

*This handbook is intended to give general information on the daily life at Easton Montessori School. **Its provisions can be changed at the will of the school administration.***

## **General Information**

### **Administration**

The Administrative Head (Susan) is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school.

### **Communication**

Good communication flow with your child's teacher (Susan) is highly desirable and should be the principle vehicle for questions that may arise. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled throughout the year for this purpose. Communicating through or with the assistant in any matter, other than the casual inquiry, is considered inappropriate, not to mention putting Jen, and/or Michelle in an uncomfortable situation.

It is respectfully requested that only calls of an emergency nature be made to the staff at home. If an emergency arises and you need to contact a staff member at home, please call the Director (Susan) first. We ask you to respect our family time and limit home calls to genuine emergencies. Messages at school are retrieved several times during the school day.

A monthly newsletter is sent out to the parents informing them of the current activities of the School, via email. Please be certain we have your current email address. If you should desire to submit an article for the newsletter to Susan, please do so before the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## **Goals and Objectives (Our Mission Statement)**

Our objective at Easton Montessori School is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating, and most importantly, a nurturing environment consistent with Montessori philosophy and methodology. To help children develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills, and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.

Easton Montessori School is dedicated to the methodology and philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, it was founded in 1987. Its focus

is child-oriented and it functions as a co-operative effort of Montessori educators, supportive professionals, children, their families and supportive staff. We are an interdependent non-sectarian community.

Therefore, **ems** shall strive to provide an educational and a developmental experience that is:

a. holistic: addressing the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical needs and development of the child; fostering independence, self-direction, motivation, responsible decision-making and respect of self and others. In other words, a student's own independence is not license to disturb the equally independent functioning of others.

b. individualized: responsive to the unique abilities, learning styles and interest of each child's potential. We strive to help each child understand the enormous personal responsibility falling on every learner in an individualized program to develop and then to demonstrate self-control, focus and responsibility.

c. nurturing of the child's love of learning: encouraging intellectual curiosity and self-confidence

d. conductive to education for life: preparing children for future educational and life experiences and eventually, their effective roles in the world community

e. inclusive: welcoming children of diverse abilities, cultural, religious, racial and socio-economic backgrounds, in an interdependent atmosphere

**ems** shall strive to offer a safe, caring, and a stable environment grounded in Montessori theory, including:

- a. qualified, dedicated professional staff
- b. specially prepared, fully equipped and enriched facility

**ems** shall strive for excellence for its programs, operations, staff and children by being:

- a. proactive in its planning and administration
- b. responsive to the changing individual needs of its students and families
- c. responsible in utilizing sound business practices to ensure fiscal stability

**ems** shall strive to be an integral part of the community by contributing to its enhancement and availing itself of its resources

Easton Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin in the admission of students or the employment of staff.

### **Accreditation's, Affiliations, Memberships (Susan)**

<i>American Montessori Society</i>	Member
<i>Association Montessori Internationale</i>	Member
<i>Montessori Administrative Council</i>	Member
<i>North American Montessori Teachers Assn.</i>	Member
<i>International Reading Assn.</i>	Member
<i>National Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	Member

Accredited by: *The Maryland State Department of Education,  
Section 2-2206 Annotated Code of Maryland*

Approved by: *Talbot County Health Department and the Maryland  
State Fire Marshall*

Licensed by : *Maryland State Department of Human Resources,  
Childcare Administration*

*\*\*\*\*Without sounding too ridiculous, or flip, I must share with you that over the course of the last twenty years our governing agency has changed more times than I can remember. As of July 1, 2007 it appears that MSDE, Nonpublic Schools, Division of Early Childhood is the agency actually overseeing us...at the moment, as of this writing (15 June 07). I will surely let you know of any changes as I am notified.*

### **General Policies and Procedures**

#### **Access to Records:**

In the event of divorce or separation, it is the policy of the school to provide the custodial parents, the non-custodial parents, and the step-parents equal access to all of the official records, written reports regarding their children as well as written school announcements and related written information. Moreover, each is granted access to the children, teachers and the administrator. Such access is provided without prior notification of the other parties and regardless of the party or parties paying the bill. Exceptions to this policy are undertaken only when necessary to comply with applicable law and/or when so ordered by a court of law.

Transcripts of cumulative performance and medical records are sent to schools requesting information after written authorization is

received from parents, assuming all financial obligations have been met.

We do anticipate, and expect, divorced or separated parents to communicate with each other regarding their child's daily progress (i.e. relaying casual verbal comments made during the course of the year). Separate conferences are not scheduled for divorced or separated parents.

### **Admission Procedure:**

Parents interested in enrollment for their child should schedule an appointment to visit the classroom, followed by a scheduled interview. An application is subsequently made. Parents are notified in writing, as openings in particular age and sex groups arise. Contracts are then issued and a time is specified for the acceptance of the available space. If there are no openings at the time of the application, parents are notified in writing and the child is placed on a waiting list. We do our best to balance the class according to age and gender.

Siblings of children already enrolled in the School and Montessori transfer students are given preference in enrollment.

### **Arrival and Departure**

It is imperative that arrival and dismissal times be closely adhered to. The time before class is vital for staff preparation to ensure a smooth and productive day. We ask that you arrive no earlier than ten minutes before the start of class and to arrive promptly at the end of class. **For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent in the absence of a written note. We are very strict about this point and will not allow any child to ride in a car with a person we do not know or about whom we have not been notified previously.**

*Promptness in a child's life is very important.* Children who arrive late and are picked up late feel awkward and uncomfortable, and can cause difficulties for the class and the staff in particular.

*Tardiness is very disruptive for a teacher as well as the class.* Therefore, it is the policy of the School not to accept children between 9:00 and 9:15 am. We will check the parking lot and wait for those "unloading" and then lock the cubby room door. After the ellipse we'll check the cubby room for those that might be waiting and then re-lock the door for security reasons. Do not leave your child unattended in the coatroom, wait with your child until the "ellipse" is over and come

in then, when check the cubby room. After 9:15, please come around through the back to the French doors, that way we see who is entering for security reasons. Late entrance is less problematic after 9:15, but can still be disruptive for those children that have settled into individual or in small group "work".

***Procedures for arrival and dismissal:***

When arriving at School, parents should park in the parking lot and walk their children to the classroom through the front doors. We open the doors at **8:50** for parents and students to come into the classroom. The ellipse begins promptly at 9:00am and the door to the cubby room is closed for the duration of the ellipse. Parents of new students are welcome to stay as long as they feel the need to, just remember your child will need to experience you leaving in order to be assured you will return! We do ask all parents of returning students to leave promptly at 9am after the first week of school. All parents are invited to stay for the ellipse on Friday's and show and tell (which we "start" after the long fall weekend). I realize this may seem obvious, but we ask parents to refrain from speaking to one another while seated at the ellipse, once we get started with our morning greeting. The children are reminded that it is the kind thing is to let one person speak at a time. It is difficult to hear little voices when grown ups are chatting with one another. Please save this for the cubby room, the parking lot, or the playground.

For dismissal, parents should park their cars and pick their children up at the playground gate. Please remember if you come for pick-up a bit early and bring along a sibling onto the playground, you need to keep an eye on the sibling. We do our best but can only accept responsibility for enrolled students. Before leaving with your child, we will ask that your child exchange "goodbyes" with the classroom adult, standing at the exit gate and that way we can ensure everyone is leaving with the right person. Hold your child's hand in the parking lot.

If the weather is very cold or inclement, parents should park their cars and come into the classroom to get their children. If you do arrive a bit early please come sit at the ellipse with your child or stand "out of sight" in the area closest to the parking lot until we dismiss the children. When we dismiss from the ellipse, we do so one child at a time – after we see that child's ride has arrived. The child exchanges goodbyes with each adult before being dismissed. This has proven to prevent mass chaos for everyone involved and allows us to be certain each child is leaving with the appropriate adult. Make sure you are holding hands with children in the parking lot.

***Parking:***

Park only in designated parking spaces directly in front of the building or alongside the building closest to Pensel and Walker; or if our lot is full, park in Pensel and Walker's lot (they have been very generous with this offer) or along side the curb on Martin Court. Do not park your car alongside the curb in front of the building, entrance, mailboxes or in Dr Ball's parking lot. In the past folks have inadvertently blocked the handicapped entrance – we've had more than one fender bender between two Montessori cars, not to mention the mailboxes taking several hits (by Montessori parents). Our reputation in the parking lot is seriously suffering!

***Late pick up fees and policies:***

Parents (baby-sitters, carpool drivers' etc.) are expected to pick up children promptly at 11:45 (and 2:00pm once "lunch-bunch" begins in January). Parents (baby-sitters, carpool drivers' etc) who pick up children after 11:50 (or 2:05) will receive a written warning upon the first occurrence. This will also be recorded in the LATE PICK UP JOURNAL. After the first occurrence, a charge of \$10.00 for the first ten minutes and \$5.00 for each minute thereafter, PER CHILD, will be levied. No Kidding. It has proven to be the only way to have this time frame taken seriously.

***Attendance:***

Parents are asked to notify the school when a child will be absent for more than three days. We also ask that you report contagious (i.e. pink eye, strep, stomach bugs, and literal bugs like LICE etc) and communicable diseases to the School immediately. This is important, so that we are able to notify other parents to be on the look out. Read the health policy, which applies to every child.

***Birthdays:***

Children enjoy having a birthday snack at school. Children with summer birthdays are invited to celebrate UNbirthdays throughout the year. We will celebrate birthdays on Fridays (of the birthday week) and invite you to send in a birthday snack. Ask yourself this question: "IF you were to have 20 some kids at your house and feed them a snack would you then get down on the same floor and play some games?" If your answer is no, then it does not pass the ems snack test! Suggestions: pretzels logs rolled in melted white chocolate and then "sprinkles", fruit in cups, veggies in cups, rice krispy treats. Individual servings are a must, cupcakes with icing are out, muffins

are ok, sheet cakes forget it etc. Please run your snack by Jen or Michelle for the final ok.

If you are planning a home party for your child, **do not hand out invitations in school**, even if everyone has been invited (think about it, the parent may have read the mailed invitation, and if for any reason the child is not able to attend - the parent may have chosen NOT to tell their child about it...). We will not hand them out and will, in fact, return them to you in your child's backpack. It is not appropriate to hand out invitations in the parking lot. These kids are not "unwise", it does not take long for their own rumor mill to start and figure out who is or is not invited to a party.

**It is appropriate to mail invitations.** Why not turn the whole notion of an invitation into a grace and courtesy lesson? Using your own address book or the class-list, explain how to correctly address an envelope and then do so. Go to the post office and purchase the stamps, place the stamps and mail the invitations together.

Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school, **do not send gifts to school with your child** if your child is going with another family to a party. Imagine being 3,4,or 5 walking by a wrapped gift in the cubby room, would you be able to concentrate?

We are not trying to be grinchies, just trying to be mindful that not everyone can be invited to a gathering or if invited always be able to attend. **This is a huge sore spot as far as we are concerned and one that parents have consistently ignored;** please do not put us in the position of having to "remind" you of this policy. We are obviously very upfront about our feelings and policies with regard to this. It is our policy to try to protect the children from heartbreak. Every child has an opportunity to celebrate their birthday or UNbirthday with their classmates in the classroom; please keep the "out of school activities" just that.

### **Carpools:**

Carpool forms need to be returned to School no later than orientation or the first day of school, and updated as each change occurs. If your carpool has a change of driver, please post it on the "transportation board", just inside the classroom door on the right. It is extremely nerve-wracking to the children (and adults) to have last minute changes. ALL CHANGES NEED TO BE DISCUSSED BEFORE THE SCHOOL DAY BEGINS, so that YOU can prepare your child for any changes. Surprises can ruin a child's entire day. Please do not use the school's voice-mail as a way of notifying us (and your child) of a

carpool changes – this can be very disruptive to everyone. Certainly there are occasional changes and we are happy to try to accommodate these but, for your child's sake, he/she needs orderliness and to be able to count on a routine.

Staff members are not permitted to participate in carpools nor do we co-ordinate them. If your child is going to be absent – please call the parent driving. If you are scheduled to drive, and your child is ill; please notify your carpool so that other arrangements can be made.

### **Class Placement:**

At this time, enrollment is limited to one class ( of up to 26 children) and one AMI certified teacher (Susan) and an assistant ( Jen or Michelle); each adult meeting current MSDE standards. It has proven to be effective to limit the class to 20 children (or less) in the fall. After Thanksgiving we take into consideration the "group" as a whole and decide if we should add to the group. The staff makes this decision together.

### **Clothing/Shoes and Slippers:**

Play clothes are encouraged. Simple, washable, sturdy and easy-to manage clothing is a must. It is a good idea to have "trial runs" at home to be certain your child can manage independently a "questionable outfit" in order to use the bathroom. "Outdoor" crocs, sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are a must for outdoors.

The School requires that each child have a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing, including underwear and socks, on hand at school. Please bring the extra clothing in a bag, a plastic baggie we can use to send wet clothing home as needed; with your child's name on it. The bag and clothing should be brought to School at orientation or on the first day of school, for returning students. We hang these clothes on a hook in the bathroom. Cloth or canvas bags work well, plastic grocery bags are dangerous. We have had many a child wear some of our leftover spares, which happen to only be shorts now, home in the middle of February! Please replenish the extra clothing as it is sent home.

We ask that all parents order a pair of "crocs" for their child to leave in their cubby at school. We'll use these as your child's school crocs. Our mindset is multi-fold: the class is quieter, little fingers are not hurt when accidentally stepped on by "soft" crocs, and these are not as slippery on the wooden floors as slippers. These can be ordered online from several sources: [www.crocs.com](http://www.crocs.com), [www.nordstroms.com](http://www.nordstroms.com),

and [www.nofeargear.com](http://www.nofeargear.com) (there are probably many more sources). We'll have the children wear their crocs each day during class. Please keep in mind the shoes your child wears to and from school; we cannot allow children wearing hard-soled shoes, "cowperson boots", clogs (without a strap) or flip flops to swing on the swings.

**It is necessary to put your child's name on everything!**

### **Dismissal Policy:**

In the event a child has a problem or causes severe problems for the other children, the staff shall document all incidents observed (this goes for adults as well...which I never thought I would have to add). The parents will be presented with documentation during a prearranged conference. The conference will show positive steps for the parents to provide special help for the child, including consultation with the child's pediatrician and other referrals, if necessary. If parents choose not to seek the suggested help for the child, the child may be dismissed.

Non-payment is grounds for dismissal as well as retention of educational transcripts.

**Disregard for school policies and its basic philosophy is grounds for dismissal. Obviously, and I am embarrassed to have to say this: this does include "parental" misbehavior as well.**

### **Emergency Closings and Late Openings:**

In the long-ago past all Talbot County Schools (Independent, Parochial and Public) all agreed to abide by one decision. This seemed to break down because of numerous fog delays and bus transportation. Now there is always some confusion associated with late openings and closings. Our policy since then is: I will make the best decision I can based upon what other schools are doing, including the Talbot County Schools and local independent schools. I will make every effort to call the school's voice mail and change the message, so if you believe there are late openings or closings in the area call 410.822.7827, by 6:15am. I will leave a new message regarding weather. If the message is the same old same old, come to school on time. I will notify WCEI am/fm 1460/96.7, they announce all school closings and late openings after 6am-once I can get through. They automatically list delays and closures on their website as well: [www.wcei.com](http://www.wcei.com). Unfortunately, they do not announce all county schools together – often Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot County public, independent and parochial schools are announced in random order.

Whenever we open late we will begin class at 10:00am with dismissal at the regular time. We will delay opening if the roads are slick, icy or snow-covered. More often than not we **will** open on time if there are delays due to fog. If you are uncomfortable with the driving conditions, whether we are opening late or not; please do what you are most comfortable with. No one should be on the road if they are unsure of the conditions, please do not worry about being on time (for arrival!) if we've had a late opening. I will try to make the best decision I can with regard to the school and collective safety, you do the same for you and your family. As a pre-school we have no pre-requisite number of days, as far as MSDE is concerned. We do however, schedule in "5" snow days into our calendar each year; which we rarely end up using. We do not claim to have any influence upon Mother Nature, and in fact would not want to!

### **Emergencies:**

In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, the School will not hesitate to seek proper care for your child. The child's individual emergency instructions on file at the school are consulted immediately and the parents called. If necessary, the child will be transported to Easton Memorial Hospital by the Maryland State Police, an ambulance, or a member of the staff. The consent statement, (which all parents must sign) will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in the absence of a parent. It is **imperative** that **you** keep the emergency contact information up-to-date, as well as current insurance information.

### **Evacuation Procedures:**

In the event that we are instructed to evacuate the building, we will walk the children to the lobby of Easton Bank and Trust. We will carry with us the emergency card file and make telephone calls asking that the children be picked up immediately. It is imperative, and **YOUR responsibility**, to be certain that we have up to date contact numbers (yours as well as those listed as persons we are permitted to call in the event that you are unavailable).

In the event of a crisis situation we will follow the direction of local law enforcement. We are in touch with the Easton Police and Talbot County Sheriff's office and have contacted the Maryland State Police.

### **Extended Day Program (a.k.a. LunchBunch):**

The culmination of our instructional program is the Extended Day Program. The curriculum is a "jump start for kindergarten". It is offered to currently enrolled children, once they become rising kindergartners, **as the Educational Director judges them ready** (that would be Susan). These rising kindergartners (entering kindergarten the following fall), are usually reading four letter phonetic letters, **without behavioral issues**, able to work with the peer group, and no longer require a nap. Should a child tire during this time, we can provide an area for rest/sleep/mats if need be. This is **not** meant to imply that the instructional program offers "after-care" or day care of any sort.

The existing group is considered when judging a new addition to the group. Invitations are made in written form. We expect to begin a few children in January 2008, adding to the group until May. These children will stay until 2pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Parents provide a boxed lunch for their child. This portion of our instructional program is optional, there is an additional fee, and billed one month before a child is considered eligible to enter. We have been awarded a variance from DHR/CCA in order to do this for the rising kindergartners.

### **Field Trips:**

We will try to schedule one field trip during the year for the entire class; additional trips may be scheduled for the extended day children. We ask for help from parent volunteers to chaperone and provide transportation; we aim for one hand for every child. The owners of vehicles used to transport the children assume the responsibility for liability coverage.

If the highest "terror alerts" is issued we will not take the children on any field trips.

### **Health Policy:**

According to Maryland law the Maryland Immunization Certificate and Health Inventory must be filled out by your physician or health department and returned to School before your child can be admitted into the class.

We are not licensed or certified to administer any medication at school; the only exception being the administration of an epi-pen in the case of a severe allergic reaction (which would require a clearly written order from a physician).

The following is a list of symptoms to guide you in deciding whether your child should be sent to school. **Easton Montessori School is not a daycare center, sick children should not attend school!** Because of our unique set up and the fact that the children are not isolated at desks, "bugs" and viruses are easily transmitted. We urge you to be prudent when deciding if your child is well enough to attend. We are **NOT** shy about sending children home if any of the following symptoms are present:

1. Fever (temperature over 98.6, **wait until your child has been fever-free, and Motrin/medication-free for 24hours before returning to school**).
2. Cough that is persistent or "wet".
3. Discharge of colored or profuse amount of mucous from the nose.
4. Rash of unexplained origin.
5. Diarrhea, wait until your child has been **diarrhea free (without medication) for 24 hours** before returning to school.
6. Vomiting, wait until your child has been **free of any vomiting for 24 hours (without medication)** before returning to school.
7. Sore throat
8. Discharge of any kind from the eyes, **including bloodshot eyes**. According to DHR/CCA, there are two kinds of pink eye: one viral and the other bacterial. The drops most commonly prescribed work (almost immediately) for bacterial pink-eye and the child may return to school after the drops have been administered for 24 hours and eyes are clear. If the drops do not work, it is considered viral pink-eye and the child must remain at home until the eyes clear. You may get a note from your pediatrician stating that the redness is due to allergies and your child is not contagious.
9. Lice, a hot and controversial topic. First of all, it happens and it is nothing to be ashamed of, it can be very quick to spread in preschool classrooms. Only once in the last 19 years have we had a case of lice and it was isolated to only one child. **OUR POLICY DIFFERS** FROM Talbot County School Policy, we DO NOT allow children to return to school with "nits" regardless of where a nit might be on a hair follicle (TCPS's do allow a child to return with nits...first round, when the lice return the child is prohibited from re-entering school until the nits are completely gone and have

a note from the health department or their pediatrician).  
**We require a note from the health department or your pediatrician stating that your child is lice and nit free, period.** We will not argue with you, the health department or your pediatrician: our policy is clearly stated.

**Holidays:** We welcome any ideas you'd like to share about new holidays (which we try to approach culturally), old ones as well. Most importantly, we celebrate **simply** ( i.e. not over the top):

1. Halloween – a small, low-key celebration, with costumes, and a special snack. We do NOT allow masks or weapons to accompany the costumes.
2. Thanksgiving – a special snack
3. Hanukkah – a special snack
4. St. Nicholas Day – a very special day at **ems**
5. Santa Lucia Day – **ems** ladies are bedecked, gents if they please in traditional costume and we share a special snack
6. Christmas – special snack
7. Ramadan – special snack
8. Valentine's Day - we exchange valentines and have a special snack
9. May Day – a swing around the maypole and a special snack
10. Lunchbunchers have a pizza party on their last "lunchbunching day"

**Lunch – for extended day students:**

Please pack a well-balanced, nutritional meal, *excluding* candy, soda and other highly sugared foods with excessive quantities of additives and preservatives.

**Newsletters:**

The School sends home a monthly newsletter to inform the parents of the current topics of show and tell, pertinent notices etc, via email. If you have anything you wish to contribute to the newsletter, please get it to the School no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following months' newsletter. Please take the time to read the newsletter each month.

**Observation:**

Parents and grandparents of children enrolled in the program are encouraged to observe at anytime. Please call ahead so that we do not have too many adults in the classroom at one time. All other observers are expected to make an appointment by calling 410.822.7827.

**Show and Tell:**

We encourage the children to bring special treasures of an educational nature to share with the class. We need your cooperation; please check your child's backpack and make certain the "show and tell" is something appropriate and that you have discussed it with your child. We try to give the kids great latitude with regard to the topic, but please make sure they are not bringing TOYS into the classroom. The children should be able to discuss what they've brought to share and how it relates to the month's topic; we understand that an attack of shyness can be overwhelming so, if you end up "walking your child through show and tell" that's a good thing. It is OK if a child chooses NOT to participate in show and tell.

On the snack calendar each month, beginning with the October calendar you will note a suggested topic. This will be the "show and tell" topic of the month (science, history, art, music etc.). Each Monday we will try to remind the 3 listed children for that week on the snack calendar that they are "on" for the following Friday. Parents are invited to join us at the ellipse on Fridays, after the fall weekend.

Some great show and tells of the past: fossils, living pets, musical instruments, science experiments, clothing or artifacts from different cultures, leaves from trees, great family adventures etc. Some unacceptable examples: Barbie dolls, Power Rangers (which are TOTALLY outlawed from School), candy, weapons, etc.

**Snack:**

The School provides a small, nutritious snack daily. A monthly list is published with the newsletter. As a rule, we have the children help us make a batch of "Montessori mix" each month. Montessori mix consists of raisins, goldfish crackers, rice chex mix and graham cracker squares; often we serve some sort of fruit or vegetable as well. Water is served with snack.

**If your child suffers from food allergies, be certain to consult the snack list** and send in a lunch box with a separate snack if your child is unable to eat the scheduled snack. We do not store alternative snacks for children. Unfortunately, the School can prepare only one snack each day for the entire group.

We will be handling the birthday snacks as well; if you are just dying to bring in your child's birthday snack you MUST run it by Fei, Jen, or Michelle first.

**Telephone:**

During school hours (9am-12noon through December and then until 2pm Tuesdays and Wednesdays) messages can be left by calling 410.822.7827. We check messages regularly during the day and before we leave, your call will be returned.

**Toilet training:**

DHR regulations prohibit the use of "pull-ups" or any other "pseudo -diaper". Your child must come in underwear. We define toilet training as being independent in the bathroom, which includes wiping of all areas. (Of course we'll help out if there has been an accident).

We generally find that most problems arise with clothing that is difficult for a child to manage independently: belts (big problem for kids), suspenders, overall clips, and sometimes tights. When in doubt, ask your child how comfortable they are working the "outfit" without help and have them try a "dry-run" at home.

**Toys:**

Help us out here please. Toys are distracting in the classroom, we have a NO TOY policy. Please respect our policy and have toys left in your car before coming into school, not in your child's cubby and not in your child's backpack. Allowing your child to bring a toy in his/her backpack only undermines us. They know it is there and they will want to get into the cubby room and their backpack to show their friends. Please check your child's backpack and cooperate with us.

**Traditions:**

We love to celebrate simply as you may have surmised by reading the holiday section. The last day of school is celebrated with rainbow sherbet. The lunchbunchers are treated to pizza on the last "lunchbunch day".

We honor the lunchbunchers as they move on by a very low-key way, no diplomas etc. As the end of the year approaches we will decide on this form. It has worked very nicely to have a "time-limited" pot-luck lunch at a LB's home as a send off.

We welcome your suggestions to add to these traditions, your help and involvement.

**Visitors:**

Every effort will be made to accommodate houseguests with children and/or siblings. **Arrangements MUST be made well in advance, a copy of the child's immunization form must be submitted with a written request.** There is a fee of \$25.00/day for the primary group and \$50.00/day for the extended day group. Please keep in mind there are limits to the number of un-enrolled children that will work well in the classroom, we will limit the number of guests and visiting alum's to one per day.

We also try to accommodate visiting alum's. Alum's of currently enrolled siblings have the first preference; we need their immunization certificates as well.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Late fees and returned checks:**

There is a \$25.00 fee for handling returned checks, a 5% late penalty, plus 1.5% interest per month for any tuition payment received after the agreed upon due dates.

In order for the School to meet our financial obligations, we must insist on prompt payment of tuition bills according to the terms of the contract agreement. **Any account over thirty days in arrears is subject to disenrollment** and the School will refuse to release academic records and will seek legal action.

**Refunds:**

The application fee is non-refundable.

The enrollment deposit is non-refundable, but applicable to tuition.

Tuition payments are non-refundable.

**PARENTAL PARTICIPATION**

**Classroom Participation:**

Parents who have a talent, career, or hobby, which they believe would be interesting to the children, are encouraged to make arrangements with us to set up a time to share this information with

the children. Parents are welcome to share anything they have to aid in our different curriculum studies (as well as interesting and interested friends) and, most importantly, to share in your child's educational experiences. We do ask for a brief overview from you ahead of time so that we can prepare the children. Observations by parents and grandparents (aunts and uncles) are welcomed and encouraged any time (see observation).

### **Conferences:**

Conferences are very important. It is a time set aside for the parents and staff to discuss the child, his/her progress and goals. Parents are expected to attend conferences. First conferences (November) are in conversation form, during the end of the year conferences (April/May), you will be given a written progress report. The conference schedule is included in the handbook (page c); your appointments have been highlighted. If the date and time scheduled is inconvenient for you please switch with another parent. This calendar should give you plenty of notice; please make note of the dates and times now. School is not in session during the conferences. Childcare is not provided Michelle will be present at the conferences in order to participate not baby-sit. Her input is invaluable.

In addition to the scheduled conferences, you may call the school and arrange for a mutually convenient conference as the need arises. Conferences are not held on an impromptu basis, you must schedule an appointment; this includes "walk-ins" before or after school.

### **Parent Education:**

All parents are encouraged to purchase a copy of: A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom, by Aline D. Wolf. It can be obtained from Parent Child Press; P.O. Box 767; Altoona, PA 16603. Each fall parents are polled and a bulk order is placed through the School. Other books that will familiarize you with Montessori philosophy and methodology, or life with kids are as follows:

Dorothy Briggs: Your Child's Self-Esteem

Ellen Galinsky: Between Generations: The Six Stages of Parenthood

Susan L. Hall: Straight Talk About Reading: How Parents Can Help

Make a Difference During the Early Years

Rita Kramer: Montessori: A Biography

Maria Montessori: The Absorbent Mind

Maria Montessori: Discovery of the Child

Maria Montessori: To Educate the Human Potential  
Maria Montessori: The Secret of Childhood  
Rosa Packard: The Hidden Hinge  
Mark Parent: Believing It All: What My Children Taught Me About Fishing, Jelly Toast and Life \* \* \* \* \*  
E.M. Standing: Maria Montessori: Her Life and Works  
Aline Wolf: Nurturing the Spirit of the Child  
Anthony E. Wolf: Get Out of My Life, But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl To the Mall? (You'll be here sooner than you think and discover that toddlerhood has many parallels to adolescence.)

## **Program Goals and Guidelines**

### **General objectives of the program are to:**

- nurture self-confidence, independence, concentration, coordination, a sense of order and awareness of self, community and the world;
- encourage and direct the innate desire to learn, to choose and to solve
- provide carefully prepared environment and personnel to support learning as it moves from concrete base to greater abstraction.

### **Primary Class (2.9 years through age 7)**

Each of the primary years is different. Children move from being the youngest to being the oldest. They feel at home in the class and develop a repertoire of work. There is a time to practice and to repeat, the equipment and material offers the opportunity for new work at every achievement level.

Young children learn by doing, by using their senses. Gradually the shift is made to learning by manipulating symbols. When children are reading well, beginning to do some arithmetic abstractly, working independently, and are socially mature enough they are recommended for entry into first grade (a Montessori Elementary Class, if available). Our students more often than not transition into a traditional kindergarten class locally, since the closest accredited Montessori Schools with Elementary programs are in Annapolis.

The Primary level ( 2.9 through 7 years of age) is designed to:

- excite the child's natural curiosity in him/herself and the world

- develop the child's ability and pride in caring for him/herself
- expand the child's concentration
- teach the child how to recognize and solve problems
- teach the child the value of physical order as a prelude to abstract academic principles
- present new concepts using concrete materials
- stress one concept at a time
- direct the child from simple to difficult tasks
- encourage mutually respectful and kind behavior (**we do not and will not tolerate bullying of ANY kind**)
- we are not necessarily a paper-producing or production oriented class

### **Professional Referrals**

Referrals for private/family tutors are available from the office and made in conjunction with the teacher's recommendation.

From time to time, **ems** may recommend to families educational, medical or other diagnostic evaluation. In such cases, **ems** will provide a list of referral sources. Following such evaluation, **ems** would anticipate consultations with the evaluators and parents to determine the best ways in which to serve the child. The Head makes recommendation for referrals.

### **Students Rights and Responsibility - Their Rationale:**

In a successful Montessori setting a cohesive understanding is worked out among adults (teachers, assistants and parents) and children regarding responsibility, freedom and respect. Montessori adults are responsible for creating and maintaining a stimulating and useful environment and for putting the child in touch with it. They are the facilitators who provide help as needed and who refrain from interfering, directing, controlling, choosing and giving unneeded assistance. Montessori adults set limits within each classroom. This choice, however, is based upon knowledge. **A child is not free to do only what he/she wants, but must operate within the structure of the curriculum and the classroom community.** If these responsibilities are not accepted, the freedoms of the classroom cannot be retained.

Our rationale for such ideas: respect the children. We feel responsible for having them leave us with confidence in themselves, with an independence of thought and action that permits them to make decisions on their own. They leave us with the understanding that they are responsible not only for their actions, but also for their learning, with an increased curiosity about the world around them, and with a sense of their obligation to help others when needed. We work

toward these goals indirectly by helping them with a sense of order, independence, sharing of attention, self-control, responsible stewardship, learning and perseverance.

**Student rights at ems:**

1. to be afforded respect and understanding
2. to be directed at their own pace through an educational program designed for individualization
3. to be safe
4. to be nurtured as a whole person and helped in all areas of his/her growth
5. to be provided with an environment and staff prepared to offer an excellent education
6. to be encouraged to think, question, explore and achieve fullest potential
7. to be supported in responsible handling of independence
8. to be valued as a special, unique contributing member of the school community
9. to experience their childhood as a time of learning growth and enjoyment

**Student responsibilities at ems:**

1. to treat fellow classmates, teacher and guests at **ems** with respect and kindness
2. to do their very best
3. to try all tasks presented to them, no matter how challenging they may seem
4. to help others, including teaching other children tasks that they have mastered, when asked to do so by teachers
5. to care for others' personal property and school property as if it were their own
6. to respect all living things in their environment and to assume responsibility for the care of plants and animals in their classroom
7. to follow the rules of **ems** and their class
8. to make responsible and informed decisions and to accept the consequences of their behavior, age appropriately

\*\*\*\*\*These rules and consequences will be reviewed with the students at the beginning of the year. We hold the parents to the same high standards as well.

**Discipline:**

**ems** believes discipline is a process rather than a method, something the student is supported in developing rather than

something an adult uses. Our approach is to help the child learn that he/she is responsible for what he/she does and that his/her actions have consequences. The basic class rules are explained, and the children are involved as much as possible in the formation of new rules. These rules are based on respect for each other and the classroom (being kind – e.g. not hurting or disturbing others). Whether a problem involves only two people or the whole class, the staff tries to help the children learn how to solve these problems on their own.

We have a very special place in our classroom, it is “the peaceful table”. Here, a table for one (or two if two children need to try to settle a disagreement) is set up looking out at the play-yard, there is also a mirror and our peaceful bunny “Violet” (Violet’s ears are full of lavender). Any child or adult in the classroom can choose to spend time at the peaceful table, getting settled, calm, or just to be peaceful. If a child is “invited” to spend some time at the peaceful table, then we open up the box with an egg-timer. After the egg-timer has cycled through once, and the child is feeling peaceful they are free to get up. If there are frequent visits to the peaceful table within the span of one morning a child may be directed to a reminder chair, (any chair in the classroom, but basically isolated from the activities of the class).

Responses should be clear and fair. A child who breaks one of the rules is first reminded of the rule or he/she may be positively re-directed (perhaps the peaceful table). A child that is out of control may pass “go” (the peaceful table) and head to a “reminder chair” (any random chair) until he/she feels under control, able to repeat to an adult his/her “offense”, and is ready to abide by the rules and rejoin the group. Staff offers this time out as an opportunity for the child to reflect upon his/her actions and to collect him/herself and be in control of his/her choices.

Helping children develop inner discipline is a challenging, joint task. As a child develops increasingly greater control over him/herself, he/she has an increasingly greater degree of freedom. How much external control staff imposes varies from individual to individual and changes as the child grows. Through role modeling and group discussions, the children see and understand acceptable behavior. Through positive and purposeful activity, the children often avoid classic behavioral “problems”, but not always!

Staff may use the following methods to encourage appropriate behavior:

- verbal praise
- granting earned independence
- notifying parents of positive behavior
  - we have, several times, asked that a parent either pick their child up early or bring them later in the morning in order to “shorten” the day and to give the child a chance to behave properly and then celebrate the good behavior. We then gradually lengthen the child’s day. and/or
- limit the number of days a child attends until the behavior improves

Staff may use the following methods to discourage inappropriate behavior (not necessarily in this order):

- restricted independence (such as being the teacher’s shadow, teacher selection of a learning activity)
- constructive experiences (such as dictating a “report about the behavior to an adult for the parents, removing crayon marks from the wall)
- withholding of privileges (such as having crackers rather than Montessori mix, to sit out “recess”)
- reminder chair
- dismissal, as a last resort

**ems** does not under any circumstances permit the use of physical punishment (including yanking, shaking, or spanking) or emotional punishment (including purposeful embarrassment, unmonitored isolation, or shouting ) as a means of modifying children’s behavior, nor we will tolerate any of the above behavior from a child.

**Easton Montessori School  
2 Martin Court, Suite 3  
Easton, Maryland 21601-3833  
410.822.7827**

15 July 2007

To: Montessori Parents, Teachers and Employees  
From: Susan Pugh, Administrator

Re: Availability of Asbestos Management Plan

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private schools. These regulations require schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos, develop asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards in school buildings and implement response actions in a timely manner.

These regulations assign schools many new responsibilities. Our program for fulfilling these responsibilities is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, reinspections, response actions, and post-response activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress.

You can review this plan during normal business hours without cost or restriction.

If you have any questions about reviewing our management plan please contact: Susan Pugh @ 410.822.7827

- *The AHERA Act requires that each parent receive the above form letter. Our reality is: we were "not disallowed", in Federal legalese. There is no asbestos in our building. Asbestos was "outlawed" in everyday building material in 1986, as part of this Act. The Federal government will never say that everything is ok they feel by doing so they then accept a degree of liability. Our building was built in 1989 and it was specified in the contract that no material containing asbestos be used.*

PS. We always serve and have available bottled water for the children; Snow Valley water in particular.

## Classroom Snapshots on the web

Please feel free to share your digital photographs of the classroom, your child or any school event (Please no birthday parties). You can do this by going to [www.ofoto.com](http://www.ofoto.com). Log on as [stpugh@eastonmontessorischool.org](mailto:stpugh@eastonmontessorischool.org) (no spaces, all lower case) and use the password bonjour. You can look through past albums and make your own. This is a great way for you to order copies of favorite photos and no one needs to keep track of negatives etc.

If you have "personal" (birthday parties etc) you can set up your own "page" by following instructions as a new member on the ofoto site and then email people as we've done above with log on and password information.