

# The Montessori School of Camden

## Parent Handbook '21-'22

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## **Introduction**

A Montessori education provides children with a lifetime gift—the opportunity to develop fully their innate intellectual, physical, social, and emotional potential. The Montessori School of Camden (MSC) encourages parents to be an integral part of their child’s education by learning about the Montessori philosophy, observing in classrooms, and volunteering in the school. MSC is a public charter school guided by a Board of Directors elected by parents and faculty. The Montessori School of Camden is a full-service school, open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and operates year-round. Class times are listed under each individual program description. The staff is certified and the school is accredited through our professional society, Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI), which is a member of the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). The school was chartered in 2018 by the Charter Institute at Erskine.

## **The Montessori Method and Its Origin - A Historical Perspective**

Maria Montessori was the first woman to become a physician in Italy. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this was an amazing accomplishment. However, becoming a medical doctor was only the first step in her long, successful career. She began her professional research with observations of mentally challenged children and was greatly influenced by the work of Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin. In 1901, she seemed to be at the high point of her career, when actually she was still preparing for an unknown future. She felt a need for further study and re-enrolled at the University of Rome to study philosophy, psychology and anthropology. In 1906, at the age of 36, she was an educator, writer, lecturer and medical doctor. The stage was set. She started a school for underprivileged children in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. Since funding allowed only office style furnishings, she contracted a carpenter to make smaller, child-sized furniture and equipment of her own design. She began this school with 60 unruly children under the age of six. As she worked, she observed and modified, modified and observed. Within six months, her results were phenomenal. She began attracting countrywide attention. These children displayed self-discipline, preferred learning materials to toys, and worked with a profound concentration and joy. They had a love for order, respected their environment, and enjoyed working in silence beside their friends. The children would carry on “business as usual” with or without the teacher’s presence.

Almost immediately, her work became known and practiced worldwide. She was invited by Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison to the United States for the first time in 1913, and schools bearing her name and using her method were

begun in many countries. She refused to patent her name or work, because she wanted to see this approach to life grow freely, and it has. Sometimes the name “Montessori” has been used in schools where the method is not practiced. However, the books she wrote have greatly influenced the early childhood programs of today, Montessori or not. Her decision to allow the method to evolve was wise.

Maria Montessori was a genius before her time. She believed that the child’s mind from birth to six years is quite different from the adult’s and labeled it “an absorbent mind.” The child effortlessly soaks in everything in his culture and environment. Modern scientists are, over a century later, finding scientific data to support her discoveries. She saw a tremendous need for the child to have respectful and intelligent help during the absorbent mind stage. She saw the child as constantly unfolding and developing himself and viewed the adults who were trying to teach him as obstacles to his process. Her life work could be summed up as defining the nature of the child and the role of the adult in helping him, thus easing the tug-of-war that exists when two completely different natures meet:

- The child loves concentration—the adult entertains or interrupts him. The teacher in this prepared environment respects his concentration and allows him to complete it. This involves everything from watching a bug on the windowsill to drops of water on a table.
- The child loves repetition and the adult becomes bored with it. Montessori allows this freedom, with respect, as the child perfects his movements.
- The child loves order but the adult provides a toy box which can afford nothing but disorder. (Try keeping your kitchen organized within a toy box.) The prepared environment offers shelves with neatly arranged activities returned to the same place.
- The child thrives on the freedom to choose his activities but the adult prefers that everyone do the same thing at the same time. The prepared environment offers the solution. “This is my work; yours is on the shelf.” With this freedom to choose comes the responsibility to return it to the shelf correctly.
- Children prefer work (learning) to play (toys); adults don’t. A child’s work is his preparation for life; hopefully, when he matures, he will enjoy his work for he has perfected what he likes to do best.
- Children don’t need rewards; adults like to think they do. Accomplishment and creativity are reward enough. A child is self-motivated at this stage and, in the proper environment, will remain so as he grows.
- Children love silence; adults demand it. The Montessori environment creates an awareness of silence. “Let’s see if you can tip-toe away so quietly we can still hear the birds chirping.”

On and on her discoveries go toward providing a practical way to a peaceful coexistence with children.

Maria Montessori developed materials for refining the senses. The materials help the child to discriminate sound, color, size, shape, smell, and touch. The materials in the classroom area called “practical life” deal with using the child’s love of movement, concentration and repetition, and help him develop good work habits, concentration, hand-eye coordination, lengthening attention span, and control of body. The activities build on the child’s natural interests and involve pouring, sweeping, dressing, stacking, folding, wiping, polishing, and washing—all of which address care of the environment, care of the self, and grace and courtesy. Conversational manners, table manners and courtesy to others are all part of the activities in a Montessori classroom. The concept of Practical Life continues for older children, addressing skills appropriate to their ages. Her math equipment is regarded by many as the most complete available. Four-year-old children can have a thorough and effortless understanding of the decimal system. The reading materials teach both phonetic and sight-reading skills at an age when the child absorbs language easily. The curriculum also includes geography, music, art, science, and history materials. The method is adaptable to all subjects. All Montessori exercises employ movement, manipulatives, free choice (within limits) and a point of completion. They are usually self-correcting and help the child develop his sense of order, his concentration, and his independence. The Director (teacher) prepares the environment and is trained to know when and how to intervene in the child’s self-directed learning. This knowledge comes through her practice of the art of observation. The child is given what is termed as “liberty within limits”. There are limits:

- He may freely choose to work with anything that he has been shown how to use.
- He must use the materials properly—which may include appropriate experimentation with their use—and return them properly.
- He may not infringe upon the rights of others.

Within this framework, the child develops freely in individuality and self-confidence. The child is given the opportunity to become independent and care for himself/herself in a responsible way. He flowers and becomes an inner-directed member of school and family. All of this will happen to the extent that the child is exposed to these ideas. The more communication and cooperation between the family and directors, the more benefit the child will receive from his Montessori experience.

The wonderfully gifted Maria Montessori revealed many of the mysteries, not only of childhood, but also of human nature. Her books are read all over the world, in many languages. The significance of her discoveries is yet to be fully understood, as much of her work is still being translated and compiled. She died in 1952 in Holland after training directors all over the world.

One could write volumes and speak for hours on Montessori philosophy. This is only a beginning of the explanation of the thinking that goes on behind

these educational methods. It should be emphasized that children are not merely little people trained to be adults; they are the other pole of humanity. They add the balance. Adults and children all over this planet must walk hand-in-hand, learning from each other, accepting each other, and providing balance for each other. The Montessori approach to life is universal and, when practiced authentically, has the potential to guide humanity towards world peace. The practice and the pursuit begins within each individual.

Written by Gale Keppler

Revised by Sheryl Sweet

Edited by John Moncure and Alice Clark

## **The Global Montessori Community**

The product of Dr. Montessori’s work can be found everywhere. Because the focus in the Montessori classroom is the child rather than the adult, the Montessori educational model is less tied to cultural norms of the community in which it finds itself. As a result, Montessori schools can operate beside traditional, state-supported systems in all parts of the world and increasingly is being added in American public schools. Of the approximately 15,000 Montessori schools in the world, about 5,000 operate in the United States—private, public, and charter. South Carolina is home to about one hundred Montessori programs, about half of which are private.

The word “Montessori” is not protected—Dr. Montessori expected her ideas to grow and become modified, and she did not want it to become frozen in time. But the principles she expressed are universal. A number of organizations interpret Dr. Montessori’s thoughts, adapt them to today’s circumstances, and affirm teacher education programs and schools. Among these are MACTE and MEPI, mentioned in the introduction. MACTE is the globally-recognized gold standard for teacher education programs. Our professional society, MEPI, while small, includes school and training center members from across the United States, North and Central America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI—founded by Dr. Montessori) and the American Montessori Society (AMS) are the best known societies created to support teacher preparation, but about a dozen others around the world perform similar functions.

While operating as a public charter school, MSC is as an integral part of a global network that gives support and allows horizons far beyond the boundaries of Kershaw County or South Carolina.

## **History of The Montessori School of Camden**

The Montessori School of Camden began its existence in 1979 as the satellite pre-kindergarten and kindergarten of Joseph Kershaw Academy (JKA). Its founder and first director was Dr. Sheryl Sweet. In the early 1980's, JKA began to experience financial difficulties. In order to maintain the high quality of education provided by the Montessori model, the staff accepted the Montessori materials in lieu of their salaries and began independent operation. The school incorporated as a tax-exempt, non-profit organization under South Carolina law in May 1985 and began the 1985-86 school year with primary and elementary programs, after-school care, and a summer program. Classes were held at the old JKA facility, and the school ended the year with 72 students.

For two years, the school operated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church. In 1988, the Montessori family moved to the location on Battleship Road. In 1993, the school added a 1,600 sq. ft. extension to create the building now called Beard Hall. In August 2000, the school purchased another 4 acres and accepted a donation of three more acres in preparation for its planned expansion. Ground was broken on a second building in January 2002, and two more acres were added, bringing the campus to just over 11 acres in size. The new facility, Bossong Hall, and the campus road, "Montessori Way" were completed that year and promptly occupied by administration and two classes. In July of 2004, Primary Hall was opened, adding three more classrooms and increasing the capacity of the school to 143 students. Moving to a new level, MSC conducted a Self-Study, hosted an On-Site Verifier from MEPI, and in February 2017 became the only Montessori school in South Carolina accredited by a professional Montessori society. One year later it became the first private school in South Carolina to be granted a charter as a public school. In that same year it converted from a traditional nine-month calendar to a year-round calendar of 4 equal quarters and three "intersessions." Throughout these many changes in the school's forty-two years of operation, one constant remained: the close family relationships forged in the caring, Montessori environment.

## **Mission**

The mission of The Montessori School of Camden is to engage students to become peaceful citizens of the global community using the Montessori approach to nurture in them an enthusiasm for learning, resourcefulness, a sense of responsibility for their actions, and respect for themselves, others, and their environment.

## **School Organization**

The school is organized as a public, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with a charter granted in 2018 by the Charter Institute at Erskine and governed by a Board of Directors and guided by written By-Laws. The Board consists of eleven members. The Headmaster is responsible to the Board for administration of the school and the carrying out of its mission.

## **Montessori Vocabulary**

### *The Environment*

The “Prepared Environment” is Dr. Montessori’s concept that the child’s environment can be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration. A prepared environment contains space for a great deal of movement and a variety of activities arrayed on shelves from the concrete to the abstract and from the simple to the complex. In the calm, ordered space of the Montessori prepared environment, children work on activities of their own choosing and at their own pace. They learn and experience a blend of freedom and self-discipline especially designed to meet their developmental needs.

### *The Materials*

In the Montessori classroom, learning materials are arranged invitingly on low, open shelves. Children may choose from all the lessons that have been demonstrated to them and that attract their interest. They can work with the materials as long as they hold the children’s interest. When they have finished with each lesson, they return it to the shelf from which it came. Bright arrays of solid geometric forms, knobbed puzzle maps, colored beads, and various specialized rods and blocks attract children who learn through interaction with the materials. Each lesson in a Montessori classroom isolates one quality. In this way, the concept that the child is to discover is presented more clearly. Moreover, the materials are self-correcting. When a piece does not fit or is left over, the child easily perceives the error; thus, there is no need for adult correction. The child is able to solve problems independently, building self-confidence, analytical thinking skills, and earning the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment.

### *“Normalization”*

Dr. Montessori used the terms “normal” and “normalization” to describe a unique process she observed in child development. When children are allowed freedom in an environment suited to their needs, they blossom. After a period of intense concentration working with materials that fully engage their interest,

children appear to be refreshed and contented. Through continued, concentrated work of their own choice, children grow in inner discipline and peace. She cited “normalization” as “the single most important result of our work.” (Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 1949).

### *“Three-Year Cycle”*

In a traditional school we think of a “school year” as being essentially nine months in duration, usually from August through May, and these years are labeled “Kindergarten” through “12<sup>th</sup> Grade.” But Montessori students work in three-year cycles, usually with the same Classroom Director, in four quarters equally-spaced across the year.

## **Program Descriptions**

Montessori's philosophy of education is based on “the personality, a harmonious growth of all potentialities of the child, mental and physical, according to the laws of its being....” (Montessori, 1964).

Montessori observed that children have a natural desire to learn and that stages of development exist for which there should be corresponding educational environments and trained adults who prepare the environment. Children can learn independently in a prepared environment; the adult in the classroom is the link between students and the environment. By providing freedom of choice, this enriched learning environment cultivates individuals who learn to make independent decisions and to solve problems creatively. They learn to create healthy social relationships, to develop skills in concentration, and to master basic academic and life skills. We challenge their minds to create, explore, and imagine.

### *Infant (Ages 6 weeks - 18 months)*

The Infant class is open from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Infants who remain at school after class time go into Extended Day. Parents may choose time slots according to their needs—morning only, morning until 3:00 p.m., or all day. Our low class ratio of 3:1 provides a comfortable, intimate environment.

In the infant room, the children develop according to their own natures and have the freedom to create their own personalities. We follow each child's natural growth pattern. The environment conforms to the physical needs of the children, both in the size of the furnishings and in the opportunities for motor development. In a Montessori atmosphere the children are free to explore their environment and develop physically, socially, intellectually and academically in activities and

learning areas. Here infants learn to care for themselves and interact with one another and their environment in an atmosphere of loving support and respect. Montessori materials and equipment are especially designed to help little muscles develop coordination, helping the child gain independence and self-esteem. Special attention is given to the development of expressive and comprehensive language skills.

The Montessori classroom provides a prepared environment where infants develop naturally in their own way and at their own pace. The prepared environment is characterized by order, simplicity and beauty that meet the needs of the child. The focus of the infant environment is on fostering basic trust in the child.

At the Montessori School of Camden, we believe in following the child, and we work closely with parents to make sure that each child's individual needs are met.

Your child's eating, sleeping, and diapering patterns are documented every day. This record is available for parent review on Transparent Classroom. Children are fed on demand or per their schedule, and diapers are checked every other hour and as needed between scheduled times. All food and formula is provided by the parents. Parents should bring pre-made covered formula & breast milk bottles. All food and bottles must be labeled with the child's name (first and last) and contents. These bottles must be taken at pick up to be sanitized at home. Parents should also bring diapers, diaper wipes, and extra changes of clothes.

### *Toddler (Ages 18 months - 36 months)*

Toddler class time is from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Toddlers who remain at school after class time go into Extended Day. The Montessori classroom is a children's room, dynamic and fluid. Classroom Directors present lessons to each child when he/she is ready to receive them. Children choose their self-correcting materials from open shelves and work independently or in self-selected small groups. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. The program includes the following components:

- 👉 Practical life exercises enhance the development of intellectual organization and independence through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and refinement of physical movement.
- 👉 Sensorial materials enable the child to order, classify, seriate and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, etc.

- ☞ Language work includes oral language development and children's literature.
- ☞ The child is also presented with geography, life sciences, physical sciences, music, art, and movement education.
- ☞ Spanish is integrated into the curriculum.

The prepared environment unifies the psychosocial, physical, and academic functioning of the child.

### *Primary and Primary All Day (Ages 3 - 6)*

Primary class time is from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Primary All Day (PAD) continues until 3:00 p.m. The Montessori classroom is a children's room, dynamic and fluid. Classroom Directors present lessons to each child when he/she is ready to receive them. Children choose their self-correcting materials from open shelves and work independently or in small groups. Over a period of time, the children develop into a "normalized community," working with high concentration and few interruptions. The program includes the following components:

- ☞ Practical life exercises enhance the development of intellectual organization and independence through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and refinement of physical movement.
- ☞ Sensorial materials enable the child to order, classify, seriate and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, etc.
- ☞ Montessori mathematics, through manipulative materials, allows the child to internalize the concepts of number, symbol, sequence, sets, place value, operations and memorization of basic facts.
- ☞ Language work includes oral language development, written expression, reading, grammar study, creative dramatics and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, moveable alphabet, and various presentations allowing children to link sounds and letter symbols effortlessly and to express their thoughts through writing.
- ☞ Spanish is integrated into the curriculum, with some classrooms featuring a native speaker.
- ☞ The child is also presented with geography, history, life sciences, physical sciences, music, art, and movement education.

The prepared environment unifies the psychosocial, physical, and academic functioning of the child. Children enrolled as Primary All Day students have opportunities for additional academic work, science experiments and creative expression following lunch and quiet time until 2:45 p.m. Younger children who stay for extended care will have lunch and naptime with their classmates in Primary Hall. After 3:00 p.m. dismissal, remaining children move to the Extended Day program at Beard Hall.

### *Lower Elementary (Ages 6-9)*

Lower Elementary class time is from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The elementary program offers experiences that build on those of the primary class. Throughout the day, the children work with manipulative materials in each component of the curriculum. Many of the special materials are designed to help the children understand their world, transferring their concrete experiences into abstract thought. Since reading skills are essential for the child, the Lower Elementary program offers thorough instruction through a variety of methods designed to meet the needs of each child. The phonics, whole language, and sight word lessons that are used in the Primary program grow more complex. Spanish is continued at a more sophisticated level. Field trips are an integral component of the curriculum. Physical fitness is encouraged by outdoor activities, including frequent walks when weather permits. The environment reflects a new stage of development in the child and offers the following: an integration of art, music, sciences, geography, history, and language that evokes the natural imagination and abstraction of the elementary child's mind. The presentation of knowledge through the Great Lessons as part of a large-scale narrative reveals the origins of the earth, of life, of human communities (agricultural and urban), of empires, and of modern history. The presentation of formal scientific languages of zoology, botany, anthropology, geography, geology, etc. exposes the child to accurate, organized information that respects the child's intelligence and interest. The use of lines, picture charts and other visual aids provides a linguistic and visual overview of the beginning principles of each discipline. The mathematics curriculum is presented with concrete materials, which simultaneously reveal arithmetic, geometric and algebraic correlations. The various aspects of the elementary program are designed to assist the child in developing self-awareness and acceptance of self and others; a cooperative responsible community spirit; a keen intellect; self-motivated learning habits and skills; and a healthy mind, body and spirit.

### *Upper Elementary (Ages 9-12)*

Upper Elementary class time is from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The goals of this program include the development of self-motivation in learning, responsibility to one's self and community, self-discipline, healthy self-confidence, concern for others, academic advancement, physical fitness, and growth in moral and ethical understanding. The day is spent in varied activities covering curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, physical and natural sciences, geography, and cultural studies. Research is a major component in integrating learning in these areas. Students learn to gather information and to communicate it both orally and in writing. Spanish studies range from beginning conversation to translation and writing. Students study mathematics and geometry as an approach to problem solving. Manipulative materials enable the students to discover mathematical relationships as they develop a mind appreciative of the beauty and usefulness of mathematics. Within the various scientific disciplines, science studies grow out of the student's natural curiosity. In this age group, the students progress rapidly from concrete learning experiences to abstractions. As they complete the cycle of work in the Upper Elementary class, they have experienced many approaches to learning and are able to make the transition to other educational methods with confidence.

### *Secondary (Ages 12-15)*

Secondary class time is from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The goals of this program include the development of self-motivation in learning, responsibility to one's self and community, self-discipline, healthy self-confidence, concern for others, academic advancement, physical fitness, and growth in moral and ethical understanding. The curriculum is a multi-dimensional system of education that accounts for the essential nature of the adolescent student, the integrated nature of knowledge, and the student's evolution over the duration of the program. From about 12 to 15 years of age the adolescent begins a rapid series of physical and chemical changes that make their behavior appear erratic. Dr. Montessori points out that these changes actually make them have more in common with infants than with children just below or just above his age group. Like infants they are egocentric, and their need for physical movement and social interaction is great, making the stereotypical classroom with rows of desks inappropriate. To account for the special nature of the adolescent, we envision a series of projects spanning the school year. Each project will repeat a cycle of preparation, execution, and reflection. The execution phase will often take place off campus.

The curriculum highlights segments of study that focus on a particular period in history bringing to bear all disciplines in proportion to their importance for a particular segment. Running uninterrupted through the year will be physical education, foreign language, and music. Service projects will occur on a schedule independent of other activities. The adolescent demands to know the relevance of anything expected of them. An integrated curriculum permits easy linking of any

subject the adolescent finds interesting to all other subjects. Since history is the recorded story of humanity, this subject is the most logical to serve as the hub for the array of knowledge. Everything from the typical focus of history—economic, political, military, art, or science—to a much broader net including sports, literature, fashion design, or comic books (just to name a few) can link mathematics to art or music, architecture to astronomy, or biology to philosophy. Each project includes an array of components designed not only to increase the knowledge of the student, but also to demonstrate the connections between all knowledge. The projects across each school year will be organized sequentially, beginning with earliest times in the fall and ending with the modern era in the spring.

The curriculum spans the duration of the secondary program without repeating information. To accomplish this, the staff will design with the students three projects per cycle, using a different historical scenario for each. While the students embark on an investigation using a different scenario from the previous or following school year, the basic lessons will be the same. Additionally, since the age, experience, and intellectual preparation of the students varies widely in a secondary classroom, the tasks required during each project must be structured accordingly. Thus, while the whole group will work on a single project, components of it must be applicable to and challenging for either typical seventh, eighth, or ninth grade students.

## **Special Curricula**

The core Montessori curricula have already been explained for each level. In addition, several special curriculum subjects are woven throughout each level of the school. While each subject is treated differently according to the developmental level of the child, learning builds upon the understanding gained at the previous level.

### *Bilingual Program*

In January 2009 MSC began transition to a bilingual format. By integrating native speakers of Spanish into the classroom, students become immersed in two languages. Rather than learning one as a “second language” students see both English and Spanish simply as different but equal ways of communicating. This exceptionally important step capitalizes on the sensitive period for language that usually presents itself with our youngest children. Those who join us after that period will find both languages spoken in the classroom and quickly adapt themselves. In classrooms without a native speaker students use digital means to practice Spanish.

### *Peace Education*

Dr. Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times, and Peace Studies have always been an integral component of a Montessori education. Because children move about the classroom freely throughout the day, they have much more opportunity to interact with each other than in a traditional classroom. Learning the skills of collaboration, compromise, taking turns, and cooperation are essential to harmony in the classroom and serve our children wherever they go throughout their lives. As children move from parallel play to collaborative play as Toddlers through group projects in the Elementary years our students learn to speak directly and respectfully to each other and develop mechanisms to control their own emotions. Teachers and more experienced children serve as role models, with soft voices and respectful behaviors. As a result, Montessori children have more advanced social and emotional skills.

### *Physical Education*

The Montessori experience develops not only the intellectual, social, and emotional aspects of a child's development but also the physical component. Both gross motor and fine motor skills are emphasized years at MSC. For example, Toddlers manipulate puzzles with grasping knobs and participate in songs with a physical component to develop balance and coordination. Primary children have more refined knobbed puzzles, walk the carpet line or the balance beam to develop gross motor skills, engage in Orff-inspired movement exercises and begin rudimentary organized outdoor games. Elementary students may choose such activities as knitting, improving their hand-eye coordination, and play games outside each day. Some of these games such as dodge ball or capture the flag are organized to help children learn rules—and learn to play by them—while others are free-play physical games to allow them to express their creativity. Depending upon interest, MSC may offer afternoon programs such as karate and dance at an additional charge.

### *Art*

Both art appreciation and creative arts are available in the classroom. Classroom Directors discuss the “artist of the month” with the children at line time. Primary and Lower Elementary classrooms have easels available for the children. The Extended Day program also emphasizes art projects.

### *Music*

Music is ever present at MSC. Not only does music offer a calming influence, it also connects children to their cultural heritage, and resonates with mathematics. Gentle music plays in the background in all classrooms. Bells in the Sensorial area of the Primary classroom help children sharpen their ability to distinguish pitch. Additional opportunities are available at an additional charge from a staff member who teaches guitar.

## **Extended Day Program**

The Extended Day Program is available before and after school hours. A minimum of two staff members will be on duty throughout the day. We maintain the school-day ratio of twelve or fewer students to one staff member. The goals of the Extended Day Program include the provision of a safe, creative, and nurturing atmosphere with organized activities. This program offers a quality environment that meets the physical, social, and emotional needs of all students and parallels the expectations of individual responsibility and respect found in the Montessori classroom.

Students in the program enjoy the Montessori approach throughout their day. While primarily an arts-enrichment program, some of the other offerings include manipulative blocks, creative drama, cooking, art, science experiments, cultural studies, and gardening. Plenty of free time is allowed for play. The Extended Day Staff strives to create, as much as possible, a home-like environment.

Fees for the before- and after-school Extended Day Program are listed on the Extended Day Enrollment Form, located on the [Enrollment Forms](#) page of the web site. Parents may choose a single payment plan for the year instead of the hourly rate. Siblings of enrolled Montessori students are welcome to participate in the Extended Day Program depending upon availability. Arrival and dismissal on the hour and half-hour will be observed for billing purposes. Late fees will be assessed according to the Accounts in Arrears and Late Fees Policies.

Extended day ends at 6:00 p.m. **MSC charges \$1.00 per minute per child after 6:00 p.m.** Fees not paid directly to the teacher on duty will be added to the next invoice sent out by the office.

A twenty-four-hour notice is preferred, when possible, for drop-in and sibling care. Staffing is a delicate balance and is based directly on the number of students present for extended day services.

The Extended Day Program operates most of the year. Children enrolled in the program for before- or after-school care have reserved places, but the staff also welcomes drop-ins on a space-available basis.

The Extended Day program is available free of charge for parents who are having conferences, substituting, or working on school business during business hours depending on availability of space; however, they will need to inform the Extended Day Director that their child will be present and request a voucher. *The staff member responsible for attendance will annotate the roster so parents are not charged for that time.*

## **Intersession**

The Intersession enrichment program follows the Montessori Model of education, emphasizing social and emotional skills as well as the traditional array of materials. In addition, each intersession features a variety of themes chosen by the Montessori faculty such as cooking, drama, fine arts, STEM or music. Parents are charged a fee per week of attendance at Intersession. They may enroll using the Intersession Enrollment Form at the Enrollment page of the web site.

## **Homework**

Homework can be a great benefit or a horrible, mind-numbing drudge. MSC policy strives for the former. We want our children to choose to work outside class to meet their own goals. Homework serves two purposes. First, it can help a student practice skills learned in class to help a student meet his or her own objectives and so serve as a bridge between school and home.

Second, if the child worked diligently and productively on a subject throughout the day, “finishing” the work is a non sequitur—a student works until he has “mastered” the lesson. But if he did not complete the work because of daydreaming or some other self-inflicted delay, the portion not completed can become a subject for work at home. At the end of the day, the teacher lists it as such, if necessary, to help the student see the correlation between work not completed in class and work done outside of class. This marking can serve not only as a guidepost for the child, but also communication either to an after-school homework monitor or a parent.

Parents also have a responsibility for homework: they ensure their child has a space and time to do it. It is not, however, a parental responsibility to do homework for their children, or to correct it, or to provide more than moral support. The correct response to a child’s request for homework answers is to reply by asking where that information could be found. The child is already familiar with this answer because he hears it from his teacher as well, every time he tries to trick her into giving the answer.

Parents also need to model homework. They should bring work home, not in a fabricated or staged way, but in a genuine effort to catch up on some task not completed during the work day. “I have my work to do this evening, and so do you” has an authentic ring to it. Children are much more likely to follow our example than our bidding.

## **T**ransition

In general, a child may move to an older class when he demonstrates readiness. The school policies outline some academic indicators of that preparedness. A child should also be physically, emotionally, and socially mature enough to integrate into the older group. Classroom Directors weigh these factors into recommendations for transition.

Children will generally transition at the conclusion of a 3-year period in each class. The Headmaster will make the final decision regarding all recommendations for transition, after consultation with Classroom Directors and parents.

For mid-year transition, when a Classroom Director believes that a student is ready to move to the next level, she advises the Headmaster and consults the gaining Classroom Director. With parent permission, the student visits her new surroundings until she is acclimated.

## *Bridging*

At the end of the school year the children, faculty, and parents gather to witness the graduation of students completing the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Secondary program and wish them well as they move on to other schools. Following that recognition, the students of each level welcome the new first year students rising from the previous level into their new classroom community. *Not* a traditional graduation ceremony, the intent of “bridging” is to begin the process of building community in each three-year group. Children completing a level but not moving to the next class will be recognized for their work, but will not “bridge.”

## **A**ssessment

Assessment takes numerous forms at MSC. First is the hourly, daily, and weekly appraisal of student progress at MSC. Early in their educational career at the school, students learn self-assessment from the prepared environment of self-correcting materials and the example provided by the adults. As students will not have a teacher, mentor, or guide looking over their shoulders following their schooling, self-assessment and self-correction are important lifelong skills that students acquire from the earliest years in a Montessori environment. Additionally, students learn from their earliest years that their learning is a partnership with their teachers.

Second, adults and students establish and agree upon daily, weekly, and monthly goals. Classroom Directors maintain records of work presented and mastered using Transparent Classroom, which links Montessori materials to state standards and can be accessed by parents. Each child has a “lesson plan” against which his/her progress is measured as he or she moves through the day and week.

A Montessori guide thus knows at any given instant precisely where a child is academically, developmentally, socially, and emotionally. With frequent one-on-one work and constant individual, personalized assessment of student work by the Classroom Director, issues and concerns emerge and are addressed quickly. Constant fine-tuning and periodic adjustment maximize all dimensions of their progress and assure intellectual engagement for each child. In such a highly structured program, parents are alerted quickly to any concerns rather than waiting for “report card periods” or “term-end grades.”

Third, MSC deploys several tools several times each year for each child to assess academic-related development. MSC faculty members are certified to use the Minnesota Executive Function Scale (MEFS), which assesses the development of executive function (EF) in the child. Not only is EF a fundamental part of healthy human development but it is a predictor of developmental outcomes such as school readiness, social functioning, academic achievement, socioeconomic status as an adult, and even mental and physical health. This tablet-based assessment tool takes about three minutes to use.

Classroom Directors also record a student’s social skills using an MSC-designed tool called “Social and Emotional Skills Observation Form.”

MSC also uses the Interval Behavior Observation System (IBOS) to determine a child’s ability to concentrate on tasks, and the duration of concentration. The Montessori Method deliberately nurtures concentration, and IBOS allows the teacher to track development of concentration skills over time as well as to identify children who may need intervention.

Fourth, MSC will use an array of public school standardized assessments, including MAP (K through Middle School), KRA (3<sup>rd</sup> Year Primary), SC Pass (Upper Elementary and Middle School), SC Ready (3<sup>rd</sup> Year Lower Elementary through Middle School), and CogAT & IA (2<sup>nd</sup> Year Lower Elementary). These assessments can be highly stressful, measuring often more of a child’s susceptibility to stress than actual ability or achievement. To minimize this effect, we conduct the state assessments with no direct preparation and a minimum of fanfare. We specifically want parents to partner with us in this effort by avoiding emphasizing the assessments at home and doing no preparation beyond ensuring the child has a good night’s sleep and a healthy breakfast before school—the same preparation we recommend for every day of the year.

At MSC, performance and progress, not grades, are the focus of assessment and the heart of any discussion about the child.

## **Special Needs**

*BabyNet*

BabyNet is South Carolina's system of services for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3) who have developmental delays or have conditions associated with developmental delays. Infant and Toddler Classroom Directors can assist parents with a preliminary assessment and advice, and information is available at the office about how to apply.

### *Child Find*

Child Find services are part of the federal law that requires school districts to identify, locate, and evaluate children ages three to twenty-one years who have disabilities. For 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-Year Primary children, referrals are made with Kershaw County School District. Information for how to contact KCSD is available at the office. For older students, a request is made through MSC. The Charter Institute at Erskine, our Charter Authorizer, retains responsibility for special needs, but evaluation of a child for eligibility for special education services actually takes place at the school. A request for evaluation is known as a referral. When the school receives a referral, the Special Needs Coordinator will appoint a team to determine what are the next steps for the child. The child may be referred for an evaluation, referred to MTSS, or both. The child may qualify as a student with a disability, and be eligible for special education services. The school locates, identifies, and evaluates all children with disabilities at MSC.

A school staff member who reasonably believes a child may have a disability has a legal duty to refer the child to the school district in which the child is enrolled. Before referring the child, the person making the referral must inform the child's parent that the referral will be made. The referral may be to the MTSS Coordinator or the Special Needs Coordinator. Others, including parents who reasonably believe a child may have a disability may also refer the child to the MTSS Coordinator or the Special Needs Coordinator. Your child's Classroom Director or the office staff can assist with a referral.

In the event that a student appears to have a learning difference, different learning needs, or recurring emotional, medical, behavioral, or disciplinary problems, the school will contact the child's family to communicate concerns in a timely, sensitive, and thoughtful manner. MSC's Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for managing the identification, assessment, IEP development, and follow-through for 3<sup>rd</sup> year Primary, Elementary, and Secondary students. The Coordinator works with Local Education Authority officials for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year Primary students.

Referrals must be in writing and include the reason why the person believes the child is a child with a disability. A referral may be made by contacting Lynn Collins, Special Needs Coordinator, The Montessori School of Camden, at [psych@montessori-camden.com](mailto:psych@montessori-camden.com), or by writing her at 2 Montessori Way, Camden SC 29020

## **MTSS**

The Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) is an umbrella framework that includes Response to Intervention (RTI) for academics, behavior and social/emotional components. The purpose of an MTSS framework is to provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed in school, identify students with learning challenges and ensure that they receive appropriate instruction and related supports. The goals of MTSS are to (a) integrate all the resources to minimize risk for the long-term negative consequences associated with poor learning due to academic, behavioral or social/emotional difficulties, and (b) strengthen the process of disability identification.

Within an MTSS framework schools use data to identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions, and adjust the intensity and nature of the interventions depending on a student's responsiveness.

If the Classroom Director or MTSS Coordinator believes a student is at risk the MTSS Team convenes to develop a plan to assist the student in the classroom. Parents are an important part of the MTSS Team and are expected to participate in planning.

MTSS is a general education initiative. Special education depends upon a comprehensive MTSS framework, and all school staff (i.e., principal, certified staff, paraprofessionals, counselors, psychologists, etc.) work together to implement their MTSS framework and make decisions regarding appropriate intensity of interventions for students.

## **School Calendar**

MSC operates on a "year-round" calendar consisting of nine-week quarters followed by multi-week intersessions. The school calendar, which includes all school holidays and teacher in-service days, is published and provided to parents at the beginning of school. Our web site, [www.montessori-camden.com](http://www.montessori-camden.com), includes a list of calendar events on the home page and at the calendar page both a PDF of the annual calendar and a monthly calendar that is kept current and includes all the major school events. The calendar includes several half days. On these days dismissal will be at noon.

## Visitors to the School

All visitors must sign-in at the office at Bossong Hall and be escorted to any building or classroom as the doors all have security magnetic locks. This safety measure ensures that we have a complete record of guests of the school.

## Staff

The school administration has the overall responsibility for day-to-day operation. The Classroom Directors (teachers) are responsible for the success of the classroom, including individualized planning for each child. The Extended Day staff provides support to the instructional day by offering supervised homework time and other appropriate planned activities.

## Admission

When space is available our school welcomes any child who exhibits readiness for the Montessori program and whose parents are willing and able to follow school policies and provide a continuity of experience at home for that child. The minimum age of admission is 6 weeks (Infant Program).

The primary means of acceptance to the school is through the lottery (see “Lottery,” below). Each spring MSC conducts the lottery to allocate spaces for the following year. If a child leaves the school during the year the first child on the wait-list for that age group will be invited to fill that space.

### *Other Admissions Requirements*

✓ Upon acceptance to the program families must pay a \$30 administration fee to confirm the acceptance of the space. If the parents withdraw the application for their child before the school year has started the deposit will not be returned. **The New Student Registration Fee is not refundable.** If the child is offered a place in the school and the parents decline, the deposit will not be refunded. This fee is collected annually for all students.

✓ Education for all children, including those with special needs, will be provided within the parameters of the Montessori philosophy and its implementation in the classroom (see “Special Needs,” above).

✓ An initial interview with parents and the child is not required, but it allows the school to ascertain the child’s readiness, gives the child the opportunity to become acquainted with the new surroundings and receive a personal orientation, and provides many answers to questions parents may have.

## **Lottery**

Parents who wish their child to attend MSC are generally admitted through the lottery. Prior to conducting the lottery, the school administration forms a Lottery Committee from the current parent group. This group serves as a panel to oversee the administrative process to ensure fairness for all. The Headmaster determines the number of spaces available at each level, following the traditional school breakdown of grades (infant through grade 8). Priority enrollment students are then offered a space, if available. The Priority Admission Category includes siblings of current students, siblings of children who win the lottery, children of MSC employees, children who had attended MSC for a full year within the three previous years, and children of Charter Committee members. Priority Admission students are admitted in order by category and then in order by date and time the acceptance of admission is returned.

Once the parents of priority students have accepted admission, all applicants will be entered into the lottery. On the day of the lottery names of all entrants will be drawn and entered into a list following the traditional school breakdown of grades (infant through grade 9). Parents will be notified of their child's place in the lottery within ten days. Those for whom a place is available will be offered a place and have 10 days to accept it. After 10 days the place is offered to the next student in line.

Children who won a space but are not toilet trained by the first day of school will either be offered a space in the Toddler program or moved to the top of the wait list, and the space offered to the next student in line. If a space comes available after the child is toilet trained it will be offered to the first child on the wait list.

Children can be admitted from the wait list at any time during the school year except during the blackout time just before the lottery.

## **Class Placement**

The Headmaster makes all class placements with the advice and counsel of the Director of Education and the Classroom Directors. In an effort to create a model educational environment true to the philosophy of Dr. Montessori, a relatively even distribution by gender and age is critical to the success of each three-year developmental cycle in which the students are grouped. The Headmaster thus selects and places children in classrooms on the basis of their age, gender and/or

current academic level. Generally, children will remain with their classroom teacher and/or classroom until they are ready for transition to the next level. Classroom Directors will notify families of their child's class placement prior to the child beginning school.

In rare cases the Headmaster may feel a change of classrooms is in the best interest of the child or class. Such a change would be made in consultation with the parent.

## **Registration**

Each student must have the following forms on file in the administration office before the child's start date:

- ✓ Copy of Birth Certificate
- ✓ Enrollment Contract (if applicable)
- ✓ Fee Schedule Worksheet (if applicable)
- ✓ Enrollment Form (MSC Form 3-5)
- ✓ General Authorization Form (MSC Form 3-1)
- ✓ Acknowledgements Form (must be signed annually) (MSC Form 3-6)
- ✓ DHEC Certificate of Immunization or Exemption (per DHEC requirements)
- ✓ DSS Form 2900 (complete front and back)
- ✓ Authorization to Release Information Form (MSC Form 3-25)
- ✓ Proof of Residence Form (must be signed annually)
- ✓ Home Language Survey

Other forms include:

- ✓ Lunch form
- ✓ Pizza Order Form (if applicable)
- ✓ Meet My Child

Many of these forms are available in the admissions section of the MSC web site.

## **Financial Responsibilities**

A \$30 nonrefundable Administrative Fee is payable upon initial enrollment ~~and~~ annually. For all students the Administrative Fee (refundable if space is not available) and signed contract reserves a child's place in the school. Parents of Infants, Toddlers, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year Primary students pay monthly according to

the Fee Schedule Worksheet. Instructional Fees are based upon the academic year, and Extended Day fees and Intersession fees are separate fees and can be added to the annual or monthly plan. All fees are due according to the payment plan selected by the parent.

Payments can be made by cash, check, or money order.

Because staff members are contracted and salaried for the full year, MSC does not refund instructional fees for individual days missed.

Regular Extended Day charges will be invoiced monthly and are due upon receipt. A one-rate plan for regular Extended Day care is also available.

For Intersession all fees are to be paid in full for each intersession period before a child can attend.

If a child is well enough to come to school, but parents do not wish him to participate in scheduled activities (outside or a trip), MSC will attempt to arrange indoor care for a charge of \$12.00 per hour. Twenty-four hour advance notice is required.

A \$30.00 fee is charged for returned payments. Fees and/or policies may be revised upon written notification to parents. Any changes made to Fee Schedule Worksheet after a contract is signed will require a \$30.00 Admin Change Fee. Withdrawal or dismissal does not eliminate the contractual obligation of the enrollment contract. No refunds are paid except as afforded by the MSC Tuition Insurance Plan (TIP). If a student withdraws, all financial obligations must be met **before** school records will be released to the parents or other educational institutions. **Late fees** are assessed in accordance with the Accounts in Arrears Policy and Late Fees Policy (explained on the reverse of the enrollment contract).

### *Optional Fees*

Parents uses the Extended Day Worksheet to enroll their children in the after-school program, and the Intersession Worksheet to enroll in the Fall, Spring, and Summer Intersessions by the week. Parents may also choose to purchase pizza (served on Fridays) on a quarterly or annual basis. Donations to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) can be made on the Fee Schedule Worksheet or directly to the office. Children enrolled in the morning program and who elect to stay for pizza on Friday will be charged the standard Extended Day fee according to the time they remain after dismissal.

## **Developing Responsibility**

Children occasionally break items in the classroom, the outdoor classroom, or the playground but sometimes they also *decide* to break something. In the latter case, replacing the broken item is an opportunity to help a child learn the consequences of his actions and allows him/her to take responsibility rather than

punishment. Should this occur, the Classroom Director will send home a note asking the parent to help the child replace the broken item or repair it, if appropriate. Taking your child to the store and taking great care to find just the right replacement can help your child understand the consequences of his actions. Montessori materials not normally available in stores can be obtained using catalogues available in the office.

## **Student Records**

Student records are **confidential**. Access to those records is limited to the child's Classroom Director and Administration. Parents of the child and designated representatives of the South Carolina Department of Education, the Charter Institute at Erskine, DHEC, DSS, and the Division of Child Development will also have access to the records. No other person will have access to the records without the written consent of the parents or legal guardians. Requests by the parents or guardians for information retained in these files, or copies of these files, will be addressed in writing to the Headmaster. Requests for transfer of student records shall be addressed to the Headmaster. The school has the right to withhold the transfer of academic records until all tuition and fees have been paid (see "Financial Responsibilities," above).

## **Outdoor Time**

Outside activities are important for a child's physical development, socialization, and recreation. Children spend time outside each day by class. Primary children usually go outside from 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. The Lower Elementary class goes out about 12:30 p.m. while the Upper Elementary class has recreation time at the beginning and middle of the day. The outdoor environment is part of the curriculum throughout the day. Outside programs include age-appropriate activities from climbing on one of the jungle gyms to ball games or races, and a mix of free-play and events to which the children are invited to participate. Inclement weather decisions are made by Classroom Directors.

Children need to be well enough to participate in these activities. Because all the classroom staff supervises the playground, no one is available to remain with a child inside. Children unable to participate in these activities should remain at home for the day unless indoor care has been contracted in advance (\$10.50 per hour).

Sometimes parents like to visit the school at the end of the morning program or school day, and watch their children on the playground. While we welcome

parents on these visits, the staff at the school is still responsible for the children, and parents will still be charged from the time Extended Day begins until they remove their children from the campus (unless, of course, the children are enrolled in an Extended Day Plan covering the time the children are present).

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of our school curriculum and extend the capabilities of the school to enrich students' experiences beyond the walls of the institution. Classroom Directors will usually notify parents of upcoming field trips several weeks in advance. Class field trips are age-appropriate educational experiences. The volunteer drivers act as chaperones for the students helping to ensure a positive experience for all. It is in the best interest of the students in the class that chaperones focus their full attention on the children in their care. For these reasons, we request that parents do **not** bring along younger or older siblings. Unless the school has contracted for transportation, children will be transported in privately owned vehicles. Public school buses are not equipped with seat belts, and would only be considered for local (in town) trips. For trips not using buses forward-facing safety devices, provided by parents, must be used for all children between ages three and five years who weigh between 20 and 40 lbs. Children in this age group weighing between 40 and 80 lbs. must be secured by a belt-positioning booster seat. These requirements all conform to South Carolina State Law.

Each year Upper Elementary students attend an environmental education camp program. This valuable experience, usually a three-day-two-night stay, is an important component of the life science's curriculum.

MSC does not transport children, either for field trips or to and from school.

Parent volunteers who wish to accompany children on field trips are required to be cleared by BIB. Application can be made at the "For Parents" tab on the school website. Drivers must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance.

A child who cannot attend a field trip must remain at home for the time the class will be away.

## **Discipline**

At The Montessori School of Camden, people have the right to work in a non-threatening, safe, pleasant environment. The children are free to work and to choose activities so long as that freedom does not infringe upon the rights of others

and does no harm to themselves, others, or the environment. Children are expected to conduct themselves responsibly within the context of their developmental level. Adults help children develop strategies to control their own behavior, to settle disagreements without physical or verbal abuse, and to respect others. Those whose behavior is unacceptable are asked to remove themselves from the activities until they choose to accept the rules. Since the children are considered responsible for their actions, the staff members are always available to assist them in achieving self-control. In an extreme or persistent case of inappropriate behavior, parents will be notified. The notice will include circumstances of the incident, the actions taken in the classroom to resolve matters, and the actions taken by the administrative staff. Staff members, parents, and children work together to achieve acceptable levels of behavior and performance. Referral services for counseling and other means of assistance are available upon request. Since the Montessori Method uses neither rewards nor punishment for motivation, MSC does not use **corporal punishment; neither do we employ strategies that shame, hurt, belittle, threaten, intimidate, force children or withhold food or physical activity from them.** The school reserves the right to dismiss students who fail to show reasonable improvement in problem behaviors identified through staff, parent, and/or professional counseling.

## **Bullying**

Merriam-Webster defines bullying as “abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful, etc.” The Montessori Method by its nature emphasizes social and emotional skills, reducing the incidence of bullying. Because children do not distinguish academics from the work of becoming a respectful, mindful, and responsible person, their class meetings, multi-age grouping, the environment, and experience as autonomous learners are woven into their reality. The perception of bullying may still exist, and the classroom adult is present in the moment to help children understand the exact nature of the offense they have taken or given, and guide each to an empathetic response to classmates. When repeated instances of conflict between the same two children seem to meet the definition of bullying the teacher will contact the parents of both children to enlist their support for a solution. In every case, conflict between children is a teachable moment, one that all the adults in the child’s life need to work together, with the assistance of the teacher, to help the children involved.

## **Suspension or Expulsion of Children**

Some activities will not be accepted or tolerated by MSC. Suspension or expulsion are options when behavior is dangerous or aggressive. At a minimum, the list includes:

1. Drugs on school grounds.
2. Weapons on school grounds. A student with a firearm on school grounds must be suspended from school for at least 365 days (one year).
3. Threatening another student or staff with bodily harm or death.
4. Purposeful behavior that endangers the safety of others.
5. Vandalizing or maliciously destroying school property or grounds.
6. Persistent and willful violation of school policies and rules.
7. Aggressive and dangerous behavior.
8. Profanity or lewd language.

If the Headmaster becomes aware of any such incident, the following course of action will be taken:

1. The Headmaster notifies the President of the Board of Directors of the allegation.
2. The Headmaster convenes the MTSS committee to consider alternatives.
3. The MTSS Investigator investigates the allegation and reports the facts of the case to the MTSS Coordinator.
4. The MTSS Coordinator summarizes the investigation in a report to the headmaster.
5. The Headmaster makes a determination of action to be taken.
6. If the Headmaster believes withdrawal from the school is appropriate, he notifies the Board of Directors of the action before dismissing a student.
7. The Headmaster sends the parent of any child dismissed from the school a letter explaining the rationale for the decision.

MSC uses the Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) approach for behavioral issues as well. As we identify students not making adequate progress and enter the second tier of the MTSS process, teachers work with struggling students in class employing a variety of intervention strategies to help students work to their potential. The MTSS Coordinator assists in the process and offers intervention assistance, as necessary.

A parent who disagrees with the decision of the Headmaster may appeal that decision within 30 days of the decision by sending a letter outlining the reasons for disagreement, through the President of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), asking for a special meeting of the Board of Directors to consider the case. The President

of the Board of Directors convenes a special meeting within 15 days of receipt of the appeal. The Board of Directors has final decision authority in such cases.

Occasionally, parents hear complaints from their children about conflicts with other students. Almost always, the parent hears the story *from the perspective of their child*, which may be accurate, may contain elements of accuracy, or not. If a parent finds the story to be credible but not supported by an Incident Report from the teacher, she should ask to meet with the teacher to learn what happened and how the teacher dealt with the incident. The teacher may not have witnessed the incident and ask for a day or two to research it. Parents should refrain from investigating or confront the parents of other children involved in the incident. Once the teacher provides a full accounting of the incident to the parent, including steps taken for resolution, the issue is usually closed. If the parent is not satisfied with the teacher's steps to resolve the issue, the parent may bring the matter to the attention of the Headmaster. If the Headmaster does not provide an answer that meets the expectations of the parent, she may appeal within 30 days of the response by sending a letter outlining the reasons for disagreement, through the President of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), asking for a special meeting of the Board of Directors to consider the case. The President of the Board of Directors convenes a special meeting within 15 days of receipt of the appeal. The Board of Directors has final decision authority in such cases.

## **Health**

The Montessori School of Camden is a tobacco-free campus.

### *School Nurse*

The responsibilities of the school nurse include oversight of both the physical and mental health of the students. She is the principal advisor to the Headmaster and faculty for all health-related issues. She conducts health services, screening programs, and health surveys of students and staff, makes referrals and conducts follow up activities, and administers medication. She also provides emergency care in case of sudden illness and administers first-aid in case of injury to students or staff and maintains required medical supplies and equipment. She participates in the development of a comprehensive health education curriculum. Her email address is [mscrn@montessori-camden.com](mailto:mscrn@montessori-camden.com).

### *Health Records*

A South Carolina certificate of or exemption from immunization is required by law upon enrollment and may be obtained from a family physician or DHEC.

Section 44-29-180 of South Carolina State Law requires that all children under six years of age present a current South Carolina Certificate of Immunization (DHEC Form 2740 or DHEC 1126) certifying immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, German measles, mumps, and hepatitis B. Additionally, Regulation 61-8, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control specifies similar requirements for vaccinations, screening, and immunizations for children to enroll in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Children who have not had clinical or serological evidence of the disease are also required to be vaccinated against varicella.

State requirements are subject to change each year. The school office has current specific information on dosages for each age group. All health records and forms must be completed at the time of the student's entry. These records and forms are kept in the school office and must be updated **annually** or at any time there is a change.

### *Illness*

**Children with fever, symptoms of respiratory, gastrointestinal or other sicknesses should remain at home until they are symptom and fever-free for twenty-four hours** to decrease the likelihood of spreading an infection. A child who exhibits signs of illness will be isolated in the School Nurse's office. The parents or other previously authorized person will be called to pick up the sick child immediately. No child can be released to anyone not listed on the Pick-up List without permission.

### *Communicable Disease*

Control of communicable illness among the children is a prime concern. Policies and guidelines related to outbreaks of communicable illnesses have been developed with the help of medical authorities. In order to protect the school and each student, we ask that parents assist us by keeping sick children at home if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the **last 24 hours**:

- ❖ A fever of 100°F (37.8°C) orally or 99°F (37.2°C) axillary (under the arm).
- ❖ Signs of a newly developed cold or uncontrollable coughing.
- ❖ Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach.
- ❖ Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache.
- ❖ Any discharge or drainage from the eyes, ears, or open sores (children with appropriately bandaged sores may attend school).

In addition, any child diagnosed with a communicable disease may return to school only with a doctor's note confirming that the disease is no longer contagious.

The school office should be notified as soon as possible of contraction of any communicable disease. MSC will notify parents of any DHEC reportable, communicable diseases within the classroom or school, as applicable.

## *Medication*

Medication should be administered by a parent or guardian before or after school hours when possible. Initial doses of a medication that a child has never taken before should not be given at school. Parents must complete a school form, “Administration of Specific Medicine” in order for staff members to administer medication to children who require it. This form is available on the Enrollment Forms page of the school website under the Enrollment drop-down menu. Medication must be clearly labeled in its original container including manufacture’s guidelines, instructed to be given according to manufacturer’s guidelines and approved by the School Nurse. Hand medications and forms directly to a member of the MSC office staff or School Nurse. Placing it in your child’s lunchbox may result in the instructions being lost and not carried out, as well as opening the possibility of children sharing medications.

The school staff will only administer medications that are FDA approved and meet manufacture’s guidelines. The staff member who administers medication will fill in and initial the Medication Record, which is available for parents to review. Cough drops, itch creams, bug sprays, antibiotics and over-the-counter medications are treated as medications for the purpose of these instructions.

In addition, ***prescription medications*** require a physician’s order to be administered in the school setting by the School Nurse. The school will accept a note from a physician or a physician’s signature on the “Administration of Medications” form. Secondary students may self-monitor/self-administer medication with both the parent’s and School Nurse’s approval.

## *Emergency Procedures*

In case of emergency, the parents or other authorized person will be contacted for instructions. If no emergency instructions can be obtained, the staff member will notify Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the child to be transported by ambulance or authorized private vehicle to KershawHealth, and the instructions and recommendations of the attending physician will be followed. Medical conditions requiring evacuation include, but are not limited to loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, unequal pupils, seizure, neck or back injury, continuous clear drainage from nose/ears after a blow to the head, severe headache, stiff neck or pain when head is moved, hives that appear quickly, very sick child who seems to be getting worse quickly, vomiting blood, severe abdominal pain that causes a child to double over, abdominal pain after a blow to the abdomen, possible broken bones, or shock.

The Enrollment Record (with DSS Form 2900 and General Authorization Form) and a faculty member must accompany the child if transported by means other than the parent.

A member of the office staff will replace the faculty member until a substitute can arrive.

In case of accident or illness the first adult on the scene will administer First Aid within the limits of her training. Further emergency procedures (as outlined above) will be initiated in cases when the child's condition cannot be remedied by elementary first aid. The Headmaster will be notified immediately if possible, but notification of the office shall not delay calling parents or EMS.

The Classroom Director (rather than the office staff) should call parents in case of accident, as parents may have specific questions about the events leading to it that the office staff may not be able to answer.

## **Insurance**

MSC carries student non-athletic insurance and policies for loss or damage to the property, liability, and to cover Directors and Officers.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

The school is required by state law to report any known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services.

## **Inclement Weather Closings and Delays**

Parents and faculty members of MSC do not face the obstacles created by inclement weather encountered by parents of children enrolled in local public school systems. Because students at MSC work at their own pace, the loss of a day by one student does not disconnect him from the place of his peers. As a result, **the closure of Kershaw County schools does not normally mean the closure of the Montessori school.** Unless MSC announces closure in the media, each parent can make a reasonable assessment of the situation and determine whether to bring a child to school or not. The Headmaster has access to the information available to the Kershaw County School District, and will make a closure decision by 6 a.m. When bad conditions may present a hazard, parents should stay tuned to the local radio station (FM 102.7), and check WIS-TV, the school answering machine, the school web site ([www.montessori-camden.com](http://www.montessori-camden.com)) or the school Facebook page. Additionally, MSC may opt to close due to the dangers of tornadoes spawned when there is an approaching hurricane. "Approaching Hurricane Related Tornado Emergencies" occur when approaching weather conditions, associated with a hurricane, result in a number of South Carolina counties (whether or not including

Kershaw) having publicly declared Tornado Watches. Parents may be encouraged, even expected, to collect children in the event of a declared Tornado Watch or Warning during the school day, should they be able and willing to do so. Classes meanwhile should continue as normal.

MSC may also invoke the provisions of Montessori at a Distance ([MAAD](#)).

In case of emergency requiring evacuation of the campus, the staff follows procedures in the Policy Manual, including evacuation to the LDS Church to meet buses and further evacuation to Camden High School or other site at the direction of Kershaw County Emergency Management. Complete details are available in the MSC office.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

MSC is open Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Please maintain prompt arrivals and departures.

Staff members sign students in and out of school using Transparent Classroom.

Arrival between 8:00 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. will ensure maximum benefit from classroom time. It also allows the child to adjust mentally from home environment to school at the same time as her classmates. Late arrivals frequently feel rushed to “catch up” or disconnected from the day, which reduces their own concentration and disturbs other children.

All children arriving before 8:00 a.m. will be dropped off at Beard Hall for morning Extended Day. At 8:00 a.m., children assigned to classes in Bossong or Primary Hall will be escorted there by a staff member.

When arriving before 8:20 a.m. at either building, parents are asked to remain in their cars and our greeter will assist the students from their cars and direct them to the classrooms. We find that this method of separation decreases anxiety for both parents and younger children. However, sometimes a child (or parent) may suffer separation anxiety. The best remedy is for the parent to make a calm, pleasant, and prompt exit, leaving the child in the care of a reassuring staff member. If this anxiety manifests itself at home and not at school, the Classroom Directors and Headmaster should be informed. Children who arrive **after 8:20 a.m.** must be brought to the office to be signed in by the person who brought them to school to be signed in, and the office staff will escort them to their classrooms.

For departures at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., parents should remain in their cars and a staff member will walk the child to the car and place him or her in a car seat or seat belt. Students scheduled to depart at 11:30 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. who are not retrieved within 15 minutes will be charged the standard Extended Day rate. **A \$1.00 per minute late fee will be charged for the time a child remains at the school after 6:00 p.m.**

The staff is permitted to release a child to a parent or other designated adult only if the vehicle has a **restraint system** in their vehicle as required by South Carolina State Law, Article 47, Chapter 5 of Title 56, Section 56-5-6410. Staff members will not release a child to an adult who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Because parking is limited in the lot, traffic can become congested easily. Parents who need to escort their children into the building or meet with staff are requested to park in the spaces provided across from the buildings' entrances. Please do not leave your car unattended in the pick-up line or park on the grass.

Parents should include on their children's Enrollment Record all possible persons whom they authorize to pick up their children. Special limitations to the pick-up list should be supported with copies of legal documents in the office, as necessary. Please stop by the office to make changes to your children's record and allow twenty-four hours to ensure that changes to the authorized pick-up list are available to all staff. In emergency situations you may give one-time permission for your child to leave school with an adult not on the pick-up list. All adults not known to the staff will be required to show photo identification before picking up children.

### *Movement During the School Day*

Each member of the staff maintains positive control over all children in her care, will know the number of children under her care, and will have access to either the Attendance Roster or the Enrollment Record.

The Headmaster has overall responsibility that all children are safely and properly supervised by members of the staff at all times.

Classroom Directors record time of arrival, time of departure, and transition to Extended Day in Transparent Classroom every day. They also record attendance during movement to and from the playground as well as occasions when a portion of the class may be in another location.

The Extended Day Director records the times of arrival and departure of all children in Transparent Classroom.

The Intersession Program Director adapts the transition procedures as described above.

Transition times during the day are more sensitive because the children have a greater likelihood to be overlooked when everyone is in motion. All children at MSC are under the supervision of a member of the staff at all times. When children transition from one staff member to another the former transmits any pertinent information about that child on the applicable transition form. For transitions from Early Morning Extended Day to the classroom and from the classroom to the nap room, the names of all children making the transition are recorded and given to the gaining staff member.

## **Attendance**

Consistent attendance is very important for proper progress through the curriculum. Please plan your vacations during Intersession or other vacation periods listed in the annual calendar. If your child must be absent from school for a planned event, coordinate with the Classroom Director and school administration for prior approval.

Students can miss up to ten days lawfully before they are dropped from enrollment. All days past ten must be approved by the Headmaster. After an absence, medical or parent notes must be submitted to school **within five days**. If notes are submitted after five days, the absences will be considered unlawful. Unlawful absences may be made up during Intersession, at parent expense, and the child must complete all missed assignments during this time. *The student must attend a full week to make up 1-5 days absence.* Any student with more than ten unlawful absences at the conclusion of the Summer Intersession will be retained in the current level for an additional year or withdrawn from MSC.

### *Lawful Absences*

- Student illness. If attendance would endanger his health or the health of others. (If your child has an illness that causes an absence to be more than five days, you may make a request for homebound instruction.) Absence for medical reasons must be confirmed by a health official. In some cases a parent note may be submitted in lieu of a doctor's note, and the Headmaster may approve the absence.
- Illness or death in the immediate family.
- A recognized religious holiday of the student's faith.
- Medical or dental appointments
- Court appearances

### *Unlawful Absences*

An unlawful absence is any absence not excused under the conditions mentioned above.

### *Tardiness*

Students need to arrive at school at or before 8:20 a.m. Greeting staff members return to their classrooms at 8:20. A parent arriving after they have left must bring their student to the office to sign in, and an office staff member will escort the child to the classroom.

### *Consequences*

Three consecutive or five total unlawful absences are considered to be truancy. Parent/ legal guardian will be notified that an Attendance Improvement Plan must be implemented. If unlawful absences continue, a referral ~~may~~ will be made to legal authorities.

## **Personal Belongings and Clothing**

Children should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for both indoor and outdoor activities. In the interest of safety, jewelry, open-toed shoes, high heels, flip-flops, backless sandals or boots may not be worn to school. To foster independence, parents are encouraged to purchase clothing that the children can easily manipulate. Parents should avoid sending children to school in clothing with messages that suggest violence, aggressive behavior or controversial themes, or ornate quiet shoes. These items compete with the gentle, loving environment we have created at MSC. Primary children must keep a complete change of clothing on hand at school for spills and other emergencies. These clothes, as well as those worn to school, should be labeled with your child's first and last name. Students may bring books, science specimens, and other items of educational interest to the class. Since Montessori materials are designed to attract children to specific lessons at the most appropriate age, toys brought from home would be a distraction in the classroom. We will safeguard toys inadvertently brought to school until the end of the school day. Parents may retrieve toys from the Classroom Director or the Office.

It is not unusual for parents occasionally to find tiny cubes, puzzle pieces, beads, or other items in pockets, cuffs, or book bags. These items should be returned to the school promptly as they are components of Montessori materials. Teachers make every effort to provide complete equipment and maintain an environment that is always ready for learning.

## **Cell Phones**

Primary and Elementary students may not bring cell phones to school. Secondary students have a separate policy. Contact the Secondary program director for details.

## **Lost and Found**

MSC maintains a Lost and Found in Beard Hall. Please check with the Extended Day Director or Office if your child is missing an article of clothing or other belongings. Unclaimed lost and found items will be donated to charity once each semester. If we find an item labeled with your child's name, we will send it home with your child.

## **School Store**

A great way to show school spirit! The MSC Store offers a variety of school logo items to choose, ranging from polo shirts to T's, hats, license plates, coffee mugs, etc. We also have older Family Recipe cookbooks and tote bags. All items purchased must be picked up at the school.

## **Celebrations**

During the school year our children and families have many occasions to celebrate. Holidays are important for many reasons, and children should be able to celebrate them in some way during school time. They help us mark the passage of time and seasons. Winter holidays bring a sense of light and joyfulness to the long, dark winter months. They create a sense of community and a shared bond among groups of people and provide an opportunity to study history, geography, and culture. They offer chances to experiment with different kinds of artwork and art projects. They help us honor special events and people in our lives and encourage us to spend time with friends and family.

MSC Classroom Directors announce how each event will be celebrated. To maintain decorum and avoid hurt feelings and sugary diets, parents are requested to check with the Classroom Director before sending to school such things as Valentine's Day cards or cupcakes.

### *Birthdays*

A birthday is also a celebratory event. The moment of birth, which is the beginning of your child's own time line, is of great importance to him/her. The "celebration of life" begins by gathering the children together as a family. We honor the birthday child by telling a story of how he/she was born, lived as an infant, learned to sit, crawl, walk, etc. As we tell the story of your child's life,

he/she walks slowly around a candle—one time around for each year of your child’s life. The candle represents the sun around which the child has circled while on earth. On this special day, please send to school one photo for each year of your child’s life, as well as some important events in your child’s life at one year, two years, at three years, etc. (pictures will be returned). This is a beautiful celebration of life, not a party, so no food or special favor is necessary. Parents and grandparents are welcome to attend the “celebration of life ceremony” for their child. At home, your child may receive many gifts on his/her birthday. One way for your child to express his/her love and thankfulness on this special day is to bring a gift for the class—even something as simple as a book, cut flowers, or a plant can be joyously given. A small, useful item such as a vase, dish, pitcher, tray, bowl, jar, or basket can be found easily in a garage sale or flea market. If the gift is marked as being made in another country, it will support our cultural studies as well! Consult with your child’s Classroom Director for suggestions and authorizations. In the interest of protecting the feelings of the children, party invitations will not be distributed at school. Please mail them or personally deliver them to the parents of the children invited. Parents and children are listed in Transparent Classroom.

## **Lunch**

Parents should provide healthy, nutritious lunches for their children. These foods should not require refrigeration or warming. At least one item from each of the following categories should be included:

- ✓ Meat, poultry, eggs, peanut butter, or other protein
- ✓ Two vegetables, or one vegetable and one fruit, or two fruits
- ✓ Cereal or whole grain enriched products
- ✓ Dairy products that do not require refrigeration

Candy and food items containing caffeine should be avoided.

Children are encouraged to be self-sufficient during lunch times. Teachers model and encourage proper social skills. Children are encouraged to eat—or at least taste—each food provided. The school provides emergency lunches (at a nominal fee) for children who forget their lunches or who participate in the Extended Day Program unexpectedly. Lunch boxes should be labeled with your child’s first and last name. Children will not be permitted to share food items to control for food allergies.

Many classrooms have a microwave, and children will be permitted to warm food according to their mastery of the lesson in its use.

On Friday’s during the school year pizza is delivered to the school for the children. Parents may elect to have their child participate in “Pizza Friday” for the entire year on the Fee Schedule Worksheet under “Optional Fees.”

## **Snacks**

Healthy snacks are provided each day by the parents on a rotating basis, with the method varying slightly from level to level. Snacks should not be “junk food” with excessive sugar or fat, and should require some “assembly” so the children can take responsibility for “making” their snack. Parent should also avoid pre-packaged foods such as packs of crackers that may be difficult for children to open by themselves (thus requiring adult assistance, reversing the intent of the Montessori environment). Classroom Directors are not permitted to serve unhealthy snacks, and will work with parents to help them with snack guidelines as necessary.

If a parent forgets to provide snack on the appointed day, the Classroom Director will either purchase snack, sending the receipt to the office and the parent account will be charged, or swap snack days with another parent, at the discretion of the Classroom Director.

Parents also provide the mid-afternoon Extended Day snacks for their own children in their lunch boxes. Primary and Lower Elementary snacks are available throughout the morning; since snack consumption is optional, children may choose whether or not to serve themselves. The Upper Elementary students bring individual snacks. Further information is available from the various Classroom Directors.

## **Naps and Rest Periods**

Primary children rest on mats that can be purchased through the school. After being settled on their mats, children who have not fallen asleep within a reasonable amount of time may put their mats away and begin their afternoon work. Children are encouraged to bring clearly labeled blankets that are taken home at least weekly for laundering. Favorite “snuggle buddies” are allowed if desired. With storage space being limited, please provide a small pillow and a lightweight blanket. All nap items should be stored inside a large Ziploc bag that can be closed securely.

## **Incident Reports**

If a child is hurt, hurts another child, or is significantly upset during the day, the witnessing staff member will fill out an Incident Report. The Headmaster reviews and initials all reports. Incident Reports are sent home with the child. If the report is not completed at the time the child departs a staff member will explain the circumstances to the parent and the report will be sent home the following day. If the incident is serious, parents will be notified immediately in accordance with our emergency policy. A staff member may apply simple first aid at the facility for an injury or illness needing only minimal attention, such as minor cuts, abrasions, bruises, and insect bites. All staff members are required to protect themselves against the risk of exposure to blood-borne pathogens. Staff members use gloves and other protective measures as they deal with blood and other body fluids.

## **Parent Participation**

The success of the child in the classroom relies heavily on the interaction between the parent and the school. Our “Open Door” policy welcomes parents who have questions and concerns or who simply want to learn more about the Montessori philosophy. We encourage parents to participate in the classroom and school activities. We have outlined below ways in which parents can help in establishing a positive school experience for their child.

### *Conferences*

Three parent conferences are scheduled each academic year. Normally the first conference addresses goals, with the students participating to the degree possible. In addition, parents are invited to seek consultation with the staff and/or Headmaster at other times during the year by scheduling a conference with the Classroom Director directly or through the school office.

### *Parent Education*

All parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Workshops and other events that will be scheduled throughout the year. This program is essential to understanding your child’s daily routine and the school’s policies. It also gives the parents an opportunity to ask questions and be introduced to the faculty and other Montessori parents. Finally, the Parent Education Program gives parents more sensitivity to the advantages of the Montessori Method, allowing them to reinforce Montessori lessons and principles at home. Parents completing six workshops receive a certificate of completion of the course.

### *Observation*

Parents and visitors are welcome to observe the children at school providing that observation does not disrupt the children’s activities. It is desirable to observe a class before enrolling a child, if possible. Parents are welcome to visit the class without interfering with the academic curriculum (unless a court order states otherwise), but are asked to allow at least **six weeks** adjustment time before observing newly enrolled students to be able to appreciate the “normalization” process. To avoid over-crowding in the classrooms, appointments to observe are preferred. Parents may also observe classrooms remotely on the large screen in the office. Written guidelines are available in the office to assist with your observation.

### *Parents’ Advisory Council (PAC)*

The PAC serves as a liaison between parents and school officials at both the classroom and school levels. PAC members speak for the parents they represent—parent representatives are volunteers of their class and the President represents the parents of the school.

The Headmaster works closely with the President of PAC, seeking parent ideas, input, and assistance for programs.

Classroom Directors work with their classroom representatives. They may assist in various ways, including organizing field trip drivers and special projects, and relaying questions or concerns from the classroom’s parents to the Classroom Director.

PAC helps organize school activities at both the classroom and school levels. The Development Committee asks the PAC President for volunteers for all-school fundraising activities.

### *Expectations: What You as a Parent Can Expect from MSC:*

- ❖ A safe, loving and secure environment to help the children develop into self-confident, happy adults at peace with themselves and each other.
- ❖ Faculty and staff who live by the stated philosophies of the school and Dr. Maria Montessori.
- ❖ Realistic goals for your child.
- ❖ Care and respect for your child as an individual who progresses at his/her own pace.
- ❖ Information about your child's progress and advice when appropriate.
- ❖ An open invitation to become part of the Montessori family.
- ❖ Appreciation of your point of view.
- ❖ Positive thinking and professionalism.
- ❖ A prepared environment that gives your child the opportunity to cultivate curiosity and interest in a wide range of fields that are arranged in an orderly and neat fashion that is easily accessible to the child.

### *Expectations: What MSC Can Expect from You as a Parent:*

- ❖ Attendance at meetings, orientations, conferences, and workshops.
- ❖ Acceptance of the Montessori philosophy and adherence to the guidelines of the *Parent Handbook*.
- ❖ Communication concerning situations which may affect your child's school performance.
- ❖ Early communication to the Classroom Director of problems or concerns.
- ❖ Setting realistic goals for your child and observing the classroom voluntarily at least once per year.
- ❖ Involvement in parent volunteer activities and other projects to support the school.
- ❖ Prompt response to tuition and paperwork obligations.
- ❖ A positive attitude towards the school and philosophy you have chosen for your child.

### **Some Points to Remember**

Dr. Montessori reminded the adults who are responsible for children of the following:

- ❖ Each child matures and develops at a rate different from that of others—and the rate changes over time; therefore, comparing children of the same age not only does not produce useful information but can also lead to anxiety.
- ❖ At school, the children are encouraged rather than pushed. The same should occur at home.
- ❖ Provide sensible, flexible rules and limits that your child can accept and follow easily. This gives your child a sense of security in her environment and in her relationship with others.
- ❖ Avoid doing anything for your child that he can do for himself.
- ❖ Demonstrate each activity to your child in a slow, simple manner with as few words as possible and let him/her try the task. Give time for practice; let your child use real objects. Your child prefers to use the objects he/she sees adults handling.
- ❖ Only touch a child when invited to do so.
- ❖ Never speak ill of the child in his presence—or absence.
- ❖ Concentrate on strengthening and helping the development of what is good in the child so that its presence may leave less and less space for the inappropriate.
- ❖ Be active in preparing the environment. Take meticulous and constant care of it. Help the child establish constructive relations with it.
- ❖ Be ever ready to answer the call of the child who needs you.
- ❖ Respect the child who makes a mistake and can (then or later) correct it.

- ❖ Stop firmly and immediately any misuse of the environment and any action which endangers the child, his development, or that of others.
- ❖ Respect the child who takes rest or watches others working or ponders over what he has done or will do. Neither call him nor force him to other forms of activity.
- ❖ Treat the child with the best of good manners.

## **Extending Montessori in the Home**

We hope that this will give you some ideas for ways to implement the Montessori philosophy in an environment other than the school. Each home is and should be a unique place for a very special group of people, not a substitute school. The following are suggestions for activities from which you can choose those most appropriate to fit your own lifestyle.

- ❖ Provide your child with his/her own work area with a table and a few sturdy objects with which to work. Introduce each new activity slowly and simply. Allow enough time for the children to become familiar with that activity before introducing another.
- ❖ Arrange your child's room neatly and simply. Have shelves for toys and display only enough toys at a time that can be displayed neatly. Rotate items from time to time.
- ❖ Have child-sized furniture in the child's areas, low hooks and rods for clothes, and a light switch within reach.
- ❖ Allocate space for your child's own belongings and mark it in a recognizable way.
- ❖ Provide the child's own accessible cleaning materials: dustpan and brush, sponge, cloth, etc.
- ❖ Have mirrors placed at the child's eye level. Give your child the possibility to see outside through a window.
- ❖ Help your child learn the names of all objects in the home environment.
- ❖ Allow your child to do some of the following practical life activities:

Pour beverages at mealtime  
 Wash fruits and vegetables  
 Water plants and flowers  
 Wash or rinse mealtime dishes  
 Fold and sort laundry  
 Wash the table after meals  
 Set or clear the table  
 Clean mirrors or windows

Dust furniture or floors  
 Polish brass, silver, furniture or shoes  
 Weed the garden  
 Sweep  
 Rake leaves  
 Care for animals  
 Brush/comb hair

Put away own clothing  
Dress and undress with little assistance  
Choose own clothing for the day  
Brush teeth  
Wash hands  
Shake hands for greeting  
Place own order at a restaurant

Offer something to a guest  
Use the telephone courteously  
Make own bed  
Pick up own room  
Prepare simple foods  
Help unload groceries and sort them

- ❖ Statistics suggest that the average preschooler watches twenty-three hours of television a week and the average American family watches seven hours a day. Find ways to limit, monitor, and select your child's viewing. Studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education show that heavy television viewing adversely affects the development of a child's language skills. Further, they suggest that children who are heavy viewers score, on average, fifteen points lower on standardized testing. They are less imaginative, more aggressive, and do not sleep as well as children who have been read to before going to sleep.
- ❖ The computer also presents a risk to children. Please find ways to limit, monitor, and control your child's use of the computer. With the increased presence of computers and on-line services in most homes, "screen time" (television and computer) can quickly comprise the bulk of a free child's time at home.

A more detailed discussion of ways to implement the Montessori philosophy in your home can be found in John Moncure, "Extending Montessori in the Home," in *Tomorrow's Child* (March 2009), also available at the school office.

## **Problem-solving Procedures**

Cooperation between the school and home is essential to assure a happy and successful school experience for the children. Open and honest communication is a must for achieving cooperation. When problems do arise, individuals are encouraged to resolve the issues among the involved parties. If resolution is not accomplished, the issues should be brought to the attention of the Headmaster. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the individuals involved should ask the PAC President that they be placed on the agenda for the next Board of Directors meeting so that the Board might attempt to bring

resolution to the matters. Following these problem-solving procedures will facilitate the spirit of cooperation throughout the school community.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:**

The Montessori School of Camden does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, disability, age, or national origin in its educational programs or in its employment practices. Questions pertaining to Title IX or Section 504 may be directed to the Headmaster at 432-6828.