

**LITTLE HANDS MONTESSORI-A TODDLER HOME
PARENT HANDBOOK
2014-15**

LITTLE HANDS MONTESSORI

PARENT HANDBOOK-2014-15

ADMISSIONS AND FEE POLICIES	3
ADMISSIONS	3
ADMISSIONS DURING THE YEAR	4
RE-ENROLLMENT	4
TUITION AND FEES	4
WITHDRAWALS	5
PROCEDURES AND POLICIES	5
FIRST DAYS	5
ARRIVALS	6
DISMISSALS	7
CALENDAR & HOURS	8
TRANSPORTATION	8
STUDENT FILES	9
PRIVACY	9
EXTENDED CARE	9
OFFICE HOURS	9
SCHOOL ATTIRE	10
TOYS FROM HOME	10
COMMUNICATION FROM PARENTS TO STAFF	10
EMERGENCIES	11
DISASTER PLAN	11
ABSENCES	12
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS	12
SNACKS	12
LUNCH	12
NAPS	14
PARENT CONFERENCES	14
PARENT EDUCATION	14
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	14
MEDICAL EXAMINATION, ILLNESS AND NOTIFICATION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASES	15
MEDICATION	15
DIAGNOSTIC TESTING	15
DISCIPLINE	16
REMOVAL OF STUDENTS	16

ADMISSIONS AND FEE POLICIES

ADMISSIONS

It is the policy of Little Hands Montessori-A Toddler Home that no child or family will be denied admission because of race, religion, national origin, or political belief. All children who meet age requirements will be evaluated fairly by the standards herein set forth.

Whenever possible, both parents should be interviewed along with the child. This is important, as Montessori education is best carried out with children of parents who understand and can cooperate with the long-term program Montessori education requires. The interviewer will assess parents on the following terms:

1. Have they a basic attitude toward the child and his potential, which is compatible with Montessori education?
2. Parents are committed to their child continuing the Montessori program through the traditional Kindergarten year.
3. Have they sufficient factual knowledge of Montessori education and/or are they willing to obtain more?
4. Are they willing to work within the structure of the Little Hands Montessori, as set forth in this Handbook?
5. Have they the financial capabilities to maintain their child in the program for an appropriate length of time?

The basic tenet of Montessori education is the exposure of the young, sensitive child to the prepared Montessori environment. Therefore, children will be admitted as young as is practical. The child that is developmentally ready and between 18 months to 2 ½ years is considered for admission.

Admission preference will be given in the following order:

1. Children presently enrolled.
2. Siblings of enrolled children.
3. Siblings of previously enrolled students
4. Children with previous Montessori experience.
5. New applicants.

Those children with emotional, developmental or physical handicaps will be considered for admission on an individual basis. Specific medical information will be required. Admission will depend on the ability of the child to benefit from the program and probable effect of the child on other children in the school, and only if the faculty is qualified and willing to accept the child on probation. Children will not be admitted if they require unusual care by the faculty.

ADMISSIONS DURING THE YEAR

When an opening occurs, children accepted will be admitted primarily according to the chronological order of application. It may be necessary for LHM to deviate from the policy of chronological admission for educational reasons, or class balance.

RE-ENROLLMENT

When the child is ready he/she may move to MCDC if they have openings. Children from LHM have the first priority when opening occurs at MCDC and during the re-enrollment period.

TUITION AND FEES

Fees are determined after careful and thorough consideration of the proposed LHM budget based on economic trends. Children are admitted for the full year, and parents agree to pay tuition for the full year.

A registration/materials fee (not applicable to tuition) must accompany the application form. This fee is non-refundable and must be submitted to place your child. (If **we** cannot place your child in a reasonable time period we will refund the r/m fee. If we confirm placement of your child and you do not choose to enroll there will be no refund.)

Upon confirmation of your child's enrollment, total yearly tuition is due. If you elect to make monthly payments, your first installment is due. Monthly installment payments thereafter are due on the first of each month beginning in September, with no payment in June. NOTE: *Installments are an equal division of the yearly fees, divided by ten for your convenience.* The installment amount for a short month is the same as for a long month, since each installment is one-tenth of the yearly tuition.

You will receive a statement approximately 2 weeks before the due date. Please keep your statements for your tax records.

A fee of \$35 is assessed after the 5th of the month if your payment is delinquent. A \$35.00 fee is charged each time a check is returned for any reason and you may be required to make future payments by cash or cashiers check.

Expenses are not significantly diminished by a child's absence, therefore, regretfully, no financial allowances can be made for illness, vacations, or other voluntary absences.

Your child will not be admitted into attendance if your account becomes delinquent beyond 15 days of the due date unless special arrangements are made with the administrators in writing.

WITHDRAWALS

All withdrawals during the school year require 30 days written notice. (A call to the office does not constitute notification for withdrawal.) *Tuition due and owing will not be canceled, nor will tuition paid (including tuition deposit) be refunded should any parent withdraw his enrolled child from the school after the tuition deposit is submitted.* If an extreme hardship case arises, a written refund request, with documentation of hardship, must be submitted at the time notice is given. The Board of Directors at its next meeting will consider the written request.

Under no circumstances will any withdrawals be accepted after April 1, nor will installments owed be canceled after that time.

PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

FIRST DAYS

The first day is a great change in the young child's life. A child's adjustment to this new environment depends in large part upon the attitudes of the parents and their cooperation with the teachers.

There is an orientation the week before your child begins Toddler Montessori. This affords the child and parents the opportunity to meet the teacher and have an introduction to the environment.

Avoid excessive discussion about the new experience. The child should feel it would be a normal and natural part of his growth and an extension of his home life. If you are calm and positive in your approach, your child will sense this and feel that going to Montessori is a good thing. Just a few days before, teach your child the names of the teachers. The adults go by Miss or Mr. and first names.

Upon arrival on the first day, pull up to the entrance at MCDC and use regular car procedures outlined below. Say a friendly good-bye, only one time, and leave. Parents should have a matter-of-fact attitude that gives the child great security. The staff are responsible for what happens after you leave; please have confidence in our ability, so the child's adjustment will be a good one. Make the transition easier for your child by allowing for this procedure from the first day. You are encouraged to call us if you are having concerns about your child's transition to Montessori. After decades of experience we find that children who start out following the routine adapt much more readily and feel more secure because they are doing the same thing as the other children.

On or before the first day bring all **paperwork, extra clothing and comfort bag** (see specifics in this handbook).

ARRIVALS

From 8:05 to 8:25 the staff will meet your child at the car in the MCDC driveway. The arrival procedure and traffic flow have been set up for your convenience and especially for the safety of the children. Please observe the signs. Drive to the front entrance, stop and put your car in park. A staff member will help your child out of the passenger side of the car. Please do not leave your car. It is very important that you let the staff handle a reluctant child. If a parent gets out of the car and comes in during the early weeks of the child's school experience, it hinders his/her acceptance of the environment by prolonging the separation of parent and child. A crying child rarely continues crying for more than a few minutes after the parent leaves.

It is imperative that we eliminate any obstruction of traffic on Espola Road. Never stop in the street, even in the bike lane, (no part of your car may ever hang out beyond the curb). If you cannot get in the driveway, please, pass the school and turn around where it is safe to do so. Please pull your car all the way forward to the exit gate or where instructed to stop. **NO LEFT TURN.** Always turn right out of the driveway. In the case that your child is not ready when you arrive, a staff member will ask you to pull into a parking space or circle around the driveway again so the cars behind you may continue to move forward.

Should the school drive be completely full, please **proceed past the school**, choose a safe area to turn around, and re-approach the school drive.

Please make every effort to arrive on time. If you arrive after class starts (**8:25**) and we have gone inside, park your car, escort your child into the MCDC and we will escort you child to LHM. Please **do not park in the fire lane**; the Poway Sheriff's or Fire Department may issue you a ticket. For you child's safety always hold your child's hand when you are in the front area of the school. Please say good bye to your child in the office.

LHM is a licensed home care, that does not provide day care and as such we expect children to be on time. We feel strongly that we must give preference to parents whose children are getting the most out of the program by being here for the morning period.

DISMISSALS

Upon dismissal, follow the same traffic procedure. An adult will meet you at MCDC and will bring your child to your car. **Be aware** of crowding in the driveway. Pull as far forward as you can to make room for more cars. **If the driveway is full DO NOT stop on Espola Rd. No part of your car may be beyond the curb. Follow the same procedure as the morning.** Please check your child to be sure he/she is properly buckled in to the safety seat. There are such a variety of safety restraints for young children that our staff cannot be responsible for knowing how to fasten all of them. Therefore, it is your responsibility to see that they are properly fastened. The California Highway Patrol suggests that children be seated in the back seat for maximum safety (it is recommended that children under 7 years old and 70 pounds be in a child's car seat and it is recommended that children under 12 sit in the backseat of the car). LAW- Children must be in a car seat until they are 6 years old or weigh 60 pounds.

Children will be ready for dismissal at the scheduled times. It is very important for the child's sense of security that when he is ready for dismissal, you are there promptly. In the case of an unavoidable delay call the office before 11:55 or 2:20 so that we may help the child to feel comfortable while we wait for your arrival. Consistent late arrival to pick up your child may affect your child's feelings of security.

All exceptions to a child's regular daily program should be in writing by note or email, such as:

1. Doctor appointments.
2. Pick up by a different adult.
3. Vacations.

CALENDAR & HOURS

LHM follows the Poway Unified School District Calendar for vacations and Holidays as closely as possible (some changes might take place when we receive the official P.U.S.D. calendar). We will notify you as soon as they have set their schedule. A calendar of our school year schedule is enclosed with your confirmation packet. You may see that we have estimated some of the holidays. These may change when we see the Poway calendar.

Classes begin promptly. We cannot overemphasize the importance of your arrival on time.

All children should arrive within ten minutes before the start of class. Class hours are:

- Half Day 8:30 - 12:15
- Full Day* 8:30 - 2:30

*Children who stay until 2:30 will nap at Montessori Child Development Center.

TRANSPORTATION

The transporting of the child to and from LHM is the responsibility of parents. If a staff member transports a child to or from LHM or baby-sits for a child outside of school, the parent must sign a release. Any such arrangement is discouraged and strictly not sanctioned by LHM and the school is not liable if such arrangements are made.

Children are to be picked up promptly by their established drivers (Emergency Information form). No exceptions will be made without prior written notification to the school.

Children will not be released into the custody of any individual other than the parent, guardian, or other authorized adult, over 18 years of age, without prior consent of the parent or guardian. Be sure both Mr. and Mrs. are indicated in your release, if this is your intent.

STUDENT FILES

The State of CA Department of Social Services Home Care Licensing and LHM require certain forms to be in a student's file. Following is a list of forms that are currently required:

- Student application/Tuition and Fee Agreement
- Emergency Form/Consent for Medical Treatment
- Health History
- Physician's Report
- Immunization Record/Immunization Card
- Parents Rights (Lic 995)
- Personal Rights (Lic 613)
- Receipt of Sex Abuse pamphlet
- Pre-admission History
- Signature card for sign in/out
- Policy acceptance receipt

This list may be revised from time to time as law or circumstances dictate.

PRIVACY

LHM will not publish addresses and phone numbers of parents or staff. If a parent wishes to communicate with another family you may do so by writing a note and giving it to a staff member to be passed on in the %o home+files. Parents must check with the office before placing anything in these files.

EXTENDED CARE

The LHM does not provide Extended Care service.

OFFICE HOURS

If you have questions pertaining to billing, school policies, or procedures, please call the office (858-748-1727) between the hours of 8:45 and 3:00. While LHM is a separate program but we do utilize the MCDC's office to disseminate information. During class time you may call directly to LHM at 858-748-1728 to check on your child.

On occasions when we are unable to answer the phone, please leave a message on our answering machine. We will return your call as soon as possible.

SCHOOL ATTIRE

While no uniform is required, students will comply with the following basic standard of school attire:

1. Clothes are to be reasonably neat and clean.
2. Children should be dressed according to weather conditions, i.e. shorts are not desirable in cold weather.
3. Since much activity takes place on the floor, child should be dressed in comfortable, non-restrictive clothing.
4. Children should wear flexible rubber-soled shoes, such as tennis shoes, which permit active participation in body movement program and are safe when using the climber. **(No cowboy or snow boots, light up or rolling shoes, hard soled shoes, backless sandals or wedge heels.)** This is for your child's safety so please adhere strictly to this guideline.
5. Children should wear clothes that they can manage themselves. (Especially, no difficult belts, jumpsuits, overalls.) Remember, your child may have to get out of his clothes quickly to use the restroom!!
6. Wristwatches are permissible for a child who is learning to tell time.
7. All clothing, should be marked with the child's full name.

The following are not appropriate for school: delicate, fragile clothing, long dresses, patent leather shoes, jewelry, and purses or any special clothing which cannot get dirty. These items hinder participation in gross motor movement and/or are extremely distracting to the child. **Super hero, rock star**, etc., clothing is not considered appropriate attire, as it distracts the children and may inhibit their creativity and imagination in play.

Each child should have an extra full set of clothing in a gallon Ziploc plastic bag (each garment labeled with the child's full name), as well as pull-ups and baby wipes on hand at LHM. These should accompany the child on his first day.

TOYS FROM HOME

Playthings are not to be brought to LHM. We provide all needed learning materials.

COMMUNICATION FROM PARENTS TO STAFF

It is very hard for the staff to recall all verbal messages given at arrival and dismissal time, Please write your messages down.

EMERGENCIES

Minor accidents occurring during LHM hours receive the prompt and careful attention by caregivers. In the event of illness or serious accident, the family is notified at once and arrangements are made for the child to be taken home or to his physician. Parents are required to inform LHM of any change of telephone numbers during the year. Please be sure that there are *reliable* alternate parties available if you are hard to reach. We suggest that if you have difficulty being reached you may consider a *cell phone*. (It is imperative that we are able to reach you in an emergency.)

IN CASES OF EMERGENCY, PARAMEDICS WILL BE CALLED, AND/OR THE CHILD WILL BE TAKEN TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM.

DISASTER PLAN

LHM is well prepared for an emergency such as an earthquake or fire. Parents can be assured that their child is being well cared for. We have food, water, first aid supplies and other emergency equipment on hand. We are prepared to care for children for up to 72 hours. LHM children will be safely moved to MCDC.

We ask parents to remain calm and make your way safely to the school. Before you pick up your child be sure that you have a safe place to go. When you get to MCDC where all the children will be gathered remain calm. We will have many concerned children and an agitated parent can disrupt the calm atmosphere the teachers are trying to maintain. Since we are required by law, as well as by moral responsibility, to know where each child is, we must follow dismissal procedures and have each child signed out by an authorized adult. Parents will wait by the north gate and a staff member will bring your child to you. Parents may want to stay and help; please check in with the head staff member for assignments. We would greatly appreciate your assistance.

Each child should have a **comfort bag** at LHM from his/her family. Please place such items as a note from you, a small stuffed animal or toy, a few family pictures, a toothbrush, a book and a small flashlight (optional) in a 1-gallon Ziploc bag. Please send with the extra clothes bag on or before the first day of school.

ABSENCES

Please call LHM office if your child is absent due to illness. In order to safeguard the health and welfare of the other children, the child should be kept at home if he shows signs of communicable illness, i.e. green or yellow runny nose. A child must remain fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child is absent due to a communicable disease, a doctor's written release may be requested before the child can be readmitted to the school.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you would like to bring a special snack for the birthday celebration, please let the staff know in advance when you plan to send. It should be very small. Please avoid cakes, cupcakes, and foods with high sugar content. Some good examples are:

- Trail mix in small cups

- Small muffins (bran, banana, etc.)

- Quick breads

- Fresh fruits

- Fresh vegetables, "ants on a log" (celery with peanut butter and raisins on top), etc.

Children whose birthdays fall during a vacation will have the opportunity to celebrate before or after vacation. Please make arrangements with the teacher for a day.

SNACKS

A regular snack is provided. It is prepared as a practical life activity, and a child may choose to have a snack or not, as he wishes. Snacks are low in sugar. For example, veggies, fruit, cheese, crackers, etc.

LUNCH

Nutrition is an everyday part of our program. The children begin by learning the four basic food groups - protein, fruits and vegetables, cereals and grains, and dairy. We will encourage the children to have all these groups represented in their lunches every day. California state law requires that children have 1/3 of

their daily food requirement met at lunch. The school is required to supplement missing items, and parents will be charged \$5.00.

Please send food that **does not need to be heated or refrigerated**. We suggest that you use a thermos or an ice pack for such foods.

Preparing lunch can be fun, educational and a part of every child's day. We suggest that the choices and main preparations be done the night before, since mornings are apt to be hectic.

Children should have a voice in preparing their lunches. The lunch can be prepared within the limits of availability and budget as well as nutrition. Present to the child the choices of 2-3 grains (crackers, whole wheat bread, roll, etc.). Do this for each food group. The lunch size should not be excessive. All uneaten food will be sent home, so that you and your child may adjust portions accordingly.

We do not allow candy, cakes, cookies, or other sweets in the classroom (these items will be sent home uneaten). If you would like your child to have desserts, please give them to him/her after school. In the past, we have found that desserts can cause bad feelings among both children and parents. We would rather not deal with this issue at school.

Lunch at school is an important activity for our students. It is structured to encourage table manners, grace, courtesy, and the fun of a meal with peers.

Lunch is also a nice time for you to visit with your child and have lunch together. Please call the school and notify the teachers if you care to have lunch here one day with your child. Due to space limitations we can only accommodate one or two parent guests at a time, so be sure to let us know in advance. (Parent guests will be scheduled eight weeks after the child enters school.)

The child should also have:

A small cloth lunch bag (purchased, or make your own), indelibly marked on outside with the child's name (plastic and metal boxes are noisy and bulky).

No juice boxes or cans, please. We will serve chilled water to the children, and you may send cheese or yogurt for the milk group (please no ~~yo-gurt~~ drinkable yogurt or similar items as we are teaching table manners during lunch).

NAPS

Children from LHM who are potty trained and 2 years old or older may stay for nap until 2:30. LHM has contracted with MCDC next door to care for nappers in the afternoon. All children staying for nap must be picked up at MCDC during the 2:30 dismissal.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year and a written assessment of the child's progress will be presented to the parents at the end of the school year. We feel that the Parent-Teacher Conference is an invaluable aid for both the parent and the teacher, and ultimately for every child. Since this is a very lengthy process for the teacher, please make every effort to keep your appointment so that the teacher does not require many additional hours of conferencing. It is LHM's policy that in the case of divorced or separated parents, conferences are scheduled with both parents at the same time. This enables the staff to remain neutral and unbiased.

For other meetings with the teacher, please feel free to call LHM office for an appointment. It is our policy to encourage the highest degree of cooperation between parents and staff.

PARENT EDUCATION

It is very important that you as parents are aware and involved in your child's experience in the Montessori environment. During the year there will be planned programs at MCDC to which LHM families are invited. These programs will include guest speakers, discussions on Montessori Method and philosophy, questions frequently asked workshops and potluck dinners.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

It is the policy of the Little Hands Montessori to maintain a highly motivated professional staff. To promote this, we will include periodic professional growth days in the school year. Parents will be notified at least two weeks prior to the date on which we will be closed.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION, ILLNESS AND NOTIFICATION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

In accordance with the requirements of the California Department of Health, no child may be admitted to the school unless his/her medical form, signed by his/her physician is on file in the school office.

LHM will notify all parents of the existence of communicable diseases within the toddler community. When your child has a communicable disease, please notify the school office immediately. As soon as the school is informed of the incidence of a contagious disease, other than the common cold, parents will be notified.

In compliance with the California State Regulation, your child may not attend school with severe cold symptoms, such as severe runny noses (Consulting a physician informed us that a green runny nose is a sign of an infection and probably contagious), coughs or sneezes. If your child has a *fever* over 100 he/she must be normal for **24 hours**, without fever reducing medication, before returning to LHM. Though this is sometimes inconvenient to parents, this policy drastically reduces the incidence of children being sick, and will result in each child being out of school for fewer days. Your strict cooperation with this policy is required. If a child is observed to have active symptoms of illness, the parent will be requested to pick the child up. If the parent cannot be reached, the person listed on the child's emergency form will be contacted.

MEDICATION

The staff will administer medication to children after lunch only for children who are staying for nap. Please adjust your medication schedule to fit this time. Medication must be in the prescription bottle and handed to a staff member. If this is impossible we ask that a parent come to school to administer the medication. A medication release form can be found in the confirmation packet for your convenience. We will not give medication to any child who does not have a signed form filled out. We will send you a new form each time one comes in to us. A new form must be filled out and signed for each new series of medication.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

From time to time children exhibit puzzling behavior. The staff, after careful observation, may request that a child be evaluated by an outside professional other than a pediatrician. We have only the best interest of the child in mind and ask for **timely** cooperation on the part of the parents so that we can best help children in their development. We are committed to working hand in hand with parents for the child's optimum physical, emotional and intellectual growth.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline, by definition, is the training of the mind and character. LHM's staff uses positive methods to assist the children in gaining self-control and positive actions. We help children to identify and express verbally what they are feeling. We have also found that redirection, lessons in grace and courtesy, role-playing and storytelling are effective methods helping children to gain self-discipline. If a child needs special attention a teacher may take that child with her and have him/her watch as she goes about helping other children.

BITING (or causing any physical harm to another child or adult) is a serious infraction. In that case the child is immediately removed from the class, parents are called and expected to pick their child up immediately. We take these measures to let the child know how strongly we feel about this behavior and we suggest that parents take it very seriously. The staff and administration will counsel the children who are exhibiting severe discipline problems and attempt to work out a solution that is mutually acceptable. Behavior that threatens the safety and well-being of other students is not tolerated, and parents are expected to assist with these matters. With cooperation problems are usually cleared up in a very short time.

REMOVAL OF STUDENTS

LHM reserves the right to ask any family, without notice, to remove their child/children from enrollment if the staff or administration feels the parent's or child's continued presence in some way threatens the safety or emotional well being of any other person attending or connected with the school. The Administrator or her representative may also ask that that family not enter the premises or grounds after they are dismissed. Any fees paid in advance will be refunded at that time after deducting fees owed.