



*a licensed, non-profit center providing year round care and educational programming for children ages six weeks to six years*

## **Family Handbook**

**2009-2010**

**101 Boulder Point Drive, Suite 1A ~ Plymouth, NH 03264  
(603) 536-3898**

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## **Introduction**

### **Our Mission Statement**

The mission of the Mid-State Montessori Center is to provide a holistic learning and living experience for young children and to create an environment that inspires them to develop inner discipline, self-assurance, and a love of learning. Our program provides a creative and adaptive environment that responds to each child's individual strengths and needs. We seek to balance academic and social development and to foster responsibility and cooperation within a supportive learning environment.

### **History of the Mid-State Montessori Center**

Founded in 2007 as a community extension of Plymouth's Mid-State Health Center, Mid-State Montessori is a licensed, non-profit educational program currently serving children ages six weeks to six years. In addition to the academic school year, Mid-State Montessori Center will offer a summer program during the months of (late) June through (late) August, providing year round education and care.

### **Center Hours**

Mid-State Montessori Center is open year round, Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

### **Program Description**

Fully licensed by the state of NH, our center offers half, whole and extended day Montessori preschool/kindergarten programming for toilet-trained children ages two years, nine months to six years. Additionally, we offer Infant/Toddler care for children ages six weeks through thirty-three months. In either classroom, your child will be part of a multi-age grouping where s/he will have the opportunity to be both a learner and a mentor.

At Mid-State Montessori Center, children will be in the care of dedicated teachers, who will follow the individual, developmental stages of each child and encourage them to advance at their own pace.

Among other things, in our program you will find:

- **The Prepared Environment**
- **Mindfully Crafted Learning Materials**

## Introduction

- A Child-Centered Program
- Montessori and Classically Trained Classroom Teachers Dedicated to “Following Your Child”

## Offered Programs

*In order to take full advantage of the Montessori 3-6 program, we recommend that our 4-6 year old children take part in the half or whole school day, five days per week.*

**\*Before Care (7:30 a.m.-8:30 a.m.)**

**Half Day (8:30 a.m.-noon)**

**Whole Day (8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.)**

**Extended Day (7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

**\*After Care (3:15 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)**

*While the 8:30 to 3:15 time span (in the preschool/kindergarten classroom) focuses on the more traditional aspects of a Montessori education, our ‘Before and After Care’ programs offer a more socially structured experience.*

\*Unless this service is included in your chosen enrollment plan, **incidental Before and After Care is not available**. Additional on-call staff may be available to assist when a parent is unable to pick-up on time due to an emergency. However, the family will be billed the cost of staffing for that time.

## Holidays Observed and Closings

To help meet the needs of the working family, Mid-State Montessori Center is open Monday through Friday for the entire calendar year. We follow the holiday closing calendar observed by the Mid-State Health Center which denotes the following days as holiday closings:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Day
- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4<sup>th</sup>)

The Montessori Center does schedule a handful of early (3:30pm) closures to allow for in-house professional development. These can be found on our annual calendar.

## **Introduction**

### Montessori Education

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the first female medical doctor in Italy, developed a system of education that uses close observation of a child's development to offer curriculum appropriate for that child at that stage. Montessori education offers a child-centered, individualized and structured approach to learning in which freedom of choice, responsibility and respect for the self and for others is emphasized. As a result, the children are allowed to develop at their own pace, using their own abilities, with the guidance of a trained Montessori teacher and the use of specially designed Montessori materials. Based on her thorough understanding of the developmental needs of the child, Dr. Montessori believed that the early years, the period from birth to age six, is the time when a child's intelligence is formed, and when her/his natural curiosity and love for knowledge is awakened. Maria Montessori felt that the goal of early education should be to cultivate this inner desire to learn, through a program adapted to the interests and needs of children.

## **General Center Information**

### **Clothing**

Children work with materials in the classroom that may result in their clothing becoming soiled or wet (water, paint, etc.), sometimes more than once per day. They appreciate the option of changing into clean, dry clothes on their own. This clothing should be comfortable, easy for the child to manage and **appropriate for the day's weather**. Each preschool / kindergarten-aged child must bring 2 complete changes of clothing in a clearly marked plastic bag. If the child uses the clothing, it will be sent home and the change of clothing must be replaced the following school day. In addition to a pair of **sturdy, outdoor shoes**, we ask that each preschool / kindergarten child bring in a **pair of non-character slippers\*** that s/he is able to independently put on and take off. Character/light-up slippers can pose a distraction for some children and large character heads make it difficult for children to sit with crossed legs and maneuver throughout the classroom.

*\*Slippers do not need to be taken home at the end of the school day; they will stay in your child's cubby when not in use. We wear slippers to help us cut down on the amount of dirt tracked into the classroom space on a daily basis, to maintain a clean and comfortable environment for the children and to "let us feel the floor under our feet."*

In addition to an ample supply of diapers/diapering supplies, families of infants and toddlers are asked to supply the center with **three complete sets** of "emergency" clothing in addition to the child's outfits for the day. These outfits will be stored separately from the child's clothes for the day and will be sent home as they become soiled or...too small for your growing child! Please be sure to replenish your child's supply of clothing when articles are sent home the previous school day.

### **Outdoors Play**

Time outdoors is an important part of child's day. It provides the fresh air needed to insure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills.

Weather permitting, the children go outside every day. In the case of a light sprinkle, drizzle or flurry the children may still go outside for a short time. Our hill is very windy and temperatures may be cooler at the school than temperatures at your home. Layering clothing is very helpful. Sometimes mittens and socks get wet after a play period. For children who attend all day, sending spare mittens, socks and hats is also helpful.

## **General Center Information**

***If your child is recovering from an illness and still is not able to go outside, you are asked to keep him or her at home. The center does not have adequate staff coverage to provide for the care of one or two children while the other children are outdoors.***

### **Classroom Materials**

The materials in the classroom are there to be used by all of the children and the teachers attempt to make them as inviting as possible. Sometimes they are too successful (!) in this endeavor and pieces of the apparatus get invited home. It is often the most important/favorite pieces that find their way home. Should this occur, we ask that parents not worry about this and return items as soon as possible.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are special days and we enjoy celebrating them at school. Please remind your child's teacher a few days before the birthday so that we are able to plan for the celebration. If a child's birthday falls during the summer time and the family would like to observe his/her half-birthday, please follow the same steps previously listed.

Every birthday child will be honored by participating in the birthday walk where the child (carrying a model of the earth) carries the earth around the sun (a "candle" in the center of our circle) for each year of his/her life. We follow-up by singing 'Happy Birthday' and the child can "blow the candle out."

If you and your child would like, you can bring a healthy birthday snack to share with the class. The celebration of your child's birthday can also include donating a book to the classroom library in your child's name.

### **Holidays and Celebrations**

We acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of our school community and the diversity of the much larger world community. We feel it is important to broaden our children's horizons to encompass the entire planet. Celebrations help inspire a sense of joy, wonder and enthusiasm. We teach with great respect for the child, his/her family, and his/her background. We encourage each family to share their heritage through stories, food and celebrations.

## **General Center Information**

Mid-State Montessori Center does not teach religion, although we do present many universal spiritual themes such as love, kindness, joy and confidence in the fundamental goodness of life. Many of the holidays we celebrate may be religious in origin. We approach them instead from a cultural perspective, sharing food, music, dance and traditions related to the day. This helps us build a sense of community by celebrating our similarities as well as our differences. *“If we want to achieve peace, we must begin by teaching children how to accept each person (and themselves) for who they are.”*

### **Field Trips**

During the course of the school year, field trips may be taken to local areas of interest in coordination with an area being studied in class or to take advantage of special community events. Parents will be notified in advance of an upcoming trip as well as any associated fees, and may be asked to help with transportation.

Volunteer field trip drivers must have a valid driver’s license, registration and automobile insurance. **The school’s insurance does not cover field trip volunteers and vehicles.** When a parent volunteers to drive (and we hope you will!), he or she is also agreeing to act as a chaperone for the children they are transporting for the duration of the field trip.

### **Tax Exempt Donations**

Mid-State Montessori Center is part of a non-profit corporation and any donations to the center are tax-deductible.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Illness Policy**

Mid-State Montessori Center adheres strictly to the following guidelines for dealing with illness in school. These standards are designed to protect your healthy child and our policy is based, not only on the expertise/guidance of local pediatricians and family practitioners but also, on the feedback of our parents to avoid any confusion over the health and well being of our children. Please do not send your child to school if they are sick or unable to participate in daily activities. Your child will recover more quickly at home and the other children and adults at school will be protected from continued exposure to the illness.

If a child becomes ill while at school, s/he will be made comfortable and isolated from the other children and parents will be called to arrange for the child to be picked up. If a child is considered to be too ill to attend school at drop off, s/he will not be admitted for that day. Please remember that when illness is accompanied by fever, your child may not return to school until their temperature has been normal for twenty four hours (**without medication**).

### **Medication Policy**

Parents are given the opportunity to sign an “Authorization to Administer Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication” form for their child(ren). Mid-State Montessori Center teachers and staff will administer medication, prescription, remedy or treatment with parental authorization **and** in accordance with the following state of NH guidelines:

- **Prescription Medication** will be administered in accordance with the printed prescription label, which must be attached to the **original** prescription container.
- **Non-Prescription Medication** must be in the original container and will be administered in accordance with the manufacturer’s printed instructions. If there are no manufacturer’s printed instructions for the age of the child, the program may administer the non-prescription medication in accordance with the written, dated and signed instructions from the child’s parent, including a statement that the instructions have been reviewed/approved by the child’s licensed health practitioner, or with signed, dated written instructions from the child’s licensed health practitioner.

## Health and Safety

### Illness Exclusion Policy

EXCLUDE IF:	READMIT IF:
1. Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (oral, rectal or axillary ) or higher	1. Fever-free for 24 hours <b><u>without medication</u></b>
2. Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (oral, rectal or axillary ) or higher <b>plus</b> one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe cold with yellow-green nasal discharge</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Sneezing</li> <li>• Swollen glands</li> <li>• Skin rash</li> </ul>	2. Fever-free for 24 hours <b>and</b> note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable
3. Conjunctivitis (pink eye) bacterial and/or viral	3. <b>All</b> discharge has ceased <b>and</b> note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable
4. Head and Body Lice	4. After treatment and free of lice and knits <b>and</b> note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable
5. Ringworm of Body and/or Head	5. After treatment and lesions are covered, <b>and</b> note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable
6. Skin lesions, impetigo and/or scabies	6. Skin sores are healed <b>and</b> note from clinic or physician stating that the child is not communicable
7. Vomiting	7. Free of upset stomach <b>and</b> vomiting for 24 hours
8. Diarrhea (two or more loose, watery stools per day)	8. Diarrhea free for 24 hours
9. Fainting, seizures or general signs of a communicable disease to which the child has been exposed	9. Free of symptoms <b>or</b> note from clinic or physician stating child is not communicable

## **Health and Safety**

### **Drop Off, Pick Up and Late Arrivals**

Communication between parents and teachers is essential to the safety and best care of the child. Often the morning arrival time and afternoon dismissal times are quite busy for the teacher and for the parents, as well. As the primary focus is on the safety of those children, neither party is generally available for conversation at these times. Parents are invited to schedule a conference, meeting or observation whenever they would like more information about their child's experiences at school.

At the time of registration, parents are asked to fill out a form authorizing who is able to pick up their child from school and/or act on their behalf in the case of an emergency. **Children will only be released to people on this form.** Parents should check and update this form regularly.

Teachers and staff will record all arrival and departure times of children each day. *Children are expected to arrive at school on time.* Late arrivals are disruptive to the flow of the classroom and make it difficult for the child arriving late to transition into the school day. It is so much appreciated when parents call in the morning whenever they know that their child will be out for the day, coming in late and/or leaving school early.

- Before Care Drop-Off: drop-off can be anytime between 7:30am and 8:30am
- Regular Drop-Off: drop-off can be between 8:30am and 8:45am (at the latest)
- Half Day Pick-Up: pick-up is at 12:00pm (children staying for the half day do not eat lunch at school)
- Full Day Pick-Up: pick-up is at 3:15pm
- After Care Pick-Up: pick-up is between 3:15pm and 5:30pm (at the latest)

### **Visitation and Observation Policy**

The classroom is a very special place. The environment has been carefully designed to meet the developmental needs of children. A very delicate balance occurs between the child, teacher and the environment as they work together to support growth and learning. The presence of visitors moving freely through the room can be distracting and at times confusing for the children. It can interfere with the atmosphere of independence and concentration in the classroom.

We ask that all outside visitors respect the children and the classroom. The teacher will guide visitors into appropriate areas to sit and observe. Visitors should remain seated and refrain from engaging in conversation or activity with the children.

## Health and Safety

In the case of parents, student teachers and volunteers, the teachers will direct visitors to appropriate activities within the classroom where they can become involved such as sharing a special skill or cultural information during circle time, listening to children read, or directing a special project.

After the first four weeks of school, parents are invited to schedule observations of the classroom(s). **One observer is welcome to the classroom at a time**, so please be aware that impromptu visits may not be possible. Upon your arrival, you will be escorted to the classroom and, following your observation, the classroom teacher and/or the center director will call you to answer questions concerning your visit.

## Supervision of Children

While often exceeding the requirements, Mid-State Montessori Center follows the NH State Licensing and Regulation Guidelines for student-teacher ratios in each classroom.

### Infant & Toddler Program

Ages of Children	State of NH Requirements	<b>MSMC</b> Practices
6 weeks to 12 months	1 Associate Teacher to 4 children	1 Associate Teacher and 1 Child Care Assistant to 4 children
13 months to 24 months	1 Associate Teacher to 5 children	1 Lead Teacher & 1 Child Care Assistant to 5 children
25 months to 35 months	1 Associate Teacher to 6 children	1 Lead Teacher & 1 Child Care Assistant to 6 children

### Montessori Preschool/Kindergarten Program

Ages of Children	State of NH Requirements	<b>MSMC</b> Practices
36 months to 47 months	1 Associate Teacher to 8 children	1 Lead Teacher and 1 Assistant to 8 children
48 months to 59 months	1 Associate Teacher to 12 children	1 Lead Teacher & 1 Child Care Assistant to 12 children
60 months or over	1 Associate Teacher to 15 children	1 Lead Teacher & 1 Child Care Assistant to 15 children

## **Health and Safety**

Efforts will be made to familiarize children and parents with potential substitute teachers, volunteers and student teachers. Should an emergency arise where the teacher may need to leave the classroom, an approved substitute will be called in to supervise the children. In the event of a planned, short-term, non-recurring absence of the teacher an approved substitute will be arranged and parents will be notified.

### **In Case of Emergency**

Mid-State Montessori Center is located within the Mid-State Health Center. As such, we have the extreme privilege of being surrounded by medical professionals willing to assist us if we should ever have a medical emergency. When it comes to an emergency requiring specialized care and an ambulance service, we must act as though we are an independent child care center. This means that, while Mid-State Health Center professionals may assist and provide support while we experience an emergency, we will follow 9-1-1 and ambulance protocol (see below) if the need should present itself.

Should an injury or medical situation (broken limb, puncture wound, a fever of over 104 degrees or occurrence of seizure, for example) require emergency treatment, 911 will be called and your child will be transported, by ambulance, to the nearest hospital. In our case, this is Speare Memorial Hospital. If the ambulance is called, one of the classroom teachers will accompany the child in the ambulance and you will be contacted and asked to meet up at the hospital. As this can be quite expensive for families, please know that the ambulance will be called only when absolutely necessary. At the same time, we will always err on the side of caution. If parents and emergency contact people are unavailable (and the child is either on the way or has already arrived at the hospital), staff will continue calling all numbers until someone is reached.

Regarding emergency contacts, without exception, every family must have 2 emergency contact people (other than the parents, themselves). We recognize that it can be difficult to find people available for this role, but it is absolutely necessary. These people can be babysitters, co-workers, neighbors, relatives, trusted friends, etc. To help us serve your family in the best possible way, please be sure that the individuals for emergency contact designated on your child's registration form are:

- **aware** that he/she is an emergency contact for your child;
- available at all times (via cell phone or otherwise);
- within a 30 minute (maximum) drive of the center.

## **Health and Safety**

Additionally, if you are going to be out of town, please leave a number where you can be reached. Whenever there are changes regarding your address, home, cell or work phone, emergency contact people or *their* phone numbers, please notify the center immediately and update your registration form.

### **Fire Drills**

All child care facilities are required to have fire drill practice throughout the year and the Fire Chief may come to the center to monitor an unscheduled drill. In order to train the children in the fire drill procedure, it is necessary to sound a very loud fire alarm. Every effort is made to prepare the children for the sound of the alarm prior to using it in a drill; sometimes they still become frightened when the alarm is actually sounded. Please help us to be aware if your child is particularly sensitive to loud noises.

During the drill, children are led outside the building along routes designated for their classroom space. Visitors are asked to respond to the alarm by quickly exiting the center via the nearest outside door. Children are directed to leave the building quickly, calmly and quietly (with their classroom teachers) and go to their designated meeting place.

### **School Closings and Delays**

Unless Mid-State Health Center has closed the facility for the day or has declared an early release due to inclement weather or some other circumstance that poses a hazard to the public, we, Mid-State Montessori Center, will be open.\* Please note, however, that travel to school in any bad weather with poor road conditions is always up to parental discretion.

\*Mid-State Montessori Center teachers have a phone tree for use in the event of an unplanned closing or delay. If early morning road conditions are unfavorable, we may elect to cancel *Before Care* (7:30am-8:30am) and open our doors at 8:30am.

### **Nutrition**

Good nutrition plays an important role in the physical, mental and emotional development of the child. What a child eats is reflected in their academic and social performance at school.

Parents are required to provide a balanced and nutritious meal (breakfast, snack, lunch and/or dinner) for their children. Please remember to include a protein, grains,

## **Health and Safety**

vegetables and fruits for lunch. In order to increase your child's awareness of alternative food choices, **we do not allow candy, soda or yogurts with food dyes or sprinkles.** Additionally, **if refined sugar and high fructose corn syrup are among the first three ingredients listed on the food's packaging,** please consider sending in a different food. If your child has these foods in their lunch box, we may offer a more nutritious snack, sending home the others with your child. If parents are having trouble discovering meals their child is willing to eat, they are encouraged to speak with teachers who will be happy to give them ideas. We can refrigerate and/or reheat meals, if required. Remember: *most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods rather than a large quantity of only one or two items.* If a child cannot finish his/her lunch, the remaining food will be sent home in the lunch box. This will help parents to better gauge the amount of food needed for the day.

## **Napping and Resting**

While every child will be given the opportunity for a nap if they want one (unless a parent does not wish their child to nap), we request that parents inform us in writing whether or not the child will be napping. For instance, if a child is still napping at home and parents wish this to continue on a daily basis, or parents do not want the child to rest at school so they will sleep better at night. Children may be invited to rest by a teacher based on their level of energy or activities.

An essential work for children of the late infant/early toddler age is discovering independence and self-awareness. Just as children transition from the breast, bottle, Sippy cup and so on, it is important for children to experience transition in their sleeping environment, as well. **Communicating with parents each step of the way, children who have turned one year and who exhibit signs of readiness will be gradually (and at the pace of the child) transitioned from a Pack & Play / Crib-Style sleeping environment to a floor rest mat.** No child will be left alone to fall asleep. A teacher will be present to sing, soothe, back-rub, read, or just be until each child resting on a mat is asleep.

In accordance with NH State Child Care guidelines, children who sleep in Pack and Plays/Cribs will be placed on their **backs** and covered with a light blanket (that parents will provide). *For safety's sake we will not place stuffed animals, loose articles of clothing or heavy blankets in with the child when they are sleeping.*

## **Health and Safety**

### **General Student Health Policies**

All families with children enrolled in either program must provide documentation signed by the child's health care provider verifying that the child is able to participate in school and care, currently appears to be free from contagious or communicable disease and is receiving health care, including appropriate health examinations in accordance with NH State Licensure Requirements. Such documentation must state that the child has received all age appropriate immunizations. Children must remain current with their immunizations and update the documentation at the school annually. Any child who is not immunized because of the parents' genuine and sincere religious beliefs *may* be admitted if the parent furnishes the provider with a written and notarized statement to this effect.

### **Staff and Facility Health & Safety Policies**

All employees of the Mid-State Montessori Center will submit a statement from a healthcare provider as required by the NH State Bureau of Child Care Licensing. This information will be kept on file and updated regularly.

Caregivers and teachers must wash their hands and ensure children wash their hands with soap and running warm water frequently throughout the day with times including, but not limited to:

- when they are dirty
- after toileting or assisting children with toileting
- after changing a diaper
- before and after food handling/eating
- after contact with bodily secretion or fluid
- after coming in from outdoors

Sufficient and suitable clothing must be available so that children who soil their clothing may be changed. Parents of preschool-aged children are asked to keep at least one seasonally appropriate change of clothes for their child at school. Parents of infants and/or toddlers should provide several changes of clothing that may be left at school.

Toileting facilities will be kept clean and supplied with toilet paper, soap and towels accessible to staff and children. Toileting equipment will be provided appropriate to

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the toilet training level of the children in the group. Toilet-training seats will be sanitized with a germicidal solution after each use.

If a child (in the infant/toddler program) is not yet toilet-trained parents must supply an adequate supply of disposable diapers and wipes. Diapers will be disposed of in a tightly covered, foot-activated trash can located in the diapering area of the classroom. As we do not have a diapering service available, **cloth diapers are allowed only by written mandate of the child's physician.** If deemed a medical necessity, parents must supply the cloth diapers, inserts, wipes, disposal bags and nylon storage bag. Soiled cloth diapers will be placed and sealed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child at the end of the day. The changing pad will be wiped with a disinfecting solution after each use.

All rooms, rest mats and Pack & Plays, equipment, supplies and furnishings accessible to children will be cleaned and disinfected as needed, and daily, to protect the health of the children and staff. In addition to the routine cleaning and disinfecting done each day by the staff and teachers, the Mid-State Health Center's facilities and maintenance crew visits nightly to vacuum carpets, clean tile floors, scrub sinks and toilets, wash windows, etc.

## **Communication**

### **Receiving Mail**

Each child has a cubby space either inside the main entrance to the center or just inside the door to our reception area. Messages that are not sent electronically will be placed in each child's cubby and so parents are asked to check them daily.

### **Newsletters**

Mid-State Montessori Center will publish bi-monthly newsletters including information about the center community and announcements of program and family/parent events. The children and teachers will periodically write a newsletter, memo or journal to parents informing them of classroom activities, words to songs and upcoming events.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Either the center or the family may schedule special meetings at any time during the year.

### **Evaluation of Progress**

Mid-State Montessori Center maintains careful observations of and notes on each preschool/kindergarten child in accordance with the traditional Montessori curriculum. Children are never compared to each other or "graded" in a traditional or arbitrary manner. Written narratives are kept for younger children and evaluation of progress is based on the individual growth of each child.

### **Support Services**

All Mid-State Montessori Center families of preschool or kindergarten age children are eligible for the screenings services available through the public school home districts. Younger children are eligible for screening through early intervention services. Your child's teacher can assist you in requesting a screening from your home district if there are concerns about your child's development in any area.

### **Suggested Readings**

By Dr. Maria Montessori

- *The Absorbent Mind*
- *The Secret of Childhood*

## **Communication**

- *The Discovery of the Child*

By Angeline Stoll Lillard

- *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*

By Paula Polk Lillard

- *Montessori From the Start*
- *Montessori Today*

By Richard Louv

- *Last Child in the Woods*

By Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

- *Your Three Year Old*
- *Your Four Year Old*
- *Your Five Year Old*
- *Your Six Year Old*
- *How to Talk So Children Will Listen, How to Listen So Children Will Talk*
- *Siblings Without Rivalry*

## **Admission Policy**

### **General Policy**

Mid-State Montessori Center considers itself more than just a preschool or daycare program; we consider ourselves a true community of families that share a vision, values and goals for our children. We consider applications for admissions on a case-by-case open admission basis. When no openings are available children will be placed in the applicant group waiting list. In the event of an opening, children in this group will be considered based on the date the application was received and age and needs of the child (in accordance with the Montessori principle of a multi-age classroom). **Mid-State staff members, siblings of currently enrolled students and transfers from other Montessori schools may be granted priority in the admissions process.**

Mid-State Montessori Center admits students of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally made available to students at school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies or admission policies. We are committed to integrating and accommodating children with special needs into our program, in accordance with our environmental design, the Montessori philosophy and appropriate early childhood practices. In some circumstances, Mid-State Montessori Center may not be the “right fit” for a child and family. We reserve the right not to accept a child into the program or ask a child to leave the program based on the school’s inability to meet the needs of the child. We will support the family in finding a program better suited to the child’s specific needs.

Admission for any child will be determined after consultation between the family, center director and the lead teacher of the appropriate class.

### **Montessori 3-6 Program (Preschool/Kindergarten)**

Children thirty-three months to six years, and who are *toilet trained* (must be out of diapers and pull-ups), may be considered for admission.

### **Infant/Toddler Program**

Children six weeks to thirty-three months may be considered for admission.

## ***Admissions Process***

### **Observation and Tour**

Prospective families are required to have a tour of the center and to schedule one parent observation in a classroom and one child visit before completion of the enrollment process. Appointments for tours and observations can be made by contacting the center director.

### **Application**

If at all possible, parents are encouraged to speak with the center director and tour the classroom prior to submitting an application. All applications will be processed upon receipt of a completed application form and a \$25.00 application fee.

### **Waiting List**

If there are no openings available in the program selected, your application will be placed on a waiting list. You will be contacted as soon as space becomes available and will then have two weeks in which to enroll your child by paying the \$200.00 security deposit.

### **Provisional Acceptance**

All children enrolled are accepted into the program with the understanding that if the center feels the program cannot meet the child's needs, the staff and parents will explore alternatives together.

### **Enrollment Agreement**

A child is officially enrolled in the program when the center has received the signed enrollment agreement and registration deposit.

### **Withdrawal**

Should a family initiate withdrawal of a child, a minimum of 2 weeks advance and written notice (14 days) must be given to the center in order to receive a full refund of the \$200.00 tuition deposit.

## ***Admissions Process***

It is possible to change programs within the school if it seems advisable to both the parents and the staff, and if space is available. The center director has the final decision-making authority.

If both the parents *and* the center decide that Mid-State Montessori Center is not appropriate for an enrolled child, the child may be withdrawn and the parents relieved of any further financial responsibility.

If the *center* decides that Mid-State Montessori Center is not appropriate for an enrolled child, the family is relieved of any further financial obligation.

## **Enrollment/Registration Forms**

The State of New Hampshire and the center staff require that the following information be kept on file for each child enrolled in the program:

1. Application
2. Enrollment Registration
3. Emergency Information Forms
4. Medical Reports/Immunization Documentation
5. Authorization to Administer Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication
6. Authorization to Administer Non-Prescription Topical Ointment
7. Media Release Form
8. Signed Acknowledgement of Handbook Content Form

**Please be sure to notify the center when there is *any* change in the information provided on these forms.**

## **Tuition Policy**

Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually, monthly or weekly in accordance with the following payment schedule:

Annual: Full tuition payment due the first week of school in September.

Semi-Annual: tuition due the first week of school in Sept. & February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **Admissions Process**

Monthly: tuition due the first week of each month

Weekly: tuition due the last day of each calendar week

Unless this service is included in your chosen enrollment plan, incidental **Before and After Care** use will be available based on staff consideration. Requests must be placed 24 hours in advance to ensure that we are able to staff accordingly. If granted, Before/After Care use will be recorded by Mid-State Montessori Center staff and a separate bill will be distributed at the end of each month. **Please note that the cost of Before and After Care is based on any length of time during those specific hours. For example, if you need to drop your child off at 8:25am on a given morning, you will be billed for the full amount of three dollars.**

## **NH State Child Care Assistance**

Mid-State Montessori Center accepts financial child care assistance from families who qualify with the NH Department of Health and Human Services. Families receiving state assistance are responsible for applying with the state and for paying any amount/balance not covered by the child care assistance program.

## **Collection Policy**

Parents are expected to make payment by the due date or make payment arrangements in writing. With sixty days written notice at the discretion of the center, MSMC may cancel the enrollment and the spaces of children with unpaid tuition will be filled. We understand that families may experience some financial difficulties and are committed to working with any family to make acceptable arrangements for payment.

## **Returned Checks**

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

## **Tuition Credit**

There is no credit of either money or school time given for absences (such as, but not limited to, illness and vacations). When Mid-State Montessori Center has to close unexpectedly for the entire day, families normally in attendance on that day will be reimbursed. However, there is no credit given for delayed openings (cancellation of Before Care—7:30am-8:30am) or early dismissal.

## **Privacy Policy**

### **Child Privacy**

The staff of the Mid-State Montessori Center values the privacy of each family that is enrolled in our program and will keep personal and private information secure. A form will be sent home asking for permission to add your name to the Montessori Center directory. Only families that give the center permission will be added to the directory. The school will not give out phone numbers, birthdays or addresses of families that have elected to remain out of the directory. Class lists will be sent home to each family that has consented.

### **Staff Privacy**

The school also respects the privacy of the entire staff. We will not give out home/cell phone numbers or addresses. Teachers may elect to give out e-mail and phone numbers; however they are not required to do so. During the school day, the staff will be given messages when you call. If it is an emergency please notify the person answering the phone and the teacher will be alerted.

## ***Discipline Policy***

Preparation of the environment and carefully defined ground rules are keys to successful discipline. In a Montessori environment, providing opportunities for “freedom within limits” is the core of the philosophy regarding discipline.

Our approach to discipline is based on empowerment, mutual respect and trust. Even with our youngest of children, we use redirection, opportunities for reflection and discussion as a way to help children gain more proficiency with their budding interpersonal skills. Below are practices that **we will never use here** at Mid-State Montessori Center.

### **These practices are prohibited:**

- Corporal punishment of any kind
- Withholding or using food, rest, sleep or toileting as punishment
- Methods or interactions that frighten, demean, or humiliate a child.

If a child is endangering his or her safety or the safety of another person, an adult will intervene immediately and remove the child from the situation. Once the child/ren are safe, the teacher can assess the situation and choose developmentally appropriate discipline measures.

If a child’s body is out of control and s/he is unable to respond to redirection, discussion or appropriate consequences, the teacher may choose to have the child sit in a calm part of the classroom to regain self-control. When the child is able to return to work calmly, he or she may do so in consult with the teacher. This brief separation for reflection should never last more than a few minutes for a preschooler, and even less for a toddler.

When any child at Mid-State Montessori Center finds it difficult to adhere to the center’s expectation of positive and respectful conduct, every effort will be made to bring the student, family, and staff together to reach a solution. If, after conferencing and implementing an individualized action plan, the inappropriate/disruptive/harmful behavior continues, Mid-State Montessori Center reserves the right to permanently withdraw said child from the program and will work with the family to find an appropriate alternative.