can be stored at school and administered by school staff. Please see your Physical Exam form and Severe Allergy Plan for further information if needed. These emergency medications are taken on all walks and outings. Please **do not** send **any** medication in your child's backpack.

### **Allergies**

Please inform us of **any allergies** your child may have and return the Severe Allergy Care Plan form that was included in your enrollment packet along with any emergency medication prescribed by your physician. Any over the counter medication must be labeled with the child's name and prescribed dosage; prescription medication must have the pharmacy label present. If for any reason this is not possible, please notify the office as soon as possible. **All forms and medications must be on file in order for a child to begin school.** Please notify the school of any changes as they occur.

### **Injuries**

First aid will be administered for minor injuries. All accidents/injuries will be reported on accident forms and given to parents.

### **OBSERVATIONS/VISITS/CELEBRATIONS**

You are welcome to visit your child any time, but please consider the following recommendations regarding visits. After the first six weeks of school, we encourage you to spend time in your child's class. (We consider the first six weeks of school to be a time for children to settle into the routine of the class without the distraction of visitors.) Whether it is a formal observation, a visit, or as a volunteer, we hope you enjoy your time at school!

Due to the limited amount of space, we try not to schedule more than two visiting adults at a time; for this reason, we ask that you call the office to schedule your visit or observation.

All visitors to the school must sign in at the front desk.

### **Observations**

Observations provide an opportunity for parents to sit back and watch the class. Should you wish to do a formal observation, you will be asked to be seated in our "grown up" chair rather than interacting with the children. This avoids confusion for the children by maintaining consistency in

the Montessori learning environment. It also supports developing independence by helping the children rely on their own problem solving abilities.

#### **Visiting the Class During School**

We hope that you will visit your child in class. This is a time to join your child in their day. Children are VERY excited to have their Mom or Dad share all or part of their day with them. However, in order to maintain a school environment that supports the children's independence, we may limit the number and frequency of visitors. Due to our limited space, please schedule your visit through the office.

#### **Visiting the Class Before or After School Hours**

You are welcome to drop in shortly before or after school to observe projects that your son or daughter has been working on, or simply to have them show you around the classroom. Be aware that the teachers are preparing the room at these times and may not be available to talk with you.

#### **Visiting Siblings**

On occasion, you may wish to have your older son or daughter visit. We welcome their visit. Please call the office to schedule the visit.

#### **Visiting Grandparents**

Grandparents are always welcome at school. As with all other visits, we ask that you call to schedule ahead of time. We also welcome grandparents as volunteers!

### **BIRTHDAYS**

#### **In School**

Birthdays are celebrated in a low-key style at school. Your child's teacher will talk with you about the celebration as it gets closer to the date. You may join your child for the birthday celebration if you would like.

We encourage you to consider donating a book in your child's name to the school library. Please write your child's name and birth date in the book. Please choose a book from the Children's Garden Wish List on Amazon.com, or choose a book which reflects an interest of your child.

#### **Summer Birthday**

Please talk with your child's teachers to arrange a date to celebrate a summer birthday during the school year.

#### **Birthday Parties Outside of School**

Please mail invitations. We also ask that you not send your child to school with a gift for another child. This may cause hurt feelings and confusion.

#### **Celebrating Traditional Holidays**

Children's Garden does not typically celebrate holidays like Halloween or Valentine's Day. We believe in today's world, having a calm, predictable place for children each day helps them cope with the excitement of holidays. If we do celebrate a holiday, we will celebrate it as a cultural event, and may ask for help from parents with diverse cultural backgrounds or knowledge.

## **WORKING WITH FAMILIES**

### **Parent Library**

The Leah Cohen Memorial Library contains a number of books on parenting, Montessori education, the Reggio approach, and recent research in the field of early childhood education. Parents are invited to check any of the books out for a three-week period. Donations are welcome.

## **PUBLICATIONS/COMMUNICATION**

### **School Calendar**

We follow a traditional school year calendar with respect to the Fall, Winter, and Spring holidays. You will receive a calendar with your registration packet which includes major events and school closings. Current and the following month calendars will be included with the monthly school newsletter. An interactive calendar with details of all events is on our website.

### **Teacher Work Days/In-service Days**

Generally, one day each month is designated as a teacher workday. No classes are held on these days. The purpose is for the teachers to meet, prepare new materials, work on new or revised programs and take additional training. These teacher workdays will be noted on the calendar you will receive prior to the start of school. On occasion, it may be necessary to change or add additional teachers' work days to allow the teachers to attend a conference or seminar. If this should happen, we will notify you well in advance.

### **School Directory**

A publication containing names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and general information will be distributed each September. The School Directory is to be used for school matters only, never to solicit business.

### **School Newsletter**

The school publishes a monthly newsletter which contains information on upcoming events, class needs, and topics of interest. The newsletter will be emailed to each family and will also be available on line at [www.cgmontessori.com](http://www.cgmontessori.com). Once a year, the school publishes a large newsletter containing articles on policy, education, child development, and school development.

**Class Newsletter**

Each class emails a monthly newsletter highlighting what is happening in that classroom. The teachers will also email you about class events.

**Non-School Announcements, Advertising**

The school does not distribute fliers or announcements for outside events unless they are specifically related to the school and approved by the Head of School. For example, the school would announce fundraising events or discounts at local businesses where part of the proceeds benefits the school.

**CONFERENCES**

Your child's teacher's primary concern is with your child's growth and development. If something happens at home or in your child's life, which is significant or may be disruptive, we would like to know as soon as possible. Adults often underestimate the effects of seemingly small changes at home, like a move to a new bed, a parent's trip, unusual medication, or just a bad night's sleep. We often observe behavioral changes at school and can help a child if we understand more about their home situation. Your communication to us is important and is confidential. If we spot significant changes we will contact you.

**Touch Base Phone Call**

Sometime after the first six weeks of school, one of your child's teachers will call you to touch base with you and address any questions about your child's adjustment to the school. If you are unavailable at the time of the call, please let the teacher know if you would like them to call back and the best time to do so.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, fall and spring. No school will be held on these days so that we may concentrate on visiting with you about your child.

Conferences are twenty minutes long, and both parents should attend if possible. The spring conference includes a written report. Since our teachers work as teams, it is possible that one teacher will prepare the fall conference report, and another will be responsible for the spring report. Additional written reports will be prepared only when a child is transferring to another school. When we receive a written release from you, we will send the child's records to the designated school.

**Concerns/Questions**

We encourage you to call or email whenever you have a question or concern. A message will be taken for your child's teachers and one of them will contact you as soon as possible. Likewise, if your child's teachers have questions or concerns, you will be contacted as soon as possible. The following email addresses are checked regularly by the teachers: [toddlers@cgmontessori.com](mailto:toddlers@cgmontessori.com); [440am@cgmmontessori.com](mailto:440am@cgmmontessori.com); [440pm@cgmontessori.com](mailto:440pm@cgmontessori.com); [wham@cgmontessori.com](mailto:wham@cgmontessori.com); [xp@cgmontessori.com](mailto:xp@cgmontessori.com)

**Additional Conferences**

Your child's teacher will be happy to schedule special conferences with you, if you or s/he feels the need to do so.

#### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Many opportunities are available for parents who wish to volunteer. An orientation for parents wishing to volunteer in the classroom or studio will be held in the fall.

If there are any special projects you would like to present to your child's class, just let the teacher know. We welcome your involvement and support!

#### **PARENT MEETINGS AND ALL SCHOOL FUNCTIONS**

During school events where parents, students, and frequently siblings, are in attendance it is not possible for the teachers to supervise the children as they do in a "normal" school situation. We ask that parents keep their children with them and closely supervise them during such events. Although these occasions are great for community building and give the children a chance to socialize in a different way, they do present the opportunity for heightened energy and activity. Our goal is for everyone to have an enjoyable, safe experience at these functions.

The following events are scheduled each year. Specific dates, times, and details will be published in the monthly newsletters just before the event.

##### **Back to School Picnic**

The beginning of each year is celebrated with an all school picnic. The picnic takes place in the beginning of September at a Denver park. This picnic is for the entire family - siblings and caregivers are welcome. Families provide their own meals. There is no rain date scheduled for the picnic.

##### **Back to School Nights**

This evening meeting is for parents only and will feature a media presentation of your children at work. A potluck dinner is usually held before the presentation.

##### **Grandparents' and Special Friends' Day**

The day before the Thanksgiving break is set aside for our grandparents or special friends to join in the regular routine of the class day. This is open house style - there is no presentation or performance.

##### **The Ezra Griffith Carlson Memorial Lecture Series**

Lectures of interest to parents will be scheduled throughout the school year. If any parent has an idea for a topic or speaker, please let us know.

**Parents' Night in the Studio**

This is a very special evening at Children's Garden when parents have a hands-on experience of what their children do in the art studio. They have the opportunity, working in groups, to create projects to leave in the studio for the children.

**Earth Day**

Earth Day is held on a Saturday in the spring. All of our families are invited to school to garden, paint, and spruce things up in our outdoor environment.

**End of School Picnic**

The end of each year is celebrated with an all school picnic held at a Denver park. This picnic is for the entire family. Siblings, grandparents, and caregivers are welcome. Families provide their own meals. There is no rain date scheduled for the picnic.

**Mothers' Night/Fathers' Night**

Two evenings a year, one for moms and one for dads of the primary program, are set aside for a parent, relative, or special friend to come and experience the classroom activities with the children.

**Parent Appreciation Day**

This social event is for all the children and their parents, and takes place in the spring. A special friend or relative is welcome to attend if a parent cannot.

**Individual Class Gatherings/Events**

In addition to the events scheduled on the school calendar, each class may have additional meetings or social gatherings. These will be noted in the class newsletters.

**FUNDRAISING/CONTRIBUTIONS**

Approximately 85% of tuition income is used to pay the teachers' salaries and benefits. We feel fortunate to have a highly qualified and dedicated faculty. We are committed to maintaining a topnotch staff with a minimum of turnover. In order to do this, salaries need to be competitive with the market.

The remaining 15% of our tuition income must cover the mortgage, utilities, insurance, maintenance, administrative costs, supplies and some scholarships. Money raised through fundraising and contributions helps to provide teacher benefits (including, but not limited to teacher training, conferences, continuing education); fund our Artist in Residence program; bring outside resources into the classrooms; support our scholarship program.

In short, your contributions allow us to provide a full and diverse experience for the children.

**FUNDRAISING EVENTS**

### **Annual Auction (Fall)**

Each year, usually in October, our parents organize the annual auction, the largest fundraiser for the school.

### **Arts Festival (Spring)**

The annual Arts Festival is held at the school and celebrates the children's studio and classroom experiences for that year. The children's work and the work of visiting artists and artists in residence are exhibited. Donations are accepted to help fund the arts program.

### **Un-Birthday (Winter)**

The party is for the entire family and features age-appropriate activities and games for the children as well as refreshments. Prior to the party, the teachers make up a "wish list" of gifts the teachers would like for the classrooms; families can make contributions to cover the cost of items of their choice

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Annual Fund**

Contributions to our Annual Fund help to support our teacher benefits program.

### **Scholarships**

Over the years, some of our families have chosen to fund a scholarship for a child or teacher. These include the **Zach's Place Scholarship** for faculty. This scholarship, in memory of Lee Woodworth and Zach Hills, allows teachers to continue their education in the arts. The **9/11 Children's Memorial Scholarship** funded by Ken and Lynne Siegel, in memory of Zoe and Dana Falkenberg, helps to support a family in need of tuition assistance. If you would like to contribute to any of these scholarships or start a new scholarship fund, please contact the office.

### **Giving Stocks**

If you are thinking about making a donation to Children's Garden, think about giving shares of stock. This is a great way to save your family money while helping your school.

To make gifts of stock, contact the school for further information. Please notify the school of any transfers, so we may acknowledge your gift.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

### **Toddler Program**

A child is eligible for the Toddler Program who is:

- 18 months by August 31st/fall enrollment (birth date by March 31<sup>st</sup>).
- 18 months by December 31<sup>st</sup>/winter enrollment (birth date by June 30<sup>th</sup>).
- Enrollment is dependent on space availability and classroom age and gender balance.
- Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

### Toddler to Primary Transition

- A child who turns 3 on or before August 31st moves to the Primary Program in August at the beginning of the school year.
- A child who turns 3 on or before December 31st moves to the Primary Program in the fall or in January after returning from the December holidays.
- Deciding if a toddler is ready to transition to the Primary program is based on the following criteria:
  1. Space must be available in the Primary Program. Generally for mid-year transition open spaces are in the **afternoon class**.
  2. The child is 3 by December 31st
  3. The child is functioning independently with the process of toileting
- Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.

Commented [D1]: We need to talk with Jamie about this.

### Primary Program

A child is eligible for the Primary Program who is:

- 3 years of age on or before August 31st for fall enrollment
- Independent with the process of toileting
- Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.
- Enrollment is dependent upon space availability and classroom age and gender balance.

Commented [D2]: Also this.

### Extended Primary Program

The Extended Primary Class is intended for children in their third year of the Montessori Primary three-year cycle (not including years in the toddler class.) For some children this will be the Kindergarten year; for others whose birthday does not meet the public and private school age cut-off requirements, this will be the year before Kindergarten.

Acceptance into the program is based on the following criteria:

- Space availability
- Age – The recommended age is 4 years 9 months or older on or before August 31st
- Enrolled in the Primary Program and attending in the morning
- Teacher recommendation based on readiness determined by the child's social and emotional maturity, stamina, self-direction and regulation

Exceptions for children who do not meet these criteria will be considered on a case by case basis dependent upon space availability, age, parent request, teacher recommendation as described above, classroom experience, and classroom dynamics.

**Because we sometimes are not able to accommodate all of the children who meet our criteria, we have established the following eligibility priority tiers for Extended Primary:**

Group I Priority (space is assured)

- Their Kindergarten year
- 5 years old by August 31st
- In 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a Montessori Primary Program

Group II Priority (space is assured)

- 4 years 9 months by August 31st In 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a Montessori Primary Program
- Group III Priority (Space is not assured)
- 4 1/2 years by August 31st
  - In 2<sup>nd</sup> plus year of a Montessori Primary
  - Children transferring from other Montessori schools who meet age criteria

### **Class Placements**

While we try to accommodate preferences, we cannot guarantee placement within a particular class or time slot.

Balance of age and gender, the needs of each child and each class as a whole are all considered in placement. In keeping with Montessori philosophy, we attempt to keep children with the same class for the entire three year cycle of the Primary Program.

Priority tiers for placement are:

- Currently enrolled children in each particular class/program
- Currently enrolled children who are eligible to transition
- New siblings of returning children
- New siblings of currently enrolled children who are not returning.
- Siblings or children of alums
- All other applicants

A lottery and waitlists are created when there are more children eligible to enroll or transition than there are spaces available.

Please call the Admissions Office with any questions regarding class placements or enrollment.

### **Re-Enrollment**

Re-Enrollment forms are sent out in January for the upcoming school year. Enrollment forms for siblings are sent with the re-enrollment materials.

### **FEES**

#### **New Child Enrollment**

The New Child Enrollment Fee of \$500 is due at the time of initial enrollment for each child and is non-refundable.

#### **Re-Enrollment Fee**

The Re-enrollment Fee of \$300 is due in January along with the re-enrollment forms and is non-refundable.

### **Tuition**

We operate under the terms of a tuition contract. The annual tuition may be paid in full or in installments. The first tuition deposit is due on March 15<sup>th</sup>. The contract and a second deposit is due on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The remaining installments are due the beginning of each month from September through April. All installment payments must be made through our direct withdrawal program. Direct withdrawals will be processed on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month or the next business day after the 5<sup>th</sup> from September through April. If for any reason funds are not available for transfer from your account to Children's Garden per the agreement on the Direct Withdrawal Form, a handling fee will be added when it is reprocessed. This fee will be determined by the bank fees charged. If the payment is not made current through reprocessing the debit or payment by check within 5 days of the bank notification, your account is considered past due.

Tuition is based on the full school year. The school does not pro-rate for missed days. Parents are obligated to pay tuition for the entire school year even if they should withdraw their child from the program.

#### **Financial Aid**

A limited number of partial scholarships are available. All inquiries and applications are confidential and evaluated on a case by case basis. Children's Garden contracts with Student Scholarship Services (SSS) to collect and evaluate requests for financial assistance. Anyone may apply. Please contact the Admissions Office for information.

#### **Non Discrimination Policy**

Children's Garden Montessori School offers placement to children from 18 months to 6 years of age. The school admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies and other school administered programs.

#### **Children with Special Needs**

The admission of a child with special needs must be in compliance with the American Disabilities Act, and a reasonable effort will be made to accommodate the child's needs and to integrate the child. Children's Garden will accept children who are eligible to be mainstreamed. Acceptance will be determined on availability of spaces.

#### **Television and Video Viewing**

There are no televisions at Children's Garden. Videos that are directly related to units of study may occasionally be viewed. All videos must be G rated.

#### **URGENT EVENT SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Colorado Department of Human Services regulations require that the school publish the following policies:

## Missing Child Policy

Procedure for being sure we know where each child in at any time:

### Toddlers (18 mos. – 3 year olds)

- Parents sign children in on a daily attendance sheet. The same sheet is used to sign children out when a child is picked up from school.
- When the toddlers come inside to use the toilet or have their diaper changed, they are always accompanied by an adult who lets the other teacher know where she is going with the children.
- The toddlers are recounted as they arrive in their classroom from the playground.
- On the day that the toddlers use the art studio, photos are put up to let classroom staff know who is in the studio.
- If a child is missing, the teacher who discovers this immediately alerts fellow teachers in the classroom, as well as the head of school and any other available staff to help locate the child.

### Primary (3 – 6 year olds)

- Parents sign children on a daily attendance sheet. The same sheet is used to sign children out when a child is picked up from school.
- When children move from one place to another (for example, from outside to inside) they are counted and the number is checked against who is signed in.
- Children are required to let a teacher know if they go inside to use the toilet, get a drink, etc.
- The children are recounted as they arrive in their classroom from the playground.
- On the day that a particular class is scheduled to use the art studio, photos are put up to let classroom staff know who is in the studio.
- If a child is missing, the teacher who discovers this immediately alerts fellow teachers in the classroom, as well as the head of school and any other available staff to help locate the child.

Our playground gates are latched at all times, and there are never children outside without adult supervision.

**In the event that a child is missing, and the class is away from the school, the following procedure will be followed:**

1. Teacher calls school
2. School contacts police
3. Teacher or school contacts parents

### Parent Reporting

If you wish to make a complaint or have a concern regarding the school you may call a Denver County licensing specialist at 720-865-5392, or the Colorado Department of Human Services at 303-866-5958.

### Obligation to Report

The school is obligated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. The child abuse hotline is 720-944-3000.

**In the Event of an Emergency**

In the event of an emergency, every attempt will be made to reach the parents. We will follow the call order specified on your child's emergency release form. Please complete the form in its entirety.

**In the Event of a Tornado**

The teachers will take the children to the teacher bathroom and upstairs stairwell. If a tornado warning is in effect, teachers will not remain outside for carpool. Park and come into the building.

**In the Event of a Block Evacuation**

The teachers will take all of the children to the lobby of Bromwell Elementary School located at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Columbine Street. The message on the school phone will be updated.

**In the Event of a Lock-Down:**

Teachers will keep the children inside until notified by the Police or Fire Department that the area is safe. The message on the school phone will be updated.