

Maple Tree Montessori Academy



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GSRP Pre-K CHILDREN'S HOUSE HANDBOOK

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”...Dr. Montessori

Welcome to our growing MTMA Primary Children’s House Community

“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future” ...Dr. Montessori

This Primary Handbook is designed to inform you of our class procedures for the school year. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have other questions.

Peace,

Ms. Sue, Mr. Joel, Ms. Cecilia, Ms. Sandi, Ms. Anca, Ms. Sonia, Ms. Sophia and Ms. Carrie

Our Goals and Objectives

The main objective of our community is to provide a planned, stimulating, productive environment of the highest quality, which is peaceful, nurturing and meets the needs of each individual child.

Our specific goals for the children are:

- To develop a positive, happy attitude toward school and learning, fostering a continued sense of curiosity.
- To build and encourage habits of initiative, concentration, persistence, independence and accountability
- To encourage and support children in their academic endeavors, providing them with opportunities to progress at their own pace and at the same time maintaining the highest academic level for each child.
- To develop a sense of high self-esteem, personal integrity, inner discipline and a sense of order.
- To foster the development of grace, courtesy, empathy and respect for others.

- To nurture compassionate socially acceptable thought and behavior.
- To create cohesive, caring, peaceful classroom communities.
- To provide the child with the opportunity to experience the skills required and successfully master future needs.

The MTMA Handbook as well as the following information should give you and your child what you need to know to make this year successful.

GSRP Enrollment and Access for All Children

Enrollment & Eligibility - Children are accepted based on state guidelines, with priority given to families with the greatest need. To apply, you'll need to show proof of your child's age, your income, where you live, and your child's health records.

We welcome all children and value their unique strengths. No child will be denied a spot or excluded because of differences like toileting needs, speech or language delays, motor skills, learning needs, or behavior.

Need help? Help Me Grow can support you with the online application process. 844-456-5437.

Withdrawal Process - We understand that sometimes families need to make changes. If you decide to leave the program, please let us know as soon as possible. This helps us notify families on the waitlist and support a smooth transition for your child.

The only reason we would permanently withdraw a child from GSRP is due to low attendance.

Your child may also be asked to stay home temporarily if they have a contagious illness that could affect the health and safety of others.

No child will be removed for needing support. According to the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP), children enrolled in GSRP must not be excluded or expelled for needing additional medical or behavioral support.

Grievance Policy - If you have a concern:

1. Start by speaking with your child's teacher.
2. If the issue is not resolved, please contact the program administrator.
3. If you still need support, contact:
 - **LESA Early Childhood:** (517) 540-6840
 - **MiLEAP:** (517) 241-7004

Funding - The State of Michigan funds the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) through the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP). The state provides funding to local intermediate school districts to offer high-quality preschool at no cost to families. These funds are carefully managed each year to make sure resources are used to support children and families. Studies show that preschool programs like GSRP help children do well in school and later in life. Our GSRP program at Maple Tree Montessori has no registration or fees to you.

Calendar, Weather, and Hours

Calendar - You will receive a program calendar before the first day of school. It includes key dates like the first and last day, holidays, breaks, and planned closures. Need another copy? Just ask your teacher or program administrator. It's also available online at <https://www.mapletreemontessori.com/calendar/>

Classroom Hours - Class schedules follow our program's established calendar. We offer a full-day program and typically operate from Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm. If our program schedule does not meet your family's needs, Help Me Grow Care Coordinators are available to help explore other program options that may be a better fit.

Before & After Care (GSRP)

- We offer before- and after-care at our school. You can find more information in Attachment A at the end of this handbook, or you can contact our Program Director. The before and after-care programs are not included in GSRP, but are

available for \$10.00 per hour. We may also provide care during school breaks by sign up for the standard hourly charge.

Weather & Emergency Closures - If school closes due to weather, power outages, or other emergencies, you'll be notified via local TV and radio (93.5 WHMI) or through direct messages. If school closes early during the day, we'll contact families right away for pick-up.

Our GSRP program will close if the Brighton Area Schools school district is closed. Contact the director if you are interested in enrolling in care on days the GSRP program is closed.

Outdoor Play - Children play outside every day as long as the weather allows. Please dress your child for the weather and send boots, coats, or snow gear when needed. Outdoor time is part of our learning and supports your child's health and well-being. If your child is too sick to go outside, it's best to keep them home and let them rest.

Curriculum

GSRP programs use learning plans that are approved by the state and based on research. These plans help children build strong skills and support their growth in every area. If your program is new to GSRP, things may look a little different, but these changes are meant to give children the best start in school and life. Our authentic Montessori approach is one of the approved curriculums and supports the goals of the GSRP program.

Montessori classrooms are calm and beautiful, with mixed-age groups and lots of choice. Kids work at their own pace using hands-on tools that help them grow in life skills, language, math, and more. This approach builds independence and a lifelong love of learning.

Developmental Screening – During enrollment, you were asked to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). It helps us learn more about your child's development and what supports may be helpful. Your classroom teacher will share the results with you soon. If the screening shows that extra support might

help, we'll talk with you and make a plan together.

Ongoing Assessment – Our choice at Maple Tree Montessori Academy is to utilize the **Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP)** Observation is a foundational skill in Montessori curriculum and we use LAP to follow and support each child's growth during the school year. Teachers observe children during daily activities and use this information to plan meaningful learning experiences. Families receive a progress report three times a year to see their child's progress.

Referrals for Child and Family Needs - We screen each child's development, behavior, and family needs early in the year. If concerns arise, we work together with families and schools to provide support and make referrals when needed. A referral is a way to connect families with extra help or services. This can include support for medical or mental health needs, food, clothing, housing, or other services. Parents are involved at every step, and services only begin with written consent.

Important Information for our GSRP Program

1. Classroom Schedule

- Our day begins each morning at 8:30 a.m. The children assist in preparing the classroom environment for the day.
- The children are free to engage in work choices and to continue lessons with a teacher.
- There will be individual and small group presentations throughout the morning.
- At 11:15 a.m. we gather for a line time. This could include songs, music, stories or large group presentations.
- We will dismiss directly from the classroom. Always make contact with an adult when picking up your child.
- Full day students and students staying for day care will be going to lunch, recess and afternoon classes.
- Pick up for students is from 3 - 3:30 p.m. Any remaining students will be sent to day care at 3:35 p.m.
- If someone else is picking up, please make sure that they are on

your child's emergency card and bring ID.

2. Illness

- If your child is sick, a day at school may not be what is best for him or her.
- Health Department and School policy dictates keeping your child home for 24 hours after a fever breaks (without fever reducing medication).
- Often times, a runny nose or bad cough keeps a child feeling poorly. Giving a miserable, germ-laden child the time to rest and recover is probably best for the child and for the others in the classroom.
- In the case of stomach upset, the child needs to remain home for at least 24 hours after the last incidence of diarrhea or vomiting.
- Please call or email if your child will be absent.

3. Nutrition

- Please be sure that your child starts their day with a healthy breakfast.
- Nutrition is an important part of a child's day, please pack lunches and snacks that are well balanced in terms of nutrition and proportion.
- Involve your child in shopping and in packing their lunch and snack.
- We cannot heat food or refrigerate your child's lunch and/or snack. Please use a thermos and an ice pack when needed.
- Because we are promoting ecology, please use a thermos instead of a disposable container...such as a juice box. Please use reusable, re-sealable containers...no paper bags.

4. Birthdays

- Birthdays are a special time at home and school, and we want to show your child the meaning of birthdays. Our tradition is to walk

around the sun...each year of life marking one trip around the sun.

- Half-birthdays are a great solution to summer birthdays! Please let us know when you would like to celebrate a summer birthday.
- We request that you do not give out birthday invitations or bring treats to school.

5. Clothing

- Children should wear comfortable clothing that facilitates independent toileting.
- Clothing can sometimes be a distraction, please keep this in mind when choosing clothing for school.
- Your child could be using paint, ink, food coloring, markers and glue, please choose clothing that can be damaged.
- Your child needs to have a change of clothing, including socks, underwear, shirt and pants or shorts in a Ziploc bag. Please label all items.
- Your child needs slippers or indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. This keeps our floor sanitary. Please label them; they will be kept at school. Please, no cartoon characters!

6. Toileting

- Children should be toilet trained before entering school.
- If your child is still learning, please send them in underwear...no diapers or pull-ups are allowed. Thickly padded underwear works best, allowing the child to feel the moisture. In contrast, pull-ups do not allow a child to feel moisture and can often delay toilet training.
- Please send in lots of underwear if your child is still learning.
- We will work closely with you to ensure a successful experience for your child.

7. Toys

- Toys are a distraction in our classroom. They should be left at home or in the car. Thank you!

8. Conferences and Communications

- Parent conferences and home visits are scheduled during the year, but you are welcome to meet with us at any time that you have questions or concerns.
- We schedule special conferences before or after class times, never during the school day.
- If you need to discuss something or would like to schedule a conference, please send a note or email with your name and phone number. The teacher will get back with you ASAP.
- We cannot stress how important it is for the teachers to give their full attention to the children, especially during transition times. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

9. Ground Rules and Orientation

- The ground rules provide the framework for the children to exercise self-discipline and self-control.
- We will spend time during Orientation Week and during the first month of school learning and practicing the ground rules as we come to define our classroom community.
- The ground rules are based on courtesy, respect and kindness. They are the philosophical structure from which all children and adults can work, learn and grow.

10. Positive Guidance, Support and Discipline

- Montessori philosophy stresses self-discipline of the child. In an atmosphere of freedom within limits, the focus is placed on a sense of responsibility, respect for persons and materials, consideration of others and cooperation. Montessori discipline emphasizes non-punitive, positive methods, which avoid personal humiliation.

Discipline is in the form of reminders, redirection, and logical consequences and will be appropriate to the child's developmental stage and level of understanding. Whenever possible, behavioral changes will be affected through continued positive reinforcement and logical consequences.

- Disruptive Behavior
 - Staff members may remove the student from the classroom activity for disruptive behavior. They will be encouraged to think and talk about their actions and choices. They will be invited and encouraged to return to the activity when they are ready to participate.
 - Students may be sent to the office if they are unable to use self-discipline and serious repeated infractions such as biting, hitting, kicking, foul language, etc., may warrant that the parent will be called to take the child home.
 - We may require additional professional evaluation to help identify difficulties or impairments. If an evaluation indicates that outside professional help is appropriate, we expect parents to follow through by obtaining it.
 - We will outline the necessary goals and a time frame for improvement by the child.

To keep our classroom safe and supportive, we will never use physical punishment or hurtful words. **Our staff is prohibited from:**

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting a form of corporal punishment.
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliation, shaming, or threatening a child
- Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.

Non-severe discipline or restraint may be used only when reasonably necessary, based on a child's development to prevent a child from

harming himself or herself or to prevent a child from harming another person or property, excluding those forms of prohibited punishment set forth above.

If you witness any action against a child by any staff member that is not consistent with our school's discipline policy, you should report it to the administration immediately.

We are committed to helping your child grow through kindness, respect, and developmentally appropriate support.

11. Observations

- We encourage all parents to come and observe their child's classroom.
- During the first month of school, we need time to lay the foundations for our community and get things started, so this isn't the best time to observe.
- Observations may be scheduled any time after September. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule a time.
- We would like to limit observation to two adults at a time to minimize the disruption to the children's cycle of activity.
- When observing, please try to blend into the background, watch rather than interact whenever possible.

Working Together to Improve

Program Evaluation and Family Consent - Our program is always looking for ways to grow and better support children and families. One way we do this is through program evaluation. This helps us understand what's working well and where we can keep improving.

As part of this process, we may be asked to participate in local, state, or national studies on the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). These studies are designed to make sure programs like ours are providing children the best start possible.

If our program is selected, we may:

- Welcome visitors to observe classroom learning.
- Provide a quiet space where children can take part in short activities or assessments.
- Give teachers and staff time to share their feedback through surveys.
- Share important program details, like reporting information already entered in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS).
- Take part in meetings, calls, or webinars that support program growth.
- Send home family letters with helpful information about the project.

These efforts help us learn more about how children grow and succeed, and they guide improvements so that all families benefit.

Confidentiality - We keep all information about your child and family private. We only share it if you give permission or if the law requires it (like in cases of suspected abuse). The Livingston Educational Service Agency (LESA) or MiLEAP may sometimes review records to ensure we follow the rules.

Opportunities for Families

Children learn best when families and teachers work as a team. Your voice matters, and you're always welcome in our classroom! Here are some ways families can be involved:

- **Classroom volunteering:** Ask your child's teacher how you can help. There are many ways to be part of your child's learning!
- **Home visits & conferences:** We meet with families 4 times a year to share progress, set goals together, and build strong partnerships. Visits are scheduled at set times during the year and give us time to talk about your child's growth and learning at home and school.
- **Family orientation:** A chance to meet the team, connect with other families, and get helpful information at the start of the year.
- **Family activities:** We may host family-friendly, fun events throughout the year to learn, play, and grow together.
- **Participation opportunities:** Families are invited to share their voices by joining the Family Participation Group, which meets twice a year at the

program level, or the School Readiness Advisory Committee at the ISD level. New members receive an orientation, and meeting notes are shared to keep everyone informed. Some meetings include meals and child care to help make participation easier.

- Data Analysis Meetings: Three times a year, families can meet with teachers and leaders to review program data and plan improvements together.

We're here for you. Whether you need support finding resources, understanding your child's development, or just want to talk. We will listen, partner with you, and support your family every step of the way.

We thank you again, for all your support and consideration. Our school community and the success of your child depend on a cohesive, comprehensive and compassionate engagement of child, family and staff. We look to Dr. Maria Montessori for inspiration and guidance remembering always, the importance of our collaboration and that each and every child is...

"a hope and a promise for mankind" Dr. Maria Montessori

These materials are funded through a grant provided by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential.

Attachment A

Maple Tree Montessori Academy

Daycare Hours and Fees

7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. \$10.00 per hour

Daycare Regulations

1. Parents should sign up for Daycare at the time of enrollment. Please indicate the times needed. Daycare is subject to limited availability
2. Daycare ends at 5:30 pm. Children who are not picked up at 5:30 will be charged a late pick-up fee.
3. Daycare fees will be billed at the end of the month. Payment is due by the 10th of the following month. Late payments will be billed a \$25.00 late fee.
4. Children who arrive before the start of their class or are not picked up within 5 minutes after class ends will go to Daycare and will be charged appropriate fees.
5. Children attending Daycare must bring a bag lunch to school. We will not be able to refrigerate or heat up food for children so please use an ice pack or thermos to keep food cool or warm.