



## Welcome to Children's Garden for the 2024-25 school year!

We are always striving to effectively communicate with our families. With that in mind, here are a few

### *"Good Things to Know"*

Here you will find your 2024-2025 Parent Handbook and Information.

If your family is new to Children's Garden, you are receiving a full Parent Handbook and binder to keep and add to over your years with the school.

If you are a continuing Children's Garden family, you are receiving 2024-2025 updates to add to your Parent Handbook and binder. The complete up-to-date Parent Handbook will be uploaded to the school website: [cgmontessori.com](http://cgmontessori.com) in Parents>forms and information section.

After reading through the handbook, **please sign and return the verification slip to CGMS.** This verification slip will be included in the registration materials sent to you in Brightwheel.

A few other things to keep in mind:

- **Check your email frequently** as most of our communication with you will be via email. It will usually come from Children's Garden or one of us listed below. We use Constant Contact regularly, which can land in your Promotions or Other section of your email.
- Registration materials come through your Brightwheel Account. Make sure that your child's account is up-to-date with current addresses, phone numbers, emails, medical information, and approved pick-ups. Additional forms and instructions will be uploaded into Brightwheel as well.
- All information and forms must be completed and returned at the beginning of school.
- Please notify any of our Admin Team if you have any question about how to update your information:

Catherine [cramey@cgmontessori.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessori.com)  
Jamie [jboes@cgmontessori.com](mailto:jboes@cgmontessori.com)

Bekke [bhowell@cgmontessori.com](mailto:bhowell@cgmontessori.com)  
Kirsten [info@cgmontessori.com](mailto:info@cgmontessori.com)

- The Parent Handbook is the first place to check when you have questions. If you don't find an answer, feel free to contact one of us at school using the emails listed above.

We are excited and looking forward to getting to know our new families and to spending another year with those of you who are returning. We are fortunate to be part of such a wonderful community at Children's Garden. Have a great summer!

--Revised as of 04/22/2024

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## CGMS PARENTS' FAQ's

**Most of this information is found in the Parent Handbook but here is a snapshot of the most frequently asked questions.**

### **1. How do I communicate with my child's teachers?**

If it is a quick question, at drop-off or pick-up. For longer conversations, you can use the class email to ask your question or suggest a time when the teacher can call you to address your questions or concerns.

### **2. Who do I contact if my child will not be attending school due to illness?**

The best way is to email your child's teachers and copy Kirsten Goode [info@cgmontessori.com](mailto:info@cgmontessori.com) or Bekke Howell [bhowell@cgmontessori.com](mailto:bhowell@cgmontessori.com) --teachers don't always have time to check emails, but Admin can pass messages along.

### **3. If my child will miss school for a few days or an extended period, what do I do?**

You can email your child's teachers directly and include the date of your return. You are always welcome to tell them directly at the gate, but they will remember more easily if it's in writing.

### **4. How do I let the school know if someone who is not on my Authorized Pick-Up list will be picking up from school?**

Whether they are authorized or not, unless it is someone who picks up regularly, you will need to notify your child's teachers of the change either at drop-off or via a phone call to the school. Feel free to leave a message on the main line, if for some reason no one is available to answer. For those not on the Authorized Pick-Up, we must have written permission from you. You can do this by adding them directly in your Brightwheel Account. For one-time occurrences, email the class, Kirsten, and/or Bekke. Please include the person's name and phone number. We will check their ID if they have not picked up before.

## **5. What do I do if my child is going home or getting a ride with another Children's Garden family?**

Again, we must have written permission from you for anyone not on your Authorized Pick-Up list to take your child. You can do this by adding them directly in your Brightwheel Account. For one-time occurrence, email your child's teachers, Kirsten, and/or Bekke.

## **6. How do I let the school know if my address, phone number, authorized pick-up information, medical updates, etc. change?**

You can change this information in your Brightwheel Account. If you are updating your email address, please email your child's class and someone in Administration so that we can update our internal email address books.

## **7. Should I share information with the teachers if my child had a late or sleepless night, a rough time getting to school, fell at home, or just seems a little off their game?**

Yes, please make us aware of anything that might affect your child's behavior at school so that we can support them from a point of knowledge and understanding. You can let the teacher know at the gate, or send an informative email directly to your child's teachers. We know that some situations can be complicated and parents are at times hesitant to share personal details. We pride ourselves in being professionals and keep information shared with us confidential. Children are very sensitive to change, and information helps us to support them in the best way possible.

### **Email Addresses:**

Toddler Classes – [toddlers@cgmontessori.com](mailto:toddlers@cgmontessori.com)

Bekke Howell – [bhowell@cgmontessori.com](mailto:bhowell@cgmontessori.com)

Ward-Hobbs Class – [wham@cgmontessori.com](mailto:wham@cgmontessori.com)

Jamie Boes – [jboes@cgmontessori.com](mailto:jboes@cgmontessori.com)

BJ's Place Class – [440am@cgmontessori.com](mailto:440am@cgmontessori.com)

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

Studio – [studio@cgmontessori.com](mailto:studio@cgmontessori.com)

Kirsten Goode -- [info@cgmontessori.com](mailto:info@cgmontessori.com)

## Changes to the Handbook, 2024-2025

Please be aware, the following items have been changed for the 2024-2025 school year. They are highlighted in blue for easy reading:

### Registration and Required Forms

Registration happens through your child's Brightwheel Account, where you can update and change information throughout the year, as needed. Here you will update contact information, authorize people who your child can be released to, and communicate accurate medical information. Additionally, specific forms will be shared and should be returned using this system. The Colorado Department of Human Services requires new forms each year and the child's file must contain the required information within 2 weeks of the first day of school. If the file is incomplete, we cannot allow the child to attend school.

The information we are required to have includes but is not limited to the following:

- Fill out directly in your Brightwheel Account:
  - Emergency contact information
  - Persons Authorized to Pick-up Child
  - Medical data including diet restrictions, allergies, or special needs
- Separate Forms that are shared in Brightwheel:
  - Emergency Information and Authorization for Treatment and Transportation
  - Permissions and Disclosure Information
  - Record of Health Appraisal from Physician
    - Annual exam is required for children over 2 years
    - Twice annual exam is required for children under 2
    - These documents must be updated as required by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment along with the Denver Department of Human Services.
  - Health Care Plan for children requiring emergency treatment for allergies or other conditions.
  - Immunization Record
    - A record of current immunizations (or exemption form) is required for enrollment.

- Children with Immunization Exemptions: In the event of an outbreak, unimmunized children or adults may be subject to exclusion from school and to quarantine.
- Student Profile: The Student Profile will be sent with other enrollment forms to help your teaching team to better understand your child and their development and learning needs, as well as the needs of your family.

These forms are fillable pdf's and can be completed and returned back using the Brightwheel Portal. You will need to download the forms, fill them out, and then upload them into your account. Additional forms can be found on our website in the Parents tab – Forms and Information. Contact Catherine Ramey directly at [cramey@cgmontessori.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessori.com) with any questions about this process.

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

These suggestions may help prepare your child for their first days at school. [Beginning a new school](#) can be a big step in life. [Young children need time to prepare, but not too much time.](#) A week before the actual date you might mention the fun you know they will have at their new school as they learn new things and spend time with new children. Mentioning specific activities may lead to disappointments, so we recommend that you talk in general terms.

### **Parent Orientation (for Parents Only)**

[Held in May, before we all disperse for the summer,](#) this meeting covers what to expect in the school year and over the summer. We will review how the start of school unfolds, all-school policies, [and what to expect from school life for children and parents](#)--from snack and birthday traditions to parent participation opportunities.

### **Classroom Visits (for Parents and Students)**

[The Friday before the first week of school children and parents will have an appointed drop-in time to briefly visit their classroom together.](#)

### **Back-to-School Social (for Parents and Students)**

During the first weeks of school, the community will organize a picnic at a nearby park for all families. [This is a perfect opportunity to connect with other families in the community!](#)

## **Start of School email (parents)**

Parents are sent a “Start of School” email in the first week of August which will outline schedules and Need to Know information for kicking off the new school year.

## **A TYPICAL TODDLER DAY**

### **Arrival/Outdoor Play**

The children are greeted at the gate by their teachers and have free play outdoors until it's time to go inside. Parents sign their child in using the Brightwheel Check-In Kiosk. Throughout their time at school, class attendees are checked using the Face-to-Name system, several times per session.

### **Work Period**

The children have the option to work independently with the prepared activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Snack is offered during this time. Toileting is another activity supported during this time.

## **A TYPICAL PRIMARY DAY**

### **Arrival**

Children enter the gate closest to their classroom--WH class enters the North gate, BJP class enters the South gate. Parents sign children in using the Brightwheel Check-In Kiosk located with each teacher. Throughout their time at school, class attendees are checked using the Face-to-Name system, several times per session.

### **Outdoor Play**

The children have free play outdoors either at the beginning of class or at the end of the session, depending on the classroom. We encourage children to spend time outside in all varieties of weather. For this reason, please send your child with layers needed for all the different weather possibilities that Colorado offers.

### **“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. These often

occur for a short time at the beginning and then the end of class time, bookending our work period.

### **Dismissal**

At the end of the session, children are dismissed to their gate and their teachers release them directly to parents or persons authorized for pick-up, [who sign them out using the Brightwheel Check-out Kiosk](#). Teachers review all sign-outs to assure that all children have been picked up.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up Etiquette**

**Park and walk your children to the gate designated for their class.** [Parking in this area can be a challenge](#). We recommend parking a short distance from school, and taking the short walk to school. This is a nice way to ease into the school day. Take special care to avoid blocking neighborhood driveways--[they can be hard to spot!](#)

### **WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME**

If your child is not feeling well enough to actively participate in the routine of the day, please keep them at home. We follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services. During certain times when specific illnesses (like COVID-19, RSV, Flu, etc.) have specific recommendations (like isolation requirements, extended time out of the classroom, follow up recommendations), the school reserves the right to adjust our wellness policies as is appropriate to maximize protection of the well-being of our staff and students. Please call or email your child's teachers and/or an administrator to let them know.

#### **There are four main reasons to keep your child home:**

- The child could infect others with a contagious illness.
- The child does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities.
- The child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
- The child has symptoms on this list and staying home is required:
  - Severe or new cough
  - Diarrhea--frequent, loose, or watery stools compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine
  - Fever--a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or greater



- Flu-like symptoms--fever with sore throat or cough, runny nose, congestion, fatigue, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea
- Vomiting

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are twenty to twenty-five 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's Kindergarten or Elementary school](#). When we receive a written release from you, we will send the child's records to the designated school. [Please note, teacher recommendations will not be given for children applying to other area preschool programs.](#)

## **Earth Day (Family Event)**

[Earth Day is celebrated in a variety ways here at CGMS. Early in the spring, families are invited in to help garden, paint, and spruce things up in our outdoor environment. Sometimes this is a specific day. Other years, this is done over a week or two in a lowkey, casual way.](#)

## **Scholarships**

Over the years, some of our families have chosen to fund a scholarship for a child or teacher.

[The Quinn Wright Scholarship](#) is a non-needs based scholarship, awarded to a continuing CGMS student, preferably in their Extended Primary year, by the CGMS Administration. Recipients are children who embody the values of the namesake's family and are chosen on the criteria of those who start their lives needing extra support due to life circumstances beyond their control. Specifically, but not limited to developmental delays, medical conditions, limiting family circumstances, etc. Recipients do not apply, but are chosen from the pool of existing, re-applying students.

The Zach's Place Scholarship for faculty. This scholarship, in memory of Lee Woodworth and Zach Hills.

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.

## **FEES AND TUITION**

### **New Child Enrollment Fee**

The New Child Enrollment Fee of [\\$650](#) is due at the time of initial enrollment for each child and is non-refundable.

### **Re-Enrollment Fee**

The Re-enrollment Fee of [\\$650](#) is due in February with the re-enrollment form and is non-refundable.

### **Tuition**

We operate under the terms of a tuition contract. The annual tuition may be paid in full or installments. The first tuition deposit of \$1000 is due in February with the [\\$650](#) enrollment/re-enrollment fee, [called the Initial Payment](#). The contract and a second deposit are due in May. The remaining installments are due at the beginning of each month from September through April. [All installment payments must be made through our Brightwheel Billing program. Installments using either ACH \(school pays processing fees\) or Credit Cards \(payee pays processing fees\)](#) will be processed on the 5th of the month or the next business day after the 5th, from September through April. If for any reason funds are not available for transfer from your account to Children's Garden, a handling fee determined by bank fees will be added when it is reprocessed. If the payment is not made current through reprocessing 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 prorate for missed days. Parents are obligated to pay tuition for the entire school year even if they should withdraw their child from the program.

## The Denver Preschool Program

Children's Garden is now a participating member of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP). With this program tuition support is available to all families – regardless of income – who have a child who is 4-years-old by October 1st and lives within the City and County of Denver. See the DPP website ([dpp.org](http://dpp.org)) for more information and to submit an application.

## Missing Child Policy

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

### Toddlers (18 mos. – 3 years old)

- Parents sign children in [using the Brightwheel Portal](#). The same portal 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 they are going with the children.
- The toddlers are recounted and checked off on a face-to-name checklist after every transition and periodically throughout the day.
- 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.
- The authorities and the child's parents are notified.

### Primary (3 – 6 years old)

- Parents sign children in [using the Brightwheel Portal](#). The same portal is used to sign children out when a child is picked up from school.
- The children are recounted and checked off on a face-to-name checklist after every transition and periodically throughout the day.
- Children are required to let a teacher know if they go inside to use the toilet, get a drink, etc.
- 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. [Additionally, children hang their feeling person on the chart when they enter the Studio so that the teacher can keep track of who is in the space.](#)

- 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.
- The authorities and the child's parents are notified.

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Children's Garden Montessori School! Our Mission, Vision, and Core Values are deeply embedded in the culture and leadership of the organization. They guide decision-making by the Board, school leadership, and faculty at all levels of the school--from large operational issues, to how the classrooms run day-to-day, to how best to position the school for the future.

## **MISSION**

To create a nurturing community--guided by both Montessori and Reggio philosophies--that educates young children and inspires a life-long love of learning.

## **VISION**

Generations of responsive, aware individuals prepared and empowered to nurture and shape our world.

## **CORE VALUES**

- A blend of Montessori and Reggio Emilia, in both curriculum and philosophy
- An environment that is a haven for teachers, children and parents alike
- A diverse and inclusive community that honors and respects the similarities and differences in people, cultures and ideas
- Teachers who are sensitive, creative, dedicated and well-trained
- Sound financial business policies that support the long-term viability and excellence of the school

We have created this handbook to answer many of the questions we have received over the years. The era we live in calls for extra flexibility and patience from us all. As an organization, we will remain flexible in how we approach the potential curve balls that circumstances may throw our way. We ask that you have patience with us as we navigate any number of new circumstances and know that our priorities are always to act in the best interest of the children, families, and faculty who make up our organization. We look forward to working with you and your children.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Phone: 303-322-0972**

**Fax: 303-322-7949**

**Office Administrator: Catherine Ramey [cramey@cgmontessori.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessori.com)**

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

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

**General Information: Kirsten Goode [info@cgmontessori.com](mailto:info@cgmontessori.com)**

**Ward-Hobbs am/pm/xp Classes: [wham@cgmontessori.com](mailto:wham@cgmontessori.com)**

**Toddler am/pm Classes: [toddlers@cgmontessori.com](mailto:toddlers@cgmontessori.com)**

**BJ's Place am/pm/xp Classes: [440am@cgmontessori.com](mailto:440am@cgmontessori.com)**

**Studio/Zach's Place: [studio@cgmontessori.com](mailto:studio@cgmontessori.com)**

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

## HISTORY OF CHILDREN'S GARDEN

Children's Garden Montessori School began as a parent co-operative in 1972. 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 preschool children and to working with their parents to bring out the abilities of each child at their 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.



## **CLASSROOMS AND FACILITY**

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

**Ward-Hobbs (WHAM/WHPM/WHXP)** (north classroom) is a Primary. There are three teachers and up to 27 children. The morning and afternoon sessions are both mixed age groups of 3-6 year olds. This room is named after two of our founders, Judy Ward and Bobbie Hobbs.

**BJ's Place (BJP AM/BJP PM/BJP XP)** (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. This room is named in honor of long-time employee Beverly Jackson who retired in 2023.

**Extended Primary (XP)** is the term used for those children who attend school here all day. XP children attend a mixed age classroom all day. They bring lunch to enjoy and carve out special times during the day to work on age-appropriate curriculum. As circumstances allow, we provide opportunities for WHXP and 440XP students to socialize and collaborate as a large group.

**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. This is set up as a creative laboratory where students work in collaboration to explore the 100 languages of expression under the guidance of a teacher who specializes in the Reggio Emilia approach.

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

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

### **IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF OUR PROGRAMS**

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 works 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 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 single activity or teacher is responsible for all that your child learns, it is a continuous process that at times is either subtle or dramatic.

Because we embrace the Reggio Emilia approach, we support creative expression and collaborative explorations. Children learn and express themselves using various tools and mediums - not only spoken and written language, but also hands-on exploration of materials, art, dance, music, drama etc. Zach's Place allows children to explore their ideas in a different way than they might in the Montessori classrooms. The studio teacher works closely with the Montessori teachers to coordinate their curriculum, so each part of our program supports the other.

Beyond curriculum, we believe children require the freedom to build relationships, negotiate emotions, and navigate conflict. As educators, we actively support and

scaffold all the facets of child development in our students. Knowing that children of this age are new to social interactions and emotions, the adults provide an environment that allows for scaffolded social construction.

## **STARTING SCHOOL**

### **REGISTRATION AND REQUIRED FORMS**

Registration happens through your child's Brightwheel Account, where you can update and change information throughout the year, as needed. Here you will update contact information, authorize people who your child can be released to, and communicate accurate medical information. Additionally, specific forms will be shared and should be returned using this system. The Colorado Department of Human Services requires new forms each year and the child's file must contain the required information within 2 weeks of the first day of school. If the file is incomplete, we cannot allow the child to attend school.

The information we are required to have includes but is not limited to the following:

- Fill out directly in your Brightwheel Account:
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  - Health Care Plan for children requiring emergency treatment for allergies or other conditions.
  - Immunization Record

- A record of current immunizations (or exemption form) is required for enrollment.
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- Student Profile: The Student Profile will be sent with other enrollment forms to help your teaching team to better understand your child and their development and learning needs, as well as the needs of your family.

**These forms are fillable pdf's and can be completed and returned back using the Brightwheel Portal. You will need to download the forms, fill them out, and then upload them into your account. Additional forms can be found on our website in the Parents tab – Forms and Information. Contact Catherine Ramey directly at [cramey@cgmontessor.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessor.com) with any questions about this process.**

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

Transitions refer to the process of a child moving from one program or setting to another, for example, the transition from home care to formal care, to a new classroom within a program, or from one program to another. At CGMS, we recognize that stability and consistency are important for a child's development and acknowledge that young children accomplish different developmental milestones at different rates. Smooth transitions support children's academic and social success and contribute to the well-being of the child and their family. At CGMS, we support intentional and thoughtful transition practices for children and their families.

These suggestions may help prepare your child for their first days at school. Beginning a new school can be a big step in life. Young children need time to prepare, but not too much time. A week before the actual date you might mention the fun you know they will have at their new school as they learning new things and spend time with new children. Mentioning specific activities may lead to disappointments, so we recommend that you talk in general terms.

### **Parent Orientation (for Parents Only)**

Held in May, before we all disperse for the summer, this meeting is all about what to expect in the school year and over the summer. We will review how the start of school unfolds, all-school policies, classroom routines, expectations, and what to expect from

school life for children and parents--from snack and birthday traditions to parent participation opportunities.

### **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 minutes.

### **Classroom Visits (for Parents and Students)**

The Friday before the first week of school children and parents will have an appointed drop-in time to briefly visit their classroom together.

### **Back-to-School Social (for Parents and Students)**

During the first weeks of school, the community will organize a picnic at a nearby park for all families. This is a perfect opportunity to connect with other CG families!

### **Start of School email (parents)**

Parents are sent a "Start of School" email in the first week of August which will outline schedules and Need to Know information for kicking off the new school year.

## **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 4x6 photos of your child for labeling
- A pair of slippers for your child to wear at school. We prefer children wear either Croc or Native-like styles—indoor shoes that are easy to clean and stand up to extra washing.
- A small backpack to bring daily containing diapers and wipes, or underwear (multiple pairs), and a change of clothes.

### **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. Anything that is easy for children to put on and take off, and additionally fits snugly to support gross motor navigation in the classroom.
- A complete change of clothes for your child to keep at school, easy for your child to manage and change themselves.
- Due to shared cubby space, we prefer children to NOT bring a backpack to school.

### **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 this age group should bring a backpack large enough to fit their lunch container, weather-related clothing layers, and extra work into. As they are our oldest students, they often have products related to their classroom work.

### **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 in their class. A schedule and suggestions will be sent home at the beginning of the year and periodically throughout the year.

Due to extreme sensitivity of some children, **no peanut or nut products of any kind are allowed at school.** This includes food 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.**

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. **Cowboy boots, sandals, and party shoes are difficult and often dangerous to run and climb in.**

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. **Please avoid adult dependent fastenings like crotch snaps and overalls. Costumes, capes, and**

**accessories (including but not limited to crowns, necklaces, and dress-up masks) can be dangerous and disruptive to play. Please leave these items at home.**

### **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. **Please avoid adult dependent fastenings like crotch snaps and overalls. Costumes, capes, and accessories (including but not limited to crowns, necklaces, and dress-up masks) can be dangerous and disruptive to play. Please leave these items at home.**

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.** Send your child to school in shoes that fit and are appropriate for climbing, running and walking.

### **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. When the temperature is 20 degrees or below, we follow the Weather Guidelines for Children and structure our programs accordingly.

### **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 it's time to go inside. Parents sign their child in using the Brightwheel Check-In Kiosk. Throughout their time at school, class attendees are checked using the Face-to-Name system, several times per session.

### **Work Period**

The children have the option to work independently with the prepared activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Snack is offered during this time. Toileting is another activity supported during this time.

### **Toileting**

We are here to support your family in this developmental process. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one 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.

## **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. Teachers release children directly to parents or persons authorized for pick-up. Teachers review all sign-outs to assure that all children have been picked up.

## **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**

Children enter the gate closest to their classroom--WH class enters the North gate, BJP class enters the South gate. Parents sign children in using the Brightwheel Check-In

Kiosk located with each teacher. Throughout their time at school, class attendees are checked using the Face-to-Name system, several times per session.

### **Outdoor Play**

The children have free play out of doors either at the beginning of class or at the end of the session, depending on the classroom. We encourage children to spend time outside in all varieties of weather. For this reason, please send your child with layers needed for all the different weather possibilities that Colorado offers.

### **“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. These often occur for a short time at the beginning and then the end of class time, bookending our work period.

### **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. Snack is offered during this time.

### **Dismissal**

At the end of the session, children are dismissed to their gate and their teachers release them directly to parents or persons authorized for pick-up, who sign them out using the Brightwheel Check-out Kiosk. Teachers review all sign-outs to assure that all children have been picked up.

## **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

## **EDUCATION DOESN'T END AT THE GATE**

It is well documented that the beginning years of all children's lives are critical for building the early foundations of learning and wellness needed for success in school and later in life. During these years, children's brains develop rapidly, influenced by the experiences they share with their families, teachers, peers, and in their communities. Because Montessori is intended to provide real-life skills, your child's education will be complemented by many activities outside school hours. You are most likely already doing many of these things, but here is a list to give some additional ideas:

- 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
- Limit or prohibit screen time to support children's tactile experiences and to extend their ability to pay attention.

- Resist over-scheduling your child with structured classes and activities outside of school. We strive to provide a rich and varied learning environment, and participation in academic/tutoring groups might decrease interest in those types of activities at school. Additionally, be aware that our school is not affiliated with any extra-curricular activities.

## **SUPPORTING ALL TYPES OF LEARNERS**

Identifying developmental issues that may affect a child's success in school and later in life and supporting the family to obtain early intervention is the key to mediating any issues that may arise for a child. If the parent or teaching team of an enrolled child has a concern that their child has a developmental delay or other problem (physical, developmental, emotional, social, or behavioral), staff will support the parent with contacting the appropriate agency. We have a working relationship with a child development specialist, and may suggest that parents seek professional guidance. Additionally, we have a comprehensive list of places that provide developmental testing and therapeutic services. We are happy to share this resource upon request of either the classroom teachers or the Head of School.

CGMS is an environment that strives to accommodate the learning and developmental needs and goals of all children. Families with a child who has identified special needs and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) are encouraged to provide a copy of the plan to CGMS which is shared only with the child's teaching team and is kept locked in that child's file. Sharing the education plan ensures that teachers and staff working with your child are aware of the goals for the child and strategies used with the child that are both developmentally appropriate and support the child's learning goals. If there are any changes to the information, please make sure that the child's classroom team and the Director are made aware of those changes. Providing us and the doctor and therapists with a signed release allowing free exchange of information also encourages better communication between all parties and allows the program to better meet the needs of the child.

It is important to note, that although CGMS will work with all children to address a variety of disabilities, our staff does not have specialized degrees or expertise that may

be needed to address every disability or health need. In the event that the parent or teaching team have a concern regarding any one child's development, the parents and the teachers will meet and discuss all available options that will provide the child with necessary help and interventions. This is a collaborative venture; participation and cooperation of all involved parties is needed to meet the learning and development needs of the child. In some cases, the administrative staff in consultation with the family, the nurse consultant, and/or other specialists may determine that we cannot meet the needs of a child or family, we may require the child to withdraw from school.

## **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 ETIQUETTE**

**Park and walk your children to the gate designated for their class.** Parking in this area can be a challenge. We recommend parking a short distance from school, and taking the short walk to school. This is a nice way to ease into the school day. Take special care to avoid blocking neighborhood driveways--they can be hard to spot!

**Drop-off locations and times for each class are:**

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>GATE</b>	<b>ARRIVAL</b>	<b>DISMISSAL</b>
WH AM	North	8:15	11:15
BJP AM	South	8:15	11:15
WH PM	North	12:15	3:15
BJP PM	South	12:15	3:15

WH XP	North	8:15	2:45
BJP XP	South	8:15	2:45
Toddler AM	Center	8:30	11:00
Toddler PM	Center	12:30	3:00

One of your child's teachers will meet you at the gate at arrival and dismissal. Remember to hang up your phone while interacting at the gate, and take the time to connect with the teacher and your child. Please sign your child in and out daily. The teachers are careful to dismiss children one at a time. Please be patient. We have staggered arrival and dismissal times arranged to keep the flow of traffic steady. **Please be mindful of others who need to drop off or pick up, and limit your time in our loading zone.**

**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 in your Brightwheel Account. 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 south gate to enter and exit.

**Over the years we have had a good relationship with our neighbors. As much as we can, we try to minimize the impact that we have on the neighborhood. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in supervising your children while waiting outside the gate, and your attention to cultivating their awareness and respect for the neighbors.**

### **Parking**

Parking on the **west side** of Detroit (and the north sides of 4th and 5th) 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.

### **Late Arrival**

Please park and come through the main door. **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 is not possible, the child will remain with a staff member until the class returns.

### **Late Pick Up**

Teachers remain at the gate for 10 minutes following the posted dismissal time. Please call the desk if you are running late so that we can let your child and the teacher know. If tardiness becomes a problem, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for any child picked up 10 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 or other circumstances require, school will be canceled. Canceled school days will not be made up. Should the need to cancel school arise, parents will be notified via text message through our texting system. Additionally, 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. If closures are required for extended periods, educational support opportunities will be provided.

## **WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME**

If your child is not feeling well enough to actively participate in the routine of the day, please keep them at home. We follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services. During certain times when specific illnesses (like COVID-19, RSV, Flu, etc.) have specific recommendations (like isolation requirements, extended time out of the classroom, follow up recommendations), the school reserves the right to adjust our wellness policies as is appropriate to maximize protection of the well-being of our staff and students. Please call or email your child's teachers and/or an administrator to let them know.

### **There are four main reasons to keep your child home:**

- The child could infect others with a contagious illness.
- The child does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities.
- The child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
- The child has symptoms on this list and staying home is required:
  - Severe or new cough
  - Diarrhea--frequent, loose, or watery stools compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine
  - Fever--a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or greater
  - Flu-like symptoms--fever with sore throat or cough, runny nose, congestion, fatigue, body aches, vomiting, and diarrhea
  - Vomiting

If your child becomes ill at school, they 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.

## **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. Special allowances may be made under certain circumstances. 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. **All medication must be in its original packaging. All forms and medications must be on file for a child to begin school.** Please notify the school of any changes as they occur.

### **Diet Restrictions**

Please advise the school **in writing** if you limit your child's diet e.g. no gluten, vegetarian, vegan, red food dye, etc. (not including allergies).

### **Injuries**

First aid will be administered for minor injuries. All accidents/injuries will be reported on accident forms and given to parents. If the accident involves a hit to the head or a concerning mark, you will receive a phone call from a teacher or other staff member.

## **OBSERVATIONS/VISITS/CELEBRATIONS**

You will be 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 either communicate directly with the teachers in your child's class or 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 parent 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 teachers.

### **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! As fun as it is to come back and visit your former school, it can also turn out to be not quite as exciting as it was, with your former friends no longer there. Keep this in mind, and limit their visiting time to around an hour. Please schedule your visit through the teachers.

### **Visiting Grandparents**

Grandparents are always welcome at school. As with all other visits, we ask that you call or email 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 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 or email 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.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

### **Walking Field Trips**

Because of the short day, most field trips are walking field trips in the neighborhood. Children partner up and walk around the block, to a nearby park, or to a variety of businesses from the Public Library to a local Starbucks. Teachers bring contact information for each child, first aid kits, emergency medication, and cell phones. Ratios are strictly maintained.

### **Other Field Trips**

Occasionally, classes take field trips to off-site locations not within walking distance. For these, parents are informed well in advance and permission slips are required for participation. Parents transport children to and from the location. Again, teachers bring contact information for each child, first aid kits, emergency medication, and cell phones. Ratios are strictly maintained.

## **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. 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. Upcoming calendar dates and events will

be included with the weekly 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 weekly newsletter which contains information on upcoming events, class needs, and topics of interest. The newsletter will be emailed to each family on Friday afternoon via Constant Contact.

### **Class Newsletter**

Classes will update families about recent studies regularly and 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.

If your family is experiencing trauma or other challenges and needs the support of a community-based resource or service, we can help you connect with those supports. Services may focus on children's developmental needs, for example early intervention screenings or family needs, such as housing, job, and food assistance. We can also provide you with information on a variety of topics including child development, nutrition, parenting, and among other topics, discipline. If you need support, you can contact us any time by speaking personally with your child's teacher or the Director, or you can phone or email us. Please let us know how we can best support you.

### **Touch Base Phone Call**

Sometime during 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. Teachers put a great deal of time and effort into preparing for these conferences, and the school specifically sets aside time to support parent-teacher connection. We ask that you refrain from scheduling vacations during this time.

Conferences are twenty to twenty-five 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's Kindergarten or Elementary school. When we receive a written release from you, we will send the child's records to the designated school. Please note, teacher recommendations will not be given for children applying to other area preschool programs.

### **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 once daily by the teachers: [toddlers@cgmontessori.com](mailto:toddlers@cgmontessori.com); [440am@cgmmontessori.com](mailto:440am@cgmmontessori.com); [wham@cgmontessori.com](mailto:wham@cgmontessori.com); **Please refrain from contacting individual teachers directly via personal email/text.** While children are in their care, teachers are focused on observing and guiding them. They will not be checking email. Expect to hear from classrooms within 24 hours.

### **Additional Conferences**

Your child's teacher will schedule special conferences with you, if you or they feel the need to do so.

### **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

All parents and guardians of children attending Children's Garden are members of the Parent Community, which provides a medium for parents to participate in and augment the school community in a variety of ways. There is no requirement to volunteer, but we encourage parents to join us as volunteers to develop in their own roles as parents and take part in an active social community. There are various opportunities and committees which include: Parent Education, Community Engagement and Outreach, Classroom and Administrative Support, Teacher Appreciation and, of course, various Fundraising Events. Details of these volunteer opportunities are included in registration materials.



## **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.

### **Grandparents’ and Special Friends’ Day (Grandparent and Child)**

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.

### **Earth Day (Family Event)**

Earth Day is celebrated in a variety of ways here at CGMS. Early in the spring, families are invited in to help garden, paint, and spruce things up in our outdoor environment. Sometimes this is a specific day. Other years, this is done over a week or two in a lowkey, casual way.

### **End of School Picnic (Family Event)**

The end of each year is celebrated with an all school picnic held on the school lawn between the morning session and the afternoon session on the last day of school. This picnic is for the entire family. Families bring their own lunch. There is no rain date scheduled for the picnic.

### **Pick-a- Parent Nights (Parent and Child)**

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

### **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.

### **Arts Festivals (Family Event)**

Once a year the school puts on an Arts Festival to celebrate the children's explorations and experiences for that year. Documentation sharing the process is displayed in addition to the children's work and the work of visiting artists are exhibited.

### **Parent Meetings and Education Events (Parent only events)**

At least two events related to important developmental subjects will be held each year, in addition to the following annual events:

- **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.
- **What's Next? Navigating What Comes Next:** An informal meeting with staff and other parents about next steps for your child--XP? Kindergarten? First Grade? Through discussion, we talk about what to look for in a future school and how to prepare your child for the future!
- **XP Information Night:** This evening provides information about our dynamic program for our oldest students. The Montessori experience for 5 and 6 year-olds is rich with opportunities not found in typical kindergarten programs:
  - Individualized learning coupled with social negotiation and collaborative projects.
  - Designed specifically for the needs of young students.
  - The exciting and "explosive" 3rd year of the Montessori 3-year Primary cycle.
    - Solidify and expand on foundational concepts and skills - blossom into broader learning and deeper understanding.
    - Leap into leadership roles and opportunities often not seen in school settings again until much older.
- **Curator's Talk:** This talk will provide a glimpse at your child's creative learning, as well as some of our observations and insights from the year. In an effort to foster meaningful community connections within a context of dialog the Curator's Talk will coincide with our annual Art Show and your child's Parent/Teacher conferences. Both will provide a better vantage from which to thoroughly appreciate your child's whole school experience.

## **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 and assure a living wage.

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, 403B funding, health care options, wellness support); 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 Fundraiser Event (Parent Only Event)**

Every year, usually in the fall, our parents organize the annual auction, the largest fundraiser for the school. This event is meant to be a community builder with some low-key fundraising.

### **Fun Run (Family Event)**

This event typically organized in the spring, is for the entire family and features age-appropriate activities and games for the children as well as refreshments.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Annual Fund**

Contributions to our Annual Fund help to support our teacher benefits program and community scholarships.

### **Scholarships**

Over the years, some of our families have chosen to fund a scholarship for a child or teacher.

The Quinn Wright Scholarship is a non-needs based scholarship, awarded to a continuing CGMS student, preferably in their Extended Primary year, by the CGMS Administration. Recipients are children who embody the values of the namesake's family and are chosen on the criteria of those who start their lives needing extra support due to life circumstances beyond their control. Specifically, but not limited to developmental delays, medical conditions, limiting family circumstances, etc. Recipients do not apply, but are chosen from the pool of existing, re-applying students.

The Zach's Place Scholarship for faculty. This scholarship, in memory of Lee Woodworth and Zach Hills.

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.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

Parents should observe a class at the program level of child's anticipated enrollment.

### **TODDLER PROGRAM**

A child is eligible for the Toddler Program who is:

- 18 months by August 31st/fall enrollment (birthday by end of February)
- Enrollment is dependent on space availability and classroom age and gender balance.
- Mid-year enrollment is not a common occurrence. Priority is based on age/gender gaps, class make-up, and dynamics. Decisions are made solely at the school's discretion.

### **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. September birthday may also move to Primary.
- A child who turns 3 on or before December 31st moves to the Primary Program close to their 3rd birthday 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 mid-year transition 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
- We have a process to help support this program change for our young students which will begin shortly after confirming the placement change. Entering Primary comes with some changes: shifts in drop-off and pick-up times, bigger class size and age range, new routines and expectations. Here are a few items to help prepare:
  - Ahead of the phase-in process we ask parents of incoming children to observe the Primary program. Please schedule your class observation with Catherine at 303-322-0972 or [cramey@cgmontessori.com](mailto:cramey@cgmontessori.com). The Admissions Director is also available to chat with you about any questions or thoughts.
  - Children entering the Primary program should be comfortable and independent with toileting: wearing underwear, using the toilet, managing the process and their clothing. The Toddler teachers actively support this learning, guiding and helping children to pay attention to their toileting needs, use the facilities, and in learning to dress/undress and become increasingly independent. In the Primary class, children are expected to manage this mostly on their own, with teachers nearby to assist as minimally as necessary, thus supporting their growing independence. The Toddler teachers are excellent resources if you would like additional help preparing your child for independence with toileting and self-care.
  - The teachers from both Toddler and Primary will arrange a classroom phase-in process and schedule for your child as well as set-up a time to meet you and your child.
  - Your child does not need to bring a backpack to the Primary program. Extra clothing is stored in the classroom for children to access if needed.
  - Other details of what you will want to gather and know ahead of their start in Primary will be provided during the transition time.

## **PRIMARY PROGRAM**

A child is eligible for the Primary Program who is:

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

## **EXTENDED PRIMARY/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

The Extended Primary class is recommended for children entering their third year of the Montessori Primary\* three-year cycle. It is based on foundational learning experiences cumulatively developed in the first and second years of the program. For some this is the Kindergarten year, for others whose birthday does not fall to meet the area school age requirements, this is the year before Kindergarten.

A child is eligible for the Extended Primary program who:

- Is entering the Kindergarten year and/or
- Is entering their 3rd year of the Montessori Primary\* program and
- Is 4 years 9 months by August 31st (5 by 11/30) and
- Has teacher recommendation based on readiness determined by the child's social and emotional maturity, stamina, self-direction and regulation

Enrollment is dependent upon space availability and classroom age-gender balance.

Exceptions are considered on a case-by-case basis for a child who:

- Is entering the 2nd year of the Montessori Primary\* program and
- Is 4 years 6 months by August 31st (5 by 2/28)

\*Montessori Primary experience does not include enrollment in a Toddler class.

## **ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND CLASS PLACEMENTS**

Upon receipt of the enrollment forms and Initial Payment, each child is placed in a program and class suitable to their age and development subject to the school's

discretion. The school does not guarantee placement within specific classes. Enrollment in class time is firm. Parents should not expect future changes in placement within the program level.

We have limited space in all classes. Balance of age and gender, the needs of each individual and each class as a whole are all considered in placements. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy, children remain with the same class for the entire cycle of the program level whenever possible. Within this framework of maintaining consistency and quality, the priority sequence for enrollment and class placements are:

- Students continuing within particular program/class
- Currently enrolled students who are eligible to transfer to the next program level
- Aligning sibling placements
- New siblings of returning students
- New siblings of current students who are not returning
- Siblings or children of alum and all other applicants
- A lottery and waitlists may be created when there are more children eligible to enroll or transition than there are spaces available.

Admission decisions are made at the discretion of the school. Current families have equal priority. We cannot make assignments based on family history with or participation in the school. While future placement in an appropriate program is assured if all enrollment policies are maintained, parents should not expect changes to placements within program levels.

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

### **Re-Enrollment and Sibling Applications**

Re-Enrollment materials are emailed in the beginning of February for the upcoming school year. Enrollment changes are dependent upon suitability of program, class balance of age and gender and space availability. In-house lotteries and wait-lists are created when there are more requests for class/times/days than enrollment available. See Enrollment Policies and Class Placement details.

Siblings applications are sent with re-enrollment. Current families do not use the online application.

## **FEES AND TUITION**

### **New Child Enrollment Fee**

The New Child Enrollment Fee of \$650 is due at the time of initial enrollment for each child and is non-refundable.

### **Re-Enrollment Fee**

The Re-enrollment Fee of \$650 is due in February with the re-enrollment form 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 of \$1000 is due in February combined with the \$650 enrollment/re-enrollment fee, [called the Initial Payment](#). The contract and a second deposit are due in May. The remaining installments are due at the beginning of each month from September through April. All installment payments must be made through our Brightwheel Billing program. Installments using either ACH (school pays processing fees) or Credit Cards (payee pays processing fees) will be processed on the 5th of the month or the next business day after the 5th, from September through April. If for any reason funds are not available for transfer from your account to Children's Garden, a handling fee determined by bank fees will be added when it is reprocessed. If the payment is not made current through reprocessing 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 prorate 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**

Financial assistance and scholarships are available and offered on a case-by-case basis depending on a family's financial circumstances and the school's available funds. Inquiries are welcome; anyone may apply. Children's Garden contracts with Student Scholarship Services (SSS) to collect and evaluate requests for financial assistance. Please see the Admissions/Financial Aid section of the website or contact the Admissions Office for information.



### **The Denver Preschool Program**

Children's Garden is now a participating member of the Denver Preschool Program (DPP). With this program tuition support is available to all families – regardless of income – who have a child who is 4-years-old by October 1st and lives within the City and County of Denver. See the DPP website ([dpp.org](http://dpp.org)) for more information and to submit an application.

### **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. CGMS is committed to partnering with families and children with special needs to support their inclusion within the classroom and program, as well as meet their learning and development goals. Like all children, children with disabilities must be exposed to a variety of rich experiences where they can learn in the context of play and everyday interactions and engage with their peers with and without disabilities. In partnership with families, high-quality early childhood programs can facilitate the experiences that foster learning for all children. 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**

Safety of the children in our care is a priority for CGMS at all times. We conduct regular emergency drills to assure that both staff and students are well prepared in the event of any variety of unfortunate events. Additionally, 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 years old)**

- Parents sign children in using the Brightwheel Portal. The same portal 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 they are going with the children.
- The toddlers are recounted and checked off on a face-to-name checklist after every transition and periodically throughout the day.
- 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.
- The authorities and child's parents are notified.

#### **Primary (3 – 6 years old)**

- Parents sign children in using the Brightwheel Portal. The same portal is used to sign children out when a child is picked up from school.
- The children are recounted and checked off on a face-to-name checklist after every transition and periodically throughout the day.
- Children are required to let a teacher know if they go inside to use the toilet, get a drink, etc.
- 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. Additionally, children hang their feeling person on the chart when they enter the Studio so that the teacher can keep track of who is in the space.

- 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.
- The authorities and child's parents are notified.

**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

## **REPORTING OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

### **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.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **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, the upstairs stairwell, or the Toddler bathroom. If a tornado warning is in effect, teachers will not remain outside for carpool. Park and come into the building. We encourage parents to remain with their children in the safe location until it is safe for them to leave.

**In the Event of a Block Evacuation**

The teachers will take all of the children to the lobby of Bromwell Elementary School located at 4th Avenue and Columbine Street. Parents will be notified of the event ASAP via the school texting service. Additional details will be sent via email as an update later on.

**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. Depending on the circumstances, the entire school may gather in the upstairs faculty room with doors securely locked. Parents will be notified of the event ASAP via the school texting service. Additional details will be sent via email as an update later on.