



Parent Handbook

2017–2018

Infant and Toddler Program

We are delighted that you will be with us this year! This Parent Handbook is designed to help you learn about the policies and procedures at Montessori Academy.

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www.montessoriacad.org

Montessori Academy Administration

Head of School/Executive Director
Dr. Jim Bernstorf

Deputy Executive Director,
Mrs. Brenda Bernstorf, M.B.A

Upper School Director,
Mrs. Marynet King, M.A., AMS Certified

Primary Director,
Mrs. Tanelle Murphy, MAT, AMS Certified

Infant/Toddler Director,
Mrs. Sara Aronson, AMS Certified

Board of Directors

The board is comprised of non-administration professionals
and members of the administration.



Dual Accreditations

American Montessori Society (AMS) and
AdvancEd (formerly Southern Association of Colleges & Schools - SACS)

Not-For-Profit School

Montessori Academy is a not-for-profit school that practices a non-discriminatory policy and accepts all qualified students without regard to race, color and national origin.

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1. WELCOME FROM DR. BERNSTORF, HEAD OF SCHOOL

Welcome to the 2017 – 2018 school year at Montessori Academy! We are delighted that you have entrusted your children to us and to the Montessori Method of education. Even though the Montessori Method is about 100 years old, it has been fascinating to read more and more current research in brain science and psychology that supports what we have known all along from Dr. Montessori's extensive research.

Children are more engaged in their learning when allowed options and choice in the learning process. Freedom within a prepared environment allows the development of those crucial executive function skills of independence, intrinsic motivation, time management, and purposeful movement. The multi-aged classroom, is a social order that is like real life whether in the home or workplace, that allows children to develop social and interpersonal skills. In short, children have the opportunity to reach their full potential in a classroom that acknowledges their intrinsic differences, both in how they learn and process and how they deal with social issues within the school community. We believe that education is all about the process and not the specific knowledge. A memorized date and fact is temporary. Learning how to learn and loving learning is a life skill that can last forever!

Thank you for trusting us with the education of your child!

Jim Bernstorf Ed.D
Head of School
jimbernstorf@montessoriacad.org

2. MISSION, VISION, AND PHILOSOPHY

2.1 Our Mission

Our mission is to be a vibrant Montessori community that engages children to thrive in our changing world.

2.2 Our Vision

Our vision is that each student will become an independent, confident, motivated learner, and responsible community member as a result of the dynamic partnership between students, parents, and teachers. This partnership, within the exceptional Montessori environment, enables each student to become a life-long learner, respects the individual strengths, needs, and abilities of the student, and is a model within the educational community.

- Montessori Academy is a safe place where students feel accepted, secure and loved. Each of our students is treated with *kindness and respect*.
- Curriculum extends beyond the State of Tennessee curriculum requirements and is comprehensive, rich and effective.
- Instruction is carried out individually, and in small and large sharing groups.
- Our positively stated ground rules help to develop and maintain a community that reflects harmony and respect for the environment, one's peers and oneself.
- Multi-age students bond as a community that reflects peace and respect. Each year first-year and new students move into established classrooms. Older students *mentor* the first year students and become the leaders in the class.
- Each classroom is guided by Montessori certified and trained teachers.
- Teachers and students speak quietly in the classroom. Students respect the need of their peers to concentrate during work time.
- Montessori materials are sequentially arranged. The materials invite hands-on learning and stimulate motivation.
- Students organize their daily/weekly plans and are expected to do most work at school. They work independently and are allowed to finish their work without being stopped by the "bell".
- Students become increasingly excited about learning.
- Accountability and responsibility are basic tenets of the Montessori philosophy.
- Use of the peace rose (in Lower Elementary) teaches conflict resolution skills.
- Students develop confidence and leadership skills.
- Students are exposed to foreign language beginning in Primary and through Middle School.
- Life skills are taught at every level at Montessori Academy.
- Our "Treasure Chest of Life Skills Program (Lower Elementary – Middle School) concentrates on developing accountability, confidence, conflict resolution, leadership, motivation, organization, self-respect, and responsibility.
- A strong partnering of teachers, parents and students enables students to achieve their maximum potential academically, physically, socially and spiritually at Montessori Academy.

3. ACCREDITATION & ORGANIZATION

3.1 Affiliations and Accreditations

Montessori schools vary greatly in interpretation, consistency and teacher training. In the United States, there are over 5,000 Montessori schools of varying degrees of competence, standards and sizes. Some schools are connected with and funded by churches and others are privately owned. Montessori schools are not franchised.

Montessori teacher training is extensive and essential to the excellence of the classrooms. To be fully certified as a Montessori teacher, one must have the minimum of a Bachelor's degree and successfully complete an accredited teacher training program.

In the mid-1990s, Montessori Academy became jointly **accredited by AMS** (American Montessori Society) and **SACS** (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). **There are only 165 AMS accredited** schools in the nation at this time. In Tennessee, there are only three AMS accredited schools: Montessori Academy, our satellite school in Clarksville (Amare Montessori) and Lamplighter Montessori in Cordova, Tennessee.

3.2 Child-Care Licensing

Our Infant, Toddler and Primary Programs are certified by the Tennessee Department of Education. A copy of the *Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education State Board of Education* is in the Administrative Office and is available for review by parents.

3.3 Organizational Structure

Infant: (3-18 months)

The Infant Program at Montessori Academy is a nurturing environment, structured to meet the developmental needs of the youngest of our children. In this carefully prepared environment, babies are provided with engaging learning materials in a peaceful yet stimulating setting. Children learn to use their large muscles for crawling, pulling up, and walking, and are exposed to many materials which will assist in the development of their intellect, fine motor control, problem solving, and social skills. The freedom to explore and make independent choices allows infants to build confidence. Each child becomes an active participant in his or her own educational experience from the very beginning, which sets the stage for a lifelong love of learning. Teachers create strong bonds of trust with the infants as they lovingly respond to the children's individual needs. Trust and parent-teacher partnerships allow infants the security to develop to their greatest potential while at school.

Toddler: (18-36 months)

A Toddler class begins the educational process during the sensitive period for language and movement, from 18 months – 36 months. In this class, toddlers are encouraged to have independence and to explore and make choices in a safe environment. Toddlers are given many opportunities for learning, including being taught to care for their own needs and the needs of the classroom. They love to help set the table for snack, fold laundry, sweep crumbs off the floor, wash dishes, and learn to put their belongings away. They also have available to them Montessori materials, which teach language, counting, sorting, and all about the world around them. The learning environment is home-like and fully equipped with Montessori materials, outdoor play area and a full size gym. Montessori Toddler programs worldwide are very successful in meeting the developmental needs of Toddlers and allowing children the freedom to develop in a rich and joyful environment.

A child is ready for our Primary school when ...

- The child is completely toilet-trained and can use the restroom without teacher assistance. *(Please see Appendix A.2 for more information about Toilet Training.)*
- The child dresses and undresses him/herself.
- The child is able to take shoes off and put them back on all by him/herself.
- The child feeds him/herself.
- The child can watch short lessons and repeat work independently.
- The child can communicate at an age-appropriate level.
- The child can lie down quietly on his/her rest mat for rest without a book.

Primary: (3-6 years, including Kindergarten)

Primary students enjoy and need repetition. The environment is sequenced so that the student can move from less to more difficult work. During work time students are absorbed in a lesson they have chosen. The student receives a presentation of how to do the lesson and then may repeat it as many times as he/she pleases. If the student chooses the same work repeatedly throughout a week or two it is because he/she has discovered the satisfaction of skill-building and mastery. The key to mastery is the desire to skill-build. Mastery produces confidence and the motivation to try another task. Kindergarten is the last year of our Primary program. Our extensive (3-6) curriculum prepares our children for Lower Elementary.

3.3 Organizational Structure (continued)

Lower Elementary (6-9 years, 1st-3rd levels)

When the Primary student meets the exit requirements and moves up to the classroom of (6-9) students, he/she discovers that the new classroom is beautifully arranged with more advanced materials. He/she is welcomed into a class of helpful students. The ground rules are important, especially in the areas of respect, kindness and caring. Work time continues to involve the use of appropriately sequenced Montessori materials and more advanced science, history, and literature curriculum. Each classroom's library allows the student to develop research skills. The multi-aged classroom gives the younger student the opportunity to observe the older student complete advanced work. Mentoring is a critical life skill that is taught and practiced in our multi-level classrooms which helps to develop leadership skills. Students in 3rd-8th level take standardized tests.

Upper Elementary (4th-6th levels) and Middle School (7th-8th levels)

Upon completion of LE, a student is welcomed into an already established UE class and is ready for the most advanced Montessori materials. Work time continues to be the concentration with the exploration of a variety of subjects. Students are expected to do most, if not all, of their work at school, edit their written papers, write the results of science experiments, give oral reports, and improve computer keyboarding skills in speed and accuracy.

An important component of Montessori educational instruction is to design a classroom environment which is conducive to learning. The students continue to move from concrete toward abstract thinking, working from the big picture to increasing detail. The foundational materials, which serve as the backbone of the Montessori philosophy, will continue to be utilized and expanded upon as needed. The math, science, language, history, and geography materials give the students full advantage for comprehension and application of basic concepts as well as continue to build higher level thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

4. MONTESSORI ACADEMY COMMUNITY

4.1 Parent Responsibilities

- Be sure your child arrives on time each day.
 - Infant/Toddler/Primary: 8:15 a.m.
- Build independence in your child through daily responsibilities at home.
- Support the goals of the Infant & Toddler Classroom.
- Communicate with teachers (i.e. going out of town, new baby, death or change in family, etc.).
- Read the Friday e-News and communication from the administration and teachers.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and "All School Events" and become involved.
- Enjoy and explore the world through nightly reading with your child.
- If you have any concerns or questions, contact your child's teacher or Director.
- Read Parent Handbook and return Acknowledgement Form to your child's teacher (Appendix A1). (DOE Requirement)

4.2 Teacher Responsibilities

- Create a peaceful, stimulating environment where children can learn.
- Convey friendliness, caring, and respect to students and parents.
- Communicate with parents.
- Clarify academic and social requirements to students and parents at each level.
- Facilitate the students' social and emotional development.

4.3 Student Responsibilities

- Arrive on time each day.
- Dress in accordance with our dress code.
- Be polite, considerate, mannerly, and courteous to peers, teachers and adults.
- Be a contributing, positive member of Montessori Academy's student community.

4.4 Parent Leadership Program

This program gives parents the chance to connect with the Montessori Academy Community as well as their children's classroom. It is Montessori Academy's hope that all parents will commit to using personal time and skills to benefit their child's classroom. A monetary donation is also an option and can serve as a resource for the classroom. Opportunities for leadership and modeling service for children may include: organizing school picnics, coordinating food and toy drives and assisting teachers with classroom projects.

5. ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT RECORDS

5.1 Enrollment Policy

No child shall be denied admission to Montessori Academy on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, or national origin.

Kindergarten Age Admission Policy: Children entering Kindergarten shall be 5 years of age on or before August 15. Our Montessori 3-6 program allows for children to continue to be challenged academically and excel as they grow socially and emotionally. Unlike traditional classrooms, there is no "ceiling" on what a child can learn in any of our classrooms.

5.2 Withdrawal Policy

Montessori Academy has a well-established withdrawal policy that is included in the "Enrollment Agreement." If you have any questions about this policy, or if you have any special circumstances that are not addressed in the policy, please feel free to discuss your concerns with Dr. Jim Bernstorf. (See the Discipline Procedures section of this Handbook for other dismissal circumstances.) The withdrawal policy is as follows:

To withdraw my child before July 1, of the current year, I must submit a letter to the applicable Director no later than June 30, of the current year, requesting to be released from the year's contract. This request must be accompanied by a termination fee of \$100. Records will be released after the termination fee has been paid.

To be released from this contract, if I move outside a 50-mile radius of Montessori Academy, I must give a full calendar month notice of intent to withdraw, or I will owe the tuition for the following month. For example, if on March 1 you notify the school in writing that the last day of attendance will be March 31, no tuition will be due beyond March. If notice is given on March 15 then the full tuition payment for April must be paid.

5.3 Student Records

Files are kept for each student at Montessori Academy. Access to the files is limited to the Administration, the student's parents and the student's teachers. Any request for records to be sent to another school must be approved by parents and a form signed. Student records will not be released if there is a balance owed on the account. Files will be kept for 7 years after the student has left MA. Student accident reports, immunization forms, and standardized test scores for LE and UE/MS students will be kept permanently.

6. FINANCES

6.1 Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1st day of each month. A \$25 late fee must accompany payments received after the 4th. If necessary, a parent may temporarily make weekly payments to avoid going into arrears or losing the child's space. Montessori Academy reserves the right to fill a child's space if tuition is not paid in full by the 4th of each month, unless arrangements have been made with the Head of School. **You will not receive a bill unless you are late on your payment.** If receipts are needed, email your request to cprather@montessoriacad.org and the receipt will be attached to the return email. If paying by check or cash, bring it to the box on the wall beside Mrs. Prather's desk. Please do not send your check in with your child or give it to a teacher.

6.2 Tuition Discounts

- A 2% discount may be applied to yearly tuition (not After Care) if paid in full before August 1, 2017.
- Families receive a \$50 per month sibling discount on the 2nd child's tuition. Families receive a \$100 per month sibling discount on the 3rd child's tuition. Families receive a \$150 per month sibling discount on the 4th child's tuition.
- Families with 2 or more students in Elementary receive an additional \$50 per month discount.
- Discounts are available to families for all children registered for 3:00 dismissal or later and attending full time (5 days). Discounts are not available for Infant students.

***4-Step Student Referral Program: \$250 credit**

1. Refer a family to MA...
2. Once the child is enrolled and begins...
3. New family mentions you referred them...
4. You earn a \$250 credit on your account *per child* enrolled, (or if you pre-pay the entire year, then MA will write you a check).

6.3 Policy for Payment by Electronic Bill Pay

We encourage you to **use your bank's online bill-pay system** just like you electronically pay your other bills. Use your child's name as the account number. To allow five days processing time, put the due date as the 25th of the prior month for us to receive it on the first.

7. GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

7.1 Safety

7.1.1 Emergency Situations

Montessori Academy has procedures in place in the event of a weather emergency, fire, lockdown or bomb threat. All classrooms have designated "safe places" and exit plans, depending on the nature of the emergency. All staff members are trained in the procedures and classrooms have regular drills to practice evacuation and lock down procedures. Please contact the Administration Office if you would like more information on the specifics of the emergency plans.

7.1.2 Crisis Management Plan

The safety of children and staff will be considered at all times. In the event of a crisis, highest ranking administrators will make safety and physical needs decisions based upon the information available at the time. The following address the most basic and primary concerns:

Communication Challenges: Communication with parents is offered in multiple formats. In the event of a crisis, not all communication forms will be available but administrators will take the following steps to encompass as many forms of communication as possible:

1. Text Message to Parents – sent from the school
2. All school email blast
3. News networks
4. Texting via channel 5
5. Phone Lists of Students & Parents & Parent approved secondary contacts

Location of Children: Keeping children here on this property is always first choice due to transportation issues. Parents are advised to check with their parent-approved secondary pick-up list (grandparents, friends, etc.). Children will be located in campus locations as follows:

1. Normal campus locations (classrooms and after care locations)
2. Normal “Safe Place” locations specified for each classroom
3. Gymnasium, Administration Building, Fine Arts Building
4. Campus property – Baseball Field, Big Rock (Not for snow – but perhaps for other emergencies)

Continuing Operations: Covered in the MA Emergency Recovery Plan and allows room for flexibility as needed.

7.1.3 Minor Accidents

Minor accidents that happen at school will be promptly treated by a staff member and the parents will be notified either by phone or through a note. We are only authorized to use soap/water/hydrogen peroxide on wounds (DOE stipulation). Our classroom teachers and after care teachers are all trained in CPR/First Aid and are required to keep their CPR/First Aid certification current.

7.1.4 Asbestos Inspection & Smoke Free Environment

You may contact Dr. Jim Bernstorf as the AHERA designated person concerning Montessori Academy as an Asbestos-Free School. The result of the inspection done by Law Engineering Firm is on file in the Montessori Academy office.

Montessori Academy ensures a smoke free environment campus-wide.

7.2.1 Sickness Policy

One of the most important ways we can keep our classrooms free of illness is to ensure that the children who attend the program every day are healthy. Children are given a routine visual health check each day upon arrival. Any child who shows symptoms of being ill or infectious will not be admitted to school. Students displaying symptoms during the school day will be sent home from school.

ILLNESS/EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL:

Regular attendance is important for your child; however, there is no advantage to sending a sick child to school. Not only do sick children pose a risk of infection to other children, a sick child (even one who is not contagious) cannot function effectively in the environment. Therefore, we WILL NOT keep actively sick children, and it is the parent's responsibility to make alternative arrangements for care in the event of illness. Should we discover you child is ill, we will call the parent or guardian. A CHILD MUST BE PICKED UP WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE FIRST CALL TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN.

A physician's report form must be completed before a child may return when:

- 1) A child has had a diagnosed communicable disease, (Strep throat, head lice, pink eye, impetigo, measles, etc.).
- 2) A child has undergone surgery or has been hospitalized.
- 3) A child has been seen by a doctor because of illness.

A child MAY NOT come to school if any of the following conditions exist:

- **FEVER of 100-degrees OR HIGHER:** A fever indicates that a body is under stress or is fighting infection. With a fever, the child should be given time to rest, recover, and regain strength even if fever suppressants are effective in reducing the fever. Even if the fever is caused by a non-contagious illness, the child may not attend school. The child may not return until he or she has been fever free for 24 hours without fever suppressants.
- **RASH:** If your child develops a rash and the cause is not known, we will ask that the doctor check out the rash and verify in writing that it is not contagious. With a note from the child's doctor, we will administer lotion or salve to treat Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, or bad chigger, flea or mosquito bites.
- **DISCHARGE:** From the eyes or ears; inflammation of the eyes
- **SORE THROAT or PERSISTENT RATTLING COUGH:** The child may return to school with doctor's note.
- **STREP THROAT:** Children who have been diagnosed with Strep Throat cannot return to school until they have had three doses of their medicine, which is usually 24 hours after they have started their medication.
- **FRESH COLD:** A constant runny nose with green or yellow mucus.
- **PINK EYES:** With or without discharge
- **VOMITING:** Occurring the night before or morning of attending school. The child may not return to school until 24 hours have passed since the last episode.
- **DIARRHEA:** Occurring the night before or morning of attending school. The child may not return to school until 24 hours have passed since the last episode.
- **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE:** Any Type
- Any health condition that prohibits the child from FULL PARTICIPATION in the program, or which the teacher or school believes to be unhealthy for the child or other exposed children.

7.2.1 Sickness Policy (continued)

- LICE: We have a NO NIT Policy. The child must be nit free to return to school and must have a note (stating that the child is nit free) from Lice Solutions or trained Lice Professional. Family has choice of treatment plan, however, note must be provided before child can return to school.
- Should a child require constant one on one attention, become ill during the course of the day, or arrive too ill to participate in the activities of the day (in the opinion of the teacher and in consultation with the Director), the parent will be notified to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will call the contacts on the Emergency Contact sheet. Please notify the Office promptly if your child will be absent for any length of time. Also, notify the Office when your child contacts a contagious disease. We will often in turn notify parents of classmates with possible exposure.

***Children who are sent home sick from school may not return the following day.**

7.2.2 Medicine Policy & Medical Conditions

Prescription medicine, cough syrup and suppressants may be sent to school in the original (unexpired) container, labeled with the child's name. The medicine must be handed to a teacher. (Please do not send medicine in the lunch box.) Medicine must be accompanied by a note of authorization every day and specific instructions as to how to administer, how much to administer and when to administer. Tape a reminder on top of the lid of the child's lunchbox. Teachers will return any medicine that is not allowed. Fever-reducing medicine may not be given to a child in the morning to "hold down" a fever. State guidelines classify diaper cream and Neosporin as medicine. If a child needs either diaper creams or Neosporin, a note of permission from the parents must be submitted to the teacher.

Medical Conditions – If a student has a medical problem such as an allergy or asthma, please send a detailed explanation to the office with multiple copies (with your signature) for your child's classroom teacher and each of the other teachers with symptoms and warning signs and appropriate measures to be taken should an emergency occur. Please make sure to add your emergency phone numbers to the note and please keep the numbers current.

Teething is a normal part of development that occurs while in the Infant/Toddler levels. With a signed note from a parent/guardian including specific instructions for administration, teachers will apply topical gel (ex. Orajel). As we are not medical professionals and cannot assess/diagnose the exact cause of a child's discomfort, we will not administer Tylenol or similar medication for teething. If a child is in pain and distress during the school day, and topical ointments do not alleviate the pain, a teacher will call the parent/guardian to pick up the child.

7.3 Arrival and Dismissal

7.3.1 Infant Arrival

The Infant classroom will open each day at 7:30 a.m. Parents will bring their child to the classroom door, where they will transfer the child to the care of the Infant teachers. Once a child can walk, we encourage parents to walk the child to the classroom, carrying his or her own lunchbox.

Infants are on the floor daily, on their bellies, knees, and feet. To keep the room as clean as possible for them, please remove your shoes before entering the environment. You may place your shoes outside the classroom.

7.3.1 Infant Arrival (continued)

On the first day of school, please send:

- 3-4 changes of clothes (labeled and in a zip lock bag). Clothing should be loose and cotton, allowing for ease of movement. No dresses, please. Shoes will not be worn in the classroom.
- 1 package of wipes (with your child's name) Please plan on replenishing wipes each Monday. The teacher will let you know if there is need for mid-week replenishment.
- 1 recent family photo & 2 recent photos of the student

SEPARATION:

Many families find parting to be a challenge. For some children, it is easier than others. For a very few, parting is quite difficult, and it can take them a little longer to adjust. If parting is difficult for you and your child, please let us help you. Together we can come up with a strategy that is comfortable for you and for your child.

DROPOFF STRATEGIES:

1. Make sure that you have a positive attitude. Your child will quickly pick up on any negative feelings you may have.
2. Upon arrival to the classroom, greet your child's teacher, and say goodbye cheerfully as you transfer your child to the teacher's care.
3. Our teachers will give your children space to watch a while and become comfortable with the group situation.
4. If your child becomes upset, the teacher will comfort your child with reassurances that you will return. Distraction with an activity or a material from the classroom will be attempted.
5. If your child remains upset for an extended period of time, the teacher will call you so you can work together to decide how to proceed. Our goal is for school to feel like a safe and happy place to each child, and we base separation strategies on that goal.
6. You are always welcome to call the school to check on your child.

7.3.2 Toddler Arrival

When your child arrives between 7:30 and 8:15 a.m. you may **walk (not carry)** him/her to the classroom door. **Say goodbye at the door and allow your child to enter the classroom independently.** Encourage and help your child to learn to carry his/her own lunchbox.

- Prolonged good-byes leave a child feeling insecure. Empower your child with a sweet, cheerful comment such as, "Have a great day!" If your child experiences separation anxiety, that is normal. Remember your child will be fine after you leave. You are welcome to call the office for reassurance.
- Please leave all breakfast food in the car. Snack is served early.

7.3.3 Tardiness Policy

Punctuality is a lifelong skill that we should model for children from a very young age. At Montessori Academy, we take punctuality very seriously. We expect all children to be in their classrooms on time each morning. Children who arrive on time get the best possible start to their school day.

Of course we understand that there are sometimes special circumstances (major traffic issues, car trouble, medical or dental appointments) that may cause you to be late, but repeated tardiness is detrimental to your child, negatively impacts the classroom, and interrupts the work of our administrative staff. If we determine that chronic tardiness is an issue, we'll take the following steps:

*After 3 unexcused tardies, your child's teachers will speak to you about the effect of tardiness on your child and offer suggestions to help with your morning routine.

*If tardiness continues, you will be contacted by the level director, who will offer more ideas and assistance with how to adjust your morning routine.

*If these steps don't resolve the issue, you will have to come in and speak with the head of school and level director about whether MA is the right fit for your family.

Infant, Toddler, and Primary

Infant, Toddler, and Primary students need routine and must arrive by 8:15 a.m. The building doors will lock at 8:15 a.m. at which time parents will need to walk their child to the Administrative Office, sign in and wait with your child until an administrator is able to walk your child to the classroom. Children are not accepted into the classroom after 9:30 a.m. (10:00 a.m. for Primary students) unless their arrival was delayed by a doctor's appointment. Please ask your child's doctor for a note to verify the appointment.

7.3.4 Dismissal

12:00 Dismissal (Toddler)

Students registered to attend until 12:00 p.m. will bring a lunch and eat with their friends.

3:00 Dismissal

Dismissal times are as follows:

- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m. IN and TD Students (Infant pick up is in the classroom and Toddler pick up is at the front of the building in the black fence.)

After School Care closes daily at 6:00 p.m. (5:00 p.m. for Infants) (with the exception of several half days), at which point After Care workers leave campus. If there is an emergency and you anticipate arriving late, please call/text Anna Sitter (615-491-0548) as soon as possible. Habitual lateness will result in a call from the Head of School and the possible suspension of After School Care privileges.

Irregular pick-up during school hours:

If you wish to pick up your child during the school day, please send a note with your child for the teacher. When you arrive at school, please report to the office (except in the case of severe weather). We will call for your child to be sent to the office. Please sign your child out on the clipboard while you wait in the office.

- Please do not pick up your child during nap time, as this can be very disruptive (Toddler).
- Exception to this rule: In case of severe weather, please do not go to the office, but go directly to your child's classroom or "Safe Place" and sign your child out on the classroom's clipboard.

When school is a half day;

Infant and Toddler children are dismissed at 11:00 a.m.

We require your written permission for your child (fax or email is also acceptable):

- To be picked up at any irregular time other than normal dismissal time
- To be picked up by anyone other than parents or the usual carpool

Authorized Individuals; Students will be released only to parents and authorized individuals (per the Enrollment Contract). Tennessee state car seat laws state that children may only be released to a person with proper seat restraints for my child's age and size and who present themselves capable of operating a vehicle. Employees of Montessori Academy are not permitted to buckle children into their car seat. It is solely the responsibility of the adult picking up students to buckle them. In the event of an emergency and a parent cannot be reached to pick up their child from school, the school will contact the authorized people on the Enrollment Contract.

7.3.5 Campus Driveway Instructions

Visiting the Admin. Office:

The Admin. Office is directly behind the three flagpoles.

Drop Off/Pick-up:

Toddler: Turn right into the circular drive by the Woodlee Memorial Gymnasium (**one way traffic only**). Do not back up! Please watch for traffic as you re-enter the main drive.

7.4 Room Placement

Next level placement is determined by teachers and administrators based upon several factors, including space availability. Parental requests will be considered but final determination is made by the administration. Based upon our accreditation status, all rooms are staffed with highly qualified teachers and are strong both academically and socially.

We offer a riser meeting and parent visit during the fall in LE/UE/MS, giving parents the opportunity to view the next level classrooms. Fall room placement is made in late spring/early summer. For students transitioning mid-year (Infant/Toddler), decisions are made as the student approaches the transitioning date. Any specific questions may be sent to the Head of School or appropriate director.

7.5 Discipline Procedures

Disciplinary Policies: Infant and Toddler

In the Infant/Toddler program, it is developmentally appropriate to see behaviors such as biting, pushing, hitting, etc. However, the school does not take these behaviors lightly. These behaviors can become habitual and widespread very rapidly if they are not immediately addressed.

Teachers will address unwanted behaviors with the children immediately. An incident report will be sent home to the parents of both students and filed with the Program Director by the end of the day. If there are multiple incidents in a short period of time, the child's teachers and/or the Director will meet with the family of the child to devise appropriate strategies to eliminate unwanted behaviors. If the behaviors do not stop, the Director may recommend professional counseling or suspension from school until the behavior ceases.

Disciplinary Policies: Toddler

Teachers use many strategies in the classroom to help children succeed in our environment. These strategies include redirection, removal of child from a situation he/she cannot handle, encouragement to make more appropriate choices, conflict resolution, and helping the child choose work.

If behavior issues arise in the classroom, the teacher will consult with an administrator about the difficulties experienced. The teacher may take the child to discuss the problem and possible solutions with an administrator. We do our best to build up the child's self-confidence so that he/she can handle the situation better the next time. Usually we will not send a note home with a child on the child's first visit with an administrator, but will do so if the problem cannot be resolved without the parent's help.

If more help is needed, the teacher will communicate with the parents and arrange a parent conference. A follow up conference will be scheduled to review if behavior has improved.

Some strategies we suggest may include; referral to a Behaviorist; referral to an Occupational or Physical Therapist; referral to have cognitive testing.

If the inappropriate behavior does not improve and all the above procedures have been utilized without success, the parent will be asked to withdraw the child and to find a place in which the child's needs will be better met. This is a "no fault" policy and there will be release from the enrollment contract without penalty.

Montessori Academy reserves the right...

Montessori Academy reserves the right to skip all of the above steps and to suspend, dismiss, or ask for the immediate withdrawal of any student at any time, in the sole discretion of the Head of School, if that student's work, progress, conduct or influence (on or off campus), falls below acceptable educational or social standards. Each student's enrollment is subject to the rules and policies adopted or amended by the Head of School.

7.6.1 Office Hours and Website

Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday when the school is open. For more information about our school, please see our website at www.montessoriacad.org.

7.6.2 Online School Directory

For our online school directory, please go to our website and click on “ParentWeb”. We reserve the right to keep private any personal information that a parent does not want published. USING THIS INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SOLICITATION IS PROHIBITED.

7.6.3 Tools for Communicating with Parents

All classrooms have an email address to communicate more effectively with parents. If you send an email in the evening, it will not be checked until the next day. **If you would like to talk with a teacher or schedule a conference**, please send a short email to your child’s teacher or tape a note to your child’s lunchbox and a teacher will call or email you as soon as he/she is free. Please do not text or call the teachers’ cell phones during the school day. **If it is urgent**, call the office and we will contact the teacher.

7.6.4 Communication Events

- **Parent Information Meetings (PIM’S)** are pivotal to your understanding of Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Each PIM will be unique and will help you understand your child’s developmental and academic progress. At these important meetings, parents will meet your child’s teachers and learn about the classroom routine, program objectives, daily schedules, and current classroom events.
- Daily Reports
- Weekly e-News sent via e-mail every Friday
- Classroom Newsletters (e-mailed to parents)
- **Open House Days**; Infants/Toddlers only participate in the Grandparents and Special Friends Open House. Parents may visit the classroom between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. on these days. Open House is a wonderful time for parents to visit their child’s classroom. The students are proud of the work they do and are eager to show it to you. Guidelines for Open House visits are as follows:
 - ✓ Please enter the room quietly to experience the wonder and peace of a Montessori environment.
 - ✓ Please make other arrangements for younger sibling(s) so that your child has your full attention.
 - ✓ Schedule an appointment with the teachers at another time if you have other questions. The teachers will be better able to give you and your questions their undivided attention at another time.
- **Two Parent Conference Days** – scheduled in October and February. There is no school on these days. Childcare is provided at no charge during your scheduled (20 minute) conference time.
- Conferences with the teachers as needed by parent or teacher

7.7 Former Student Visits

Former students are welcome to visit Montessori Academy at the end of the school day (i.e. during dismissal). Visitors must check in at the office. Visits are not permitted during the school day.

7.8 Snow Day Policy

Announcements of school closure will be made via the following methods:

- Parent Alert Text Message
- Email from Montessori Academy
- TV channels: 2, 4, 5

Please do not call the office. If you need to pick up your child, please do so.

We try to avoid unnecessary closings by waiting until early morning to make the decision and announcement. The safety of your family is most important, so please use your own judgment about bringing your student late, picking him/her up early or just staying home on those troublesome days. If the weather worsens as the day progresses and we have to close early, we will announce the closing time via email/text, and the TV stations listed above.

7.9 Videotaping School Programs/Events

We encourage you to take pictures and videos of *your own children* as a record of their growth and accomplishments through their years at Montessori Academy. We are extremely careful about publicizing pictures or information about families, which is why we use a formal photo release form. We ask that you bear this in mind when videotaping performances. You may post pictures of *your own children* on the internet (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) at your discretion. However, please do not post pictures of children of other families to any of these websites without the parent's permission.

7.10 Religion and Montessori Academy

Montessori Academy was founded by Eileen Bernstorf in 1985 and its roots go back to 1967. The school has always had a very diverse student and family body based on race, ethnicity, and religion. This has not been an accident but has been intentional. The Bernstorf family has a long Christian heritage, but has chosen to build and develop a school that is focused on the Montessori Method and not on color of skin or religious affiliation. That is not in any way to diminish the value of those things in the lives of the families who are a part of our school community. Instead it values those things enough to not let them become divisive issues that stand in the way of educating children within an authentic Montessori framework.

While the underlying values of the school come from a Judeo-Christian world view, it is the policy of Montessori Academy to not make accommodations for any specific religion or manifestation of that religion on campus by students or faculty during the school day. That includes dress, observances, or special days that are specific for any religion. We value those religious and cultural values that bring meaning to people's lives, but the campus of Montessori Academy will continue to be a place where our focus is on educating children; not on being a battleground where the cultural conflicts present in the United States and the world are fought out.

8. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

8.1 Entering the Classrooms during School Hours

If you are volunteering in a classroom or observing in a classroom during school hours, please check-in first at the Administrative Office. All parents, visitors, and volunteers need to sign-in and get a visitor's badge.

8.2.1 Infant Meals

Food borne illnesses and food allergies can pose severe risks to infants. To minimize any ill effects from food related illnesses, children in the infant classroom will only be fed food brought from home.

- For infants under the age of 12 months, parents must supply bottles of formula/breastmilk each day, in a thermal cooler with icepacks, separated into bottles with an appropriate amount for each individual feeding. Bottles must be clearly marked with your child's name.
- In order to reduce the spread of germs from baby bottles/nipples, all formula must be brought from home already mixed and bottled.
- If your child is eating solids, please ensure that he or she is introduced to a solid in the home environment prior to sending that food to school. This will allow us to minimize the chance of any allergic reactions while at school.
- When your child is eating solids, please send appropriate amounts each day to serve the child lunch and two snacks.
- Shelf stable foods (baby food in unopened jars, uncut fruit, bread, etc.) may be brought to school at room temperature. All other foods must be delivered to school in a thermal cooler with a frozen icepack.
- There is no facility in the Infant Environment for the teachers to heat solid foods, so please plan lunches accordingly.
- Children will bring home, in their lunchbox, uneaten items so parents are able to adjust lunch proportions appropriately.

As Infants are being exposed to solid foods for the first time, there is an opportunity to provide a wide range of tastes and textures of foods. Please provide a wide variety of foods each day, including fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats and protein. For more specific examples of foods to send in your child's lunchbox, please email the Infant teachers.

You may not send the following items to school for either snack or lunch:

- Jell-O, pudding, anything with chocolate, cupcakes, frosted cookies, sugar-coated cereals, candy, chewing gum, Frito's, Cheetos's, chips, similar high-calorie low-nutrition foods

8.2.2 Toddler Meals

A lunch box is issued to each new student when the initial registration fee is paid. (New lunchboxes are available in the office for \$12.) We encourage the use of labeled reusable containers instead of plastic baggies. **Containers should be easy for students to open by themselves.** Lunches may be kept cool by putting a frozen cool pack in the thermal lunch box. Write your child's allergies on the top of his/her lunch box with a permanent marker. Please send any necessary utensils.

Children will bring home, in the lunchbox, uneaten items so parents are able to adjust lunch proportions appropriately.

Water is provided for lunch. Please do not send flavored milk or juice of any kind.

We encourage parents to send lunches that reflect good nutrition by using the food groups in preparing lunches. A nutritious snack or lunch means one which provides nutritional value in addition to calories. We ask for your support as we establish and maintain healthy habits. Keep in mind that the lunch should include protein as well as be nutritional in terms of vitamins and minerals. Meat, casseroles, soups, rice and vegetables can be sent in a small thermos (if your child is able to open it).

8.2.2 Toddler Meals (continued)

Please refer to the following lunch suggestions:

Protein: cheese, luncheon meats, tuna, peanut butter, eggs
Grain: whole grain bread, bagels, pita, and tortillas, quinoa, rice, pasta
Veggies: carrot strips, celery, green peppers, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, cauliflower, broccoli
Fruit: apple, orange, banana, peach, avocado, pear, raisins or other dried fruit

You may not send the following items to school for either snack or lunch:

- Jell-O, pudding, anything with chocolate, drinks other than water, squeezable yogurt, squeezable pouches or pureed food, cupcakes, frosted cookies, sugar-coated cereals, candy, chewing gum, Frito's, Cheetos's, chips, similar high-calorie low-nutrition foods

8.2.3 Toddler Snack

Each family provides snack for the entire classroom on a rotating schedule during the school year and in turn your child gets to enjoy nutritious snacks all year. The Snack Coordinator for your child's room will let you know which week has been assigned to you.

Please send an extra snack in the red Montessori Academy snack bag if your child stays for After School Care.

8.3 Dress Code

8.3.1 Infant Dress Code

- Clothing should be comfortable, and promote ease of movement.
- Please avoid clothing which has snaps or buttons placed on the back for non-mobile infants – the snaps could cause discomfort while a child is lying on his or her back.
- Once a child is mobile, two piece outfits are preferred. Pants/shorts with elastic waist bands are needed in order to promote independence of dressing. As you purchase new clothing, please keep this in mind.
- Clothing should not cover the child's feet...they will need to be barefoot in order to work on their walking or crawling abilities.
- The classroom will be a shoe-free zone for both children and adults, so please ensure that if your child is wearing shoes, that they are easy to take off/put on.
- Dresses are not appropriate to the infant learning environment, as they will impede the child's ability to move around the classroom.
- Infants may not wear necklaces, bracelets, etc.
- Please ensure that all items are labeled with the child's name.
- No jeans
- No head coverings may be worn during the school day.
- **Character and/or super hero clothing/shoes/etc. are not to be worn or brought to the Infant environment.**

Change of Clothes: Please Send

- Send extra sets of clothing in individual zip-lock bags labeled with the child's name to be left at school.
- As the weather changes, please send new sets of clothes.

8.3.2 Toddler Dress Code

Please help your child learn to dress him/herself at home so he/she can do it at school as well.

- **Please label all items brought to school** (books, coats, sweaters, changes of clothing, etc.).
- Students should dress in clothing that does not bring undue attention to them, or distract the classroom.
- **Overalls** or other one piece outfits should not be worn – all clothes should be easy for children to take off when using the restroom. Dresses are acceptable. Clothes that zip down the back are impossible for students to manage and should not be worn.
- **Character and/or super hero clothing/shoes/etc. are not to be worn or brought to the Toddler environment.**
- “Light up” shoes, open toed sandals, shoes with characters, and tie shoes are not permitted.
- Children may not bring/wear jewelry, lip gloss or perfume to school.
- Students’ hair should not call attention to the child.
- No head coverings may be worn during the school day.
- **Toddlers** should only wear pants/shorts with elastic waist bands in order to promote independence.

Change of Clothes: Please Send

- Send extra clothes in a gallon-sized zip-lock bag labeled with the child’s name to be left at school.
- If your child has had an accident, replace the clothing in a zip-lock bag the very next day. (Make sure your child always has a change of clothes at school.) If we cannot find a change of clothes, extras will be used, but must be returned.
- As the weather changes, please send a new set of clothes.

8.4 Infant Safe Sleep Practices

Montessori Academy follows Safe Sleep Practices, as outlined by the Department of Education:

- Infants shall be positioned on their backs when sleeping.
- In order to avoid the risk of smothering, soft bedding for infants is prohibited.
- Infants shall not be wrapped tightly or swaddled in blankets for sleeping.
- Infants shall be touched by a caregiver every fifteen (15) minutes in order to check breathing and body temperature.
- Pillows shall be prohibited for infants.

Nap room Lighting - The areas where infants sleep shall be lit in a manner which allows the caregiver to quickly, at a glance, verify that the child’s head is uncovered, that the child is breathing, and otherwise visually verify the child’s condition.

Once a child has reached the age of 12 months, he or she may bring a blanket or stuffed animal for rest time.

8.5 After School Care

After School Care is offered daily: Infant (3:10-5:00p.m.) and Toddler (3:10-4:30 p.m. or 3:10-6:00 p.m.). Please contact Anna Sitter with any questions or concerns regarding After School Care: asitter@montessoriacad.org .

Students must be signed out of After School Care on the classroom clipboard. Your child will only be released to people on the authorized pick up list. You may update your pick-up/emergency contact list by emailing asitter@montessoriacad.org or by calling 833-3610.

After School Care closes daily at 6:00 p.m. (5:00 p.m. for Infant) (with the exception of several half days), at which point After Care workers leave campus. If there is an emergency and you anticipate arriving late, please call/text Anna Sitter as soon as possible (615-491-0548). Habitual lateness will result in a call from the Head of School and the possible suspension of After School Care privileges.

Occasional Care:

- We cannot offer occasional care for the day or for After Care in Infant or Toddler.

After School Care Pick Up Procedure:

- **Infant** – Please pick up your child from the Infant Classroom.
- **Toddler** – After Care students will be in Toddler 3 and, if necessary, in Toddler 1 as well. Signs will be posted. Enter through the double doors in the breeze-way and knock on the interior classroom door. A sign will be posted on the double doors if the students are outside on the Toddler playground.

8.6 Birthday Celebrations

Birthday celebrations are kept purposefully low key in the Infant/Toddler environment, so as not to disrupt the rhythm of the day. Please speak with your child's teacher to discuss how your classroom celebrates birthdays.

Party Invitations may be brought to school to be placed in the child's bag ONLY IF all children in the class are invited. **We are not authorized to distribute parent e-mail addresses.**



2017-2018

Acknowledgment of Montessori Academy's Policies & Procedures

Dear Parents,

We are delighted to have your family with us for the 2017-2018 school year!

Here is your newly revised **Parent Handbook**. Please take time to read through it carefully. Sign this form and return it to your child's room or the Administrative Office. By doing this, we are assured that you have indeed received this important communication from Montessori Academy. Thank you!

All Parent Response: *I have read and do understand all of the policies and procedures contained in the "Montessori Academy Parent Handbook" and I will abide by them. I also have received access to the following documents:*

- *Child Abuse and Neglect Information (MA website & Appendix 3 of Parent Handbook)*
 - *The following "Reporting Child Abuse Training Module" provides additional information:*
<https://www.sworps.tennessee.edu/children/jtf/resources.html>
- *Summary of Child Care Approval Requirements (MA website)*
- *Personal Safety Curriculum (Appendix 4 of Parent Handbook)*

(Parent or Guardian Signature)

Date

(Parent or Guardian Signature)

Date

(Student's Name)

Room Number

The Montessori approach to toilet training is unique. We observe and follow the child's interest. Often toilet training is accomplished early, at age 18 to 24 months, not due to pressure from adults, but rather because the child is more open to the experience at that time.

Toilet training is accomplished most easily with preparation that begins far in advance of the time when the child is ready.

Around the age of 12 months children often become quite interested in the bathroom. They want to explore, play with the water in toilet, and may persistently follow their parents when they go into the bathroom. These are early signs of the child's first interest in toilet training.

By the age of 15 months, children often show interest in wearing underpants. Many become fascinated with the process of dressing and undressing and may undress themselves when it is least expected. It is not uncommon for children of this age to try on their older siblings' or parents' underpants. What may seem to be simply cute or attention getting behavior is probably another indication that they are becoming curious about using the toilet. Pull ups hinder toilet training progress and are not allowed at school.

The parent can be encouraging and can prepare the environment to support the child when he/she is ready by:

- Using cotton training pants.
- Allowing access to the bathroom.
- Providing an appropriate way for the child to explore both the use of the toilet and to play with water.
- Offering a patient explanation of body functions.
- Providing old towels for cleaning up accidents.
- Providing gentle understanding when accidents do occur.

Clothing should be manageable for the child—loose shirts and socks, elastic waist pants, Velcro shoes or slip-on shoes. The child is soon capable of dressing and undressing with little assistance.

READINESS FOR PRIMARY:

We do expect all of our Primary students to be completely toilet trained. This means that they are *independent* in the restroom. They go to the restroom on their own, not when directed by parents or teachers. They manage their clothing on their own, and they wipe on their own. Of course for very young children, this is a process, but they should be attempting the full process independently before beginning Primary.

We do understand that children may have a few accidents as they transition into Primary, and Primary teachers will work with those children to help them be successful. If frequent accidents continue after those early weeks, we will need to ask for your assistance. Primary teachers have up to 24 children in their care with a broad curriculum of materials to present, and they cannot give up that instructional time with other children to work continually on toilet training.

If a student has **3 bathroom accidents at school within a two week period**, we will ask that you keep the child home until your child has three consecutive days at home with no accidents before returning to school. This will help your child's attention to be focused on being toilet trained. Please make sure that you are letting your child follow his/her natural urges to go to the restroom, and stay positive! Pushing and/or punishments will not help your child be successful and will most likely cause further regression. Rewards have no positive effect long-term, as the child won't get a treat every time he or she uses the restroom. If your child has accidents at home, make cleaning up and changing clothes part of his or her responsibilities. If you need more advice in this area, please contact your child's teachers or the Primary Director. We appreciate your understanding and partnership in helping your child be independent in the restroom.



Dear Parents –

Montessori Academy is required to present information concerning child abuse to parents each school year. Our teachers and staff are required by the Department of Education to report any suspected child abuse directly to the Department of Children's Services. A complete copy of the DOE rules (including those concerning child abuse) is available in the Administrative Office.

Please visit: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf> for the Child Welfare Information Gateway Publication on Child Abuse.

Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

How Are We Really Doing?

The question of how many children are abused and neglected each year in the United States is seemingly simple, but it does not have an easy answer. Because several national and state agencies collect and analyze different data using different methods, the statistics vary. In addition, not every suspicion or situation of abuse or neglect is reported to child protection services (CPS) agencies. As a result, the number of reports likely under represents the number of children who actually suffer from abuse or neglect.

One of the most reliable and extensive information sources is the yearly Child Maltreatment Report by the Children's Bureau, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families. This yearly report is based on data collected by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) from state CPS agencies. American Humane has provided significant technical assistance and expertise to NCANDS as a project subcontractor to Walter R. McDonald and Associates since the project began in 1990. According to NCANDS whose latest statistics are for 2005 an estimated 3.3 million referrals of child abuse or neglect were received by public social service or CPS agencies. Of these referrals, 899,000 children were confirmed to be victims of abuse or neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). That means about 12 out of every 1,000 children up to age 18 in the United States were found to be victims of maltreatment in 2005 (USDHHS, 2007).

Where Do We Get Our Information?

Reports of suspected child maltreatment come from multiple sources. In 2005, over one-half of reports (61.7 percent) were from professionals who are considered "mandated reporters" (USDHHS, 2007). Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect. The most common mandated reporter referral sources in 2005 were social services personnel, legal professionals, law enforcement, criminal justice personnel and medical and mental health professionals (USDHHS, 2007).

Types of Maltreatment Children Suffer

Maltreatment can take many forms, and some children can suffer from more than one type. Since 1999, the majority of children confirmed to be victims of child maltreatment experienced neglect. The following are the percentages of children who experienced maltreatment in 2005 (USDHHS, 2007):

Neglect	62.8%
Physical abuse	16.6%
Sexual abuse	9.3%
Emotional/psychological abuse	7.1%
Medical neglect	2.0%
Other	14.3%

The 'Other' category listed above includes abandonment, threats to harm the child, congenital drug addiction and other situations that are not counted as specific categories in NCANDS. The percentages here add up to more than 100 percent because some children were victims of more than one type of maltreatment.

Demographics of Child Victims

Boys and girls are equally likely to suffer maltreatment. In 2005, 47.3 percent of child victims were male, and 50.7 percent were female. Victimization rates were highest among the youngest population of children, birth to 3 years, at a rate of 16.5 per 1,000 children (USDHHS, 2007).

In 2005, 49.7 percent of children who were maltreated were white, 23.1 percent were African American, and 17.4 percent were Hispanic. American Indians and Alaska Natives accounted for 1.2 percent of victims, and Asian-Pacific Islanders accounted for less than 1 percent of victims (USDHHS, 2007).

Approximately 10 percent of the children in this country have a disability or chronic illness. The incidence of abuse and neglect among these children is twice as high as it is among average children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006).

Child victims who were reported with disabilities accounted for almost 8 percent of all victims of child abuse and neglect in the 39 states that reported this type of data (USDHHS, 2007). For NCANDS' purposes, children with the following disabilities were considered disabled: mental retardation, emotional disturbances, visual impairment, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioral problems or other medical problems. It is believed that while children with disabilities are maltreated more frequently, these cases are less likely to be reported for several reasons. Most CPS agencies' data collection on maltreatment cases does not involve questions regarding a child's disability. Children with disabilities are less likely to be believed or viewed as credible when they attempt to report.

Parental Substance Abuse Can Lead to Child Abuse and Neglect

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University estimates in a 2005 report that substance abuse is a factor in at least 70 percent of all reported cases of child maltreatment. Adults with substance use disorders are 2.7 times more likely to report abusive behavior and 4.2 times more likely to report neglectful behavior toward their children. Maltreated children of substance abusing parents are more likely to have poorer physical, intellectual, social and emotional outcomes and are at greater risk of developing substance abuse problems themselves (USDHHS, 2003).

Too Often Children Need to Be Removed From Their Homes

One of the major reasons children enter foster care is abuse and neglect associated with parental alcohol or drug abuse (USDHHS, 1999). As of September 30, 2004, 517,000 children lived in foster homes because they could not safely remain in their own homes. In 2005, one-fifth (21.7 percent) of victims or 317,000 children were removed from their homes as a result of child maltreatment investigations. Some children spend weeks or months in care, and others live in care for an entire year or longer (USDHHS, 2007).

Statistics Over Time

The number of children who are abused and neglected has fluctuated over time. There has been a general increase in the number of abuse and neglect substantiations.

1999	829,000
2000	881,000
2001	903,000
2002	896,000
2003	906,000
2004	872,000
2005	899,000

It is difficult to determine if the shifts in the numbers of children being reported is due to the actual change in abuse and neglect each year or if the fluctuations are a result of improved data collecting in these areas. NCANDS reports that the increase in 2005's data could be a result of the additional reporting of both Puerto Rico and Alaska, which were not included in *Child Maltreatment* in previous years.

Who Are the Perpetrators?

Perpetrators of child abuse or neglect are most often the child's own parents. According to NCANDS, in 2005, 79.4 percent of perpetrators were parents and 6.8 percent were other relatives. The largest remaining categories of perpetrators were the unmarried partner of a child's parent (3.8 percent) and other perpetrators (4.1 percent). In 3.6 percent of child maltreatment cases the perpetrators were missing or unknown. In under 1 percent of child maltreatment cases the perpetrator was a foster parent, residential facility staff, the child's daycare provider, a legal guardian, friends or neighbors, or other professionals (USDHHS, 2007).

Approximately 40 percent of child victims were maltreated by their mothers acting alone; another 18.3 percent were maltreated by their fathers acting alone; 17.3 percent were abused by both parents (USDHHS, 2007).

Children Die Every Day From Abuse or Neglect

In 2005, an estimated 1,460 children died as a result of abuse or neglect (USDHHS, 2007). The majority almost 76.6 percent of these children were 3 years of age or younger. Most child fatalities (76.6 percent) happened at the hands of parents (USDHHS, 2007). Not all fatalities were the result of the physical trauma of abuse. Neglect accounted for almost half (32.2 percent) of all fatality cases.

Many Child Victims Are Unknown to CPS Agencies

According to the federally funded Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (1996), almost three times as many children are maltreated as are reported to CPS agencies. This study involved 5,700 community professionals who came in contact with children. The study offered insight into when and why these professionals reported suspected abuse or neglect in greater detail than can be derived through NCANDS data.

What Can You Do?

Thousands of children throughout America suffer abuse and neglect each day. This has harmful consequences on the physical and emotional development and well-being of children. State CPS agencies identify and help many of these children and their families, yet many cases of abuse or neglect are never reported, and not all states provide detailed case-level data to NCANDS. American Humane encourages all community members to become actively involved in the lives of the children within their communities.

American Humane's Front Porch Project® is a national initiative built on the belief that people who are concerned about children's well-being should be empowered to act. The program teaches community members how to intervene appropriately when necessary and encourages them to share their knowledge with other community members. It strengthens communities through relationship building between community members, building on the strengths and assets within at-risk families, and by creating a partnership between participants and government agencies.

You have the power to create positive change in your community by stopping the abuse and neglect that occurs in your own neighborhood. If you suspect child abuse or neglect is occurring, please report it to your local CPS agency or to the police if the child is in immediate danger. The longer the abuse continues the more damage it will ultimately cause the child(ren). (See American Humane's Fact Sheet, *Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect*). As nationwide data from sources like NCANDS become more detailed and available, they can help professionals and others understand the problem of child maltreatment more completely. Yet, data alone cannot solve the problem of child abuse and neglect in America.

What Is NCANDS?

NCANDS, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, is the primary source of national information on abused and neglected children known to public child protective services agencies. American Humane has provided technical assistance to this project since its beginning in 1990. NCANDS reports that *Child Maltreatment 2005* appears to have a large increase in overall data due to the fact that this edition is the first to include Alaska and Puerto Rico. For a copy of this report, contact the Child Welfare Information Gateway at (800) 394-3366 or <http://www.childwelfare.gov/>. The publication is also available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>.

References

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Personal Safety Curriculum

Dear Parents –

The Department of Education now requires us to present a Personal Safety Curriculum to your Primary children every year. Each six weeks your child's teachers will read two books related to personal safety. These books are all age appropriate. Below is a list of books we will use – the books will be rotated through the Primary classrooms, so this may not necessarily be the order they are read. If you would like to view the curriculum, please stop by the Administrative Office.

1st 6 Weeks:

Strangers by Dorothy Chlad

You're Ok (A Children's Guide to Helping Friends) by Jean B. Holler

2nd 6 Weeks:

Matches, Lighters, and Firecrackers Are Not Toys by Dorothy Chlad

We're Responsible (A Children's Guide to Fire Safety) by Sandra J. Williams

3rd 6 Weeks:

Poisons Make You Sick by Dorothy Chlad

Be Healthy, Be Wise (A Children's Guide to Health Awareness) by Dr. Michael J. Rostafinski

4th Six Weeks:

They're Only Words (A Children's Guide to Words that Hurt) by Deborah J. Testi

What's the Difference (A Children's Guide to Cultural Diversity) by Jean B. Holler

5th Six Weeks:

Bicycles are Fun to Ride by Dorothy Chlad

When I Ride in a Car by Dorothy Chlad

6th 6 Weeks:

We're Street Smart by Frank MacHovec

We Must Say "No!" by Marjorie E. Castro and Rhett Leary

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Administrative Office.

Highly recommended for all parents:

Author	Title
Stephenson, Susan	<i>The Joyful Child</i>
Lillard, Paula Polk	<i>Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood*</i>
Nelson, Jane	<i>Positive Discipline A-Z, Revised and Expanded 2nd Edition: From Toddlers to Teens, 1001 Solutions to Everyday Parenting Problems</i>
Lillard, Paula Polk & Jessen, Lynn Lillard	<i>Montessori From the Start</i>
Lekovic, Jill H.	<i>Diaper Free Before 3</i>
Moudry, Sara	<i>Toilet Awareness</i>
Kohn, Alfie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No Contest: The Case Against Competition</i> • <i>Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community</i> • <i>Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise & Bribes</i>