

PARENTS' HANDBOOK

Little Hands Montessori School & Daycare

WELCOME TO OUR MONTESSORI FAMILY

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to our Montessori daycare community. This handbook contains important information about our program, policies, and procedures. Please read it carefully and keep it as a reference throughout your child's enrollment with us.

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OUR MISSION & PHILOSOPHY

Our Mission: To provide a nurturing, authentic Montessori environment where children develop independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning while receiving quality daycare services that support working families.

Our Philosophy: We believe in the Montessori principle that children are naturally eager to learn and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, prepared environment. Our mixed-age classrooms foster collaboration, mentorship, and respect for individual development. We honor each child's unique pace and interests while building a strong foundation for future academic and social success.

Core Values:

- Respect for the child as an individual
- Independence and self-direction
- Collaborative learning environment
- Connection to nature and community
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Cultural awareness and diversity

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Age Groups Served

- Nido Community (0-12 months)
- Infant community (12-36 months)
- Primary Program (3 - 5 years)
- Extended care (before and aftercare)

Montessori Curriculum Areas

- Practical Life: Daily living skills that build independence and concentration
- Sensorial: Materials to refine the senses and develop cognitive skills
- Mathematics: Concrete to abstract learning of mathematical concepts
- Language: Reading and writing development through phonetic approach
- Cultural Studies: Geography, history, science, and arts
- Toilet Independence

Classroom Environment

Our prepared environments feature child-sized furniture, carefully selected Montessori materials, and spaces that encourage exploration and discovery. Mixed-age groupings allow younger children to learn from older peers while older children reinforce their learning by teaching others.

Curriculum

Our Montessori curriculum is designed to meet the developmental needs of each child while fostering independence, curiosity, and a love of learning. The curriculum is hands-on, individualized, and rooted in respect for the child.

The core areas of our curriculum include:

- **Practical Life:** Promoting care of self and the environment, fine motor skills, and independence
- **Sensorial:** Activities that refine and classify sensory input
- **Language:** Encouraging spoken language, vocabulary development, and early literacy
- **Mathematics:** Introduction to quantity, symbols, and operations through concrete materials
- **Cultural Studies:** Exploring science, geography, and nature to broaden children's understanding of the world
- We also include music, movement, and creative expression to support a well-rounded early education.

DAILY SCHEDULE

- 8:00 AM - 8:30 AM: Arrival & Free Choice Work
- 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM: uninterrupted work cycle
- 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM: Snack
- 11:15 AM - 12:00 PM: Outdoor play
- 12:00 PM - 12:45 PM: Lunch (Family Style)
- 12:45 PM - 2:45PM: Rest Time
- 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM: Snack
- 3:00 PM - 5:30 PM: Afternoon Activities & Departure

ENROLLMENT & REGISTRATION

Required Documents

- Completed enrollment application
- Child's birth certificate
- Current immunization records
- Physical examination form (completed within 6 months)

- Emergency contact information
- Signed parent handbook acknowledgment
- Tuition agreement
- Completed Use of Child's Images form
- Allergies and Medication information form
- Completed Health Inventory (OCC 2015)

Registration Fee

One week of tuition is required at the time of enrollment. This fee secures your child's placement.

Waiting List Policy

When programs are full, families are placed on a waiting list in order of application date. Priority is given to currently enrolled families and siblings.

TUITION & FEES

Payment Schedule

- Tuition is due on the Monday of the current week
- Late payment fees of \$ 25.00 apply after 05:00 P.M. Tuesday of that week
- Returned check fee: \$35
- Payment methods: Check, cash, Automatic bank transfer, Zelle or Venmo

Withdrawal Policy

Written notice of withdrawal must be given 30 days in advance. Tuition is non-refundable for any portion of the week your child is enrolled in.

ATTENDANCE & ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

Hours of Operation

- Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:30 PM
- Closed: Weekends and designated holidays

Arrival Procedures

- Arrive during designated drop-off times
- Sign your child in daily
- Accompany your child to the classroom
- Communicate any special needs or concerns to staff

Departure Procedures

- Only authorized person(s) may pick up your child
- Photo ID required for unfamiliar individuals
- Sign your child out daily
- Children will only be released to individuals listed on enrollment forms

Attendance Requirements

Regular attendance supports your child's learning and development. Please notify us by 9:00 AM if your child will be absent.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES

Illness Policy

To protect all children and staff, please keep your child home if they have:

- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Contagious conditions (pink eye, strep throat, etc.)
- Persistent cough or cold symptoms

Children must be symptom-free 24 hours before returning to school.

Medication Administration

- All medications must be in original containers with pharmacy labels
- Prescription medications require written authorization from parents
- Staff will maintain medication logs
- Over-the-counter medications require physician's written consent

Injury Protocol

- Minor injuries will be treated with basic first aid
- Parents will be notified of all injuries
- Serious injuries will result in immediate emergency care and parent notification
- Incident reports will be completed and copies provided to parents

Health Screenings

Daily health checks are conducted upon arrival. Children showing signs of illness will be isolated and parents contacted for immediate pickup.

Physical Fitness

At Little Hands Montessori School & Daycare, we recognize the importance of physical activity in a child's healthy development. We offer daily opportunities for both structured and unstructured movement, including outdoor and indoor play.

Children spend at least 60–90 minutes each day engaged in physical activity, weather permitting. Outdoor play includes activities such as running, climbing, balancing, and exploring our natural environment. When weather does not allow outdoor play, we offer indoor movement activities such as dancing, yoga, stretching, and obstacle courses to support gross motor development. \

Inclusion Policy for Children with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs

At Little Hands Montessori, we are committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment where all children—regardless of ability—can thrive. We recognize that each child is unique, and we are dedicated to supporting the individual needs of children with disabilities and those with special health care needs.

Our Commitment:

- **Individualized Support:** We work in partnership with families, therapists, and medical professionals to understand each child's specific needs and provide appropriate accommodation and support.
- **Inclusive Environment:** Children with disabilities and special health care needs participate fully in all aspects of our program. Our classrooms, materials, and routines are designed to be adaptable and inclusive.

- **Reasonable Accommodations:** We make every effort to modify activities, routines, and the environment to meet children's physical, developmental, and health-related needs.
- **Collaboration with Families:** We communicate closely with families to ensure continuity of care and to create an individualized plan that supports each child's participation and well-being.
- **Staff Training:** Our staff members receive ongoing training on inclusive practices and are equipped to respond to medical needs such as administering medication, using EpiPens, or recognizing symptoms of health concerns such as asthma, diabetes, or severe allergies.
- **Health Care Plans:** For children with special health care needs, we require a written care plan from the child's health care provider. This plan will outline necessary procedures and emergency actions, and we will review and update it with the family regularly.
- We believe that every child has the right to feel valued, safe, and supported. Our goal is to build a strong foundation for all children to grow, learn, and reach their full potential in a respectful and inclusive setting.

NUTRITION & MEALS

Meal Program

Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their children. Balanced meals and snacks that support healthy growth and development are recommended. Snacks will be provided per OCC approved menu. This menu follows USDA guidelines and accommodates dietary restrictions when possible.

Food Allergies

Please inform us of any food allergies or dietary restrictions. We work with families to ensure safe meal options for all children.

CLOTHING & PERSONAL ITEMS

Appropriate Clothing

- Comfortable, washable play clothes

- Closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles
- Weather-appropriate outerwear
- Extra clothing set kept at school

Personal Items

- Small comfort items are welcome
- Toys from home should generally stay at home
- Label all personal belongings
- The school is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items

Rest Time Items

- Small blanket or sheet
- Small pillow or comfort item
- Items will be sent home weekly for washing

COMMUNICATION & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Daily Communication

- Weekly newsletters
- Parent-teacher conferences twice yearly
- Open door policy for questions and concerns

Parent Involvement Opportunities

- Classroom volunteering
- Field trip chaperones
- Special skill sharing
- Parent education workshops
- Family events and celebrations

Communication Channels

- Email updates and newsletters
- Parent bulletin board
- Classroom websites/apps
- Phone calls for urgent matters
- Scheduled conferences

Child Assessment

We use ongoing observation and informal assessments to support each child's individual growth and development. These assessments are aligned with the Maryland Early Learning Standards and focus on the whole child.

Documentation of progress includes developmental checklists, observation notes, and samples of work. This information is used to plan lessons, adjust the environment, and guide teacher interactions.

We hold teacher-parent conferences twice a year to share insights into your child's development and goals. We also welcome informal conversations and are always open to collaboration with families throughout the year.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Positive Discipline Approach

We use positive, respectful guidelines based on Montessori principles:

- Natural consequences
- Redirection and problem-solving
- Conflict resolution skills
- Respect for others and the environment

Challenging Behaviors

For persistent challenging behaviors:

1. Observation and documentation
2. Parent conference to develop strategies

3. Possible behavior plan implementation
4. Outside consultation if needed
5. Potential program modification or withdrawal

Prohibited Disciplinary Measures

We never use corporal punishment, verbal abuse, withholding of meals, or any form of humiliation.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Contacts

Ensure emergency contact information is current and includes at least two local contacts who can pick up your child.

Emergency Procedures

- Fire evacuation drills conducted monthly
- Severe weather procedures are posted in each classroom
- Lockdown procedures in place
- Emergency supplies maintained on-site
- Staff trained in CPR and first aid

Inclement Weather

School closures due to weather will be communicated via email and phone by 6:00 AM when possible.

HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES

School Closures

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (Thursday & Friday)
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
- Additional days as announced

Vacation Weeks

The school observes two weeks of paid staff vacation during the school year. Vacation week dates will be announced at the beginning of each school year. Tuition remains due during all scheduled closures and vacation periods, as these costs are incorporated into the annual tuition structure to ensure fair staff compensation and program sustainability.

Additional emergency closures, such as those caused by inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, will be communicated to parents with as much notice as possible. Emergency closures are not eligible for tuition refunds.

PARENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent Rights

- Access to your child during program hours
- Information about your child's progress and development
- Advance notice of any significant changes to policies
- Access to licensing information and inspection reports

Parent Responsibilities

- Provide accurate enrollment information
- Keep emergency contacts' current
- Follow health and safety policies
- Support school policies and procedures
- Communicate concerns respectfully and promptly
- Pay tuition and fees on time

Grievance Procedure

If you have concerns:

1. Discuss with your child's teacher
2. Meet with the program director
3. Submit written concerns if unresolved
4. Contact a licensing agency if necessary

CONTACT INFORMATION

Little Hands Montessori School & Daycare

Address: 2209 Rockland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20851

Phone: 301-978-6104

Email: lakmalic@hotmail.com *and/or* lakmalic@littlehandsmsd.com

Website: www.littlehandsmsd.com

Director: Lakmali Cooray

Business Hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Emergency Numbers:

Fire Department: 911

Police: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Licensing Information:

License Number: 261961

Licensing Agency: Office of Childcare

License Expiration: 05.31.2027

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the policies outlined in this Parents' Handbook. I agree to comply with all policies and procedures.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Child's Name: _____

This handbook is reviewed annually and updated as needed. Parents will be notified of any policy changes in writing. The current version is available on our website and in the main office.

Handbook Version: July 2025

Next Review Date: July 2026