



Children's House Parent Orientation Fall 2023

Phone: 612-825-5914 Email: admin@cmsmpls.org

Arrival and Dismissal

It is important to have a consistent routine for your child. Please plan to arrive **between 8:30 and 8:45am**, when the work cycle begins. You are welcome to walk to the Blue Welcome Desk and say goodbye. Guides will greet your child at the classroom door. There will be hallway staff to help with this transition as needed.

Please notify the school (both admin and your classroom) in advance to excuse any absences or late arrivals: call 612-825-5914 or email admin@cmsmpls.org plus the classroom email (CH1@cmsmpls.org, CH2@, CH3@, or CH4@).

Before-Care Arrivals If you have signed up for Before Care, please:

- Arrive for the drop-off time of **7:30-7:35 am**.

Late Arrivals

If you arrive after 8:45am, please wait at the Blue Welcome Desk. A staff member will escort your child to the classroom.

11:45 & 3:30 Pick-ups. When picking up your child, please arrive at **11:45am-11:55am for half-day** pick-ups and **3:30-3:45 pm for full day** pick-ups. Dismissal will be in the hallway just after the entrance to the education wing. The children will be waiting for you on the benches just across from the courtyard windows!

After Care Pickups (4:30-5:25pm; 4:55pm for the Toddler Community)

Please come between 4:30 and 5:25. You are welcome to meet your child in the courtyard or aftercare room for pick-up. You are also always welcome to come at any time to pick up your child.

Clothing

Children will need an extra set of clothes and a pair of indoor shoes to keep at school. Each child will be provided a cloth bag to store these items. **Please label all clothing** and bring the following:

- 1 underwear (2 pairs for younger children)
- 1 pants/shorts (2 pairs for younger children)
- 1 pair of socks (2 pairs for younger children)
- 1 shirt
- 1 sweater/sweatshirt
- Inside shoes with rubber soles

Outdoor Gear

Now is a great time to start looking into collecting a full set of outdoor gear for your child. While the outdoors is always incorporated as much as possible within the day, now more than ever, with fresh air a high priority, we will be maximizing outside time. Please label with your child's name the following items:

- Sun hat
- Rain boots
- Rain pants
- Rain jacket
- Rain hat (optional)
- Snow boots
- Snow pants
- Warm winter jacket
- Waterproof gloves/mittens
- Winter hat
- Long underwear, top and bottom
- Wool socks

CROCS AND FLIP-FLOPS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE. These shoes slip off easily and children often trip over the toes. Shoes should fit securely. A simple, closed-toe shoe with Velcro is just right for younger children and simple shoes with laces are good for older children who will be starting to learn to tie bows. Secure closed-toed shoes prevent slipping and cuts from sharp objects on the floor.

Clothing should be easy for your child to put on independently (i.e. elastic waistband) and to feel comfortable wearing when working and playing outside. We will go outside every day, weather permitting. Please help your child to choose clothing that is suitable for the weather when getting ready each morning. Layers are a great idea. **Label all clothing that is sent or worn to school.** Otherwise, be forgiving of us as we cannot keep track of all children's belongings.

If your child gets wet during the day, we will send the wet clothes home in a plastic bag. An attached note will tell you what replacement clothes to send back to school the next day. For the rain or snow season, consider leaving an extra pair of rain pants and boots or snow pants at school.

Backpack

We ask that you send your child with a child-sized backpack for her to easily and independently manage her belongings.

Nap

If your child naps, please bring a lightweight blanket and an optional pillow in a large carrying bag. No stuffed animals. Please label all items. Health regulations require that all nap bedding is laundered each week. Nap bedding will be sent home Friday afternoon; please return clean nap gear with your child Monday morning.

NOTE: If your child is under 5 and you believe they should have shorter naps or no nap, please discuss this with your guide. Guides will collaborate with families and create a plan for your child that works for your family as well as the children's house community. DHS requires that we offer all children under 5 years of age 30 minutes of rest per day when staying full days.

Snacks & Lunch

Please note that we are a NUT FREE school. If we find an item with nuts in your child's lunch box, we will remove it, give alternative food if needed, and return it to parents/caregivers at pickup time. If you send soy or sunflower butter, please indicate so with a brief note in your child's lunchbox. Thank you!

Please pack a morning snack for your child, in a separate container from their lunch box if possible. We do provide pre-packaged afternoon snacks for children.

Full-day children eat lunch in the Children's House. Please pack a nutritious lunch that does not require refrigeration. Consider putting warm items into an insulated container or Thermos and add ice packs for items you wish to keep cool. Your child can help to choose a protein, fresh fruit, fresh vegetable and grain to put in their lunch. We ask that you do not include a dessert (**this means no pudding, candy, cakes, cookies, etc**). Yogurt in containers is preferred over drinkable yogurts or Go-Gurts.

We aim for a pleasant sit down meal. Children will open and empty their own food containers onto plates; please use containers that your child can manage. You may want your child to practice opening and closing the containers at home first to see if they are practical! We will also supply utensils and napkins. Please do not send a beverage other than water. We will supply a choice of water or organic hormone-free 1% milk to drink with lunch. At the end of lunch, your child packs uneaten food, aside from an apple core, etc, back into their lunchbox. This way you will know how much they ate.

Please send a water bottle labeled with your child's first and last name to leave at school. We will wash and sanitize these at school each day.

Allergies/Medication/Health

A handful of children in each classroom have allergies. These can range from a penicillin allergy or asthma to a more severe nut or egg allergy requiring an EpiPen. Each classroom takes the necessary precautions for the safety of these children and the larger school community. For dairy or wheat allergies, we may ask the family to send snack alternatives or a non-dairy milk alternative to serve at lunch.

Any medication coming to school needs to be handed off to an admin or guide to be stored out of reach of children. *If medication is to be administered at school, you will need to fill out a Medication Authorization form (see admin for a copy).* Please review our Parent Handbook for further information on illness. If your child cannot take part in the daily life of school, they should stay home. To attend school, your child should be fever and vomit free for 24 hours, and not using a fever-reducing medication, before they return to school. If your child is sent home because they have vomited or have a fever of 100 F or more, they need to stay at home the following day even if they are symptom free (see Parent Handbook). We want the children and teachers at our school to be healthy.

Your young child is a playful explorer taking risks! They will come home with bumps, bruises, and scrapes. We fill out Accident Reports for the more significant injuries.

Visiting the Children's House

We will offer Thursday parent observations beginning November 2023. Parent observations at this time will be limited to 30 minutes and will take place between 9-9:30am. After the observation parents will meet in the Family Engagement Center and debrief about their experience with a Montessori-trained staff member. These observations will be held every Thursday morning from November through March.

Conferences

Parent/caregiver conferences will be held twice a year; fall conferences will be all day Wednesday of MEA weekend in October and spring conferences will be all day in March. Conferences will be in person unless you would prefer a Zoom or phone conference. This is a time to talk about your child's activities in the classroom, as well as what the rest of the year holds. You will also receive a written report of your child's progress. Please note that these conferences are scheduled only for 20 minutes! And it goes by fast! If you have a question or concern that might need more time to address fully, let's please set up an additional meeting for another time.

Groceries

Each week a different family supplies the Children's House with groceries used for food work and snacks. The guide may assign families each week or post a sign up online. You will receive the grocery list the Thursday prior to your designated week. Consider bringing your child to the grocery store with you over the weekend. Please drop off groceries on Monday morning with morning greeters between 8:30 and 8:45 am. We thank you for taking the time to run this errand and providing this financial contribution to the school. If you are on financial tuition assistance, please bring your receipt to an admin to be reimbursed.

Children's Work

Your child has a drawer in the room to store work like paintings, writings, stamp game papers, metal insets, etc. Children can take finished work home on Fridays. Some classrooms send their folders home; if so, please empty its contents and return the folder Monday morning. We strive to create an atmosphere that values the process over the product. We want to praise the time, effort, and attention your child put into their work over the beauty of the final product.

Toys/Jewelry

We ask that toys, personal items, and jewelry stay at home. These items tend to become a distraction in the classroom since it may be hard for the owner to share them. Toys also take away your child's attention from interacting with the beautiful materials that we offer in our Children's

House. If your child needs a transition object when leaving your home environment, a great place to leave this object may be the car seat where it can wait for your child until after school.

Sharing Information with You Via Transparent Classroom

Transparent Classroom is our school database and communication tool. We use Transparent Classroom to keep confidential records of information about your child, including medical and emergency contacts, health summaries, allergies, and so on. We also use Transparent Classroom to communicate the following with you:

- Photos of your child at work and play
- Conference reports in fall and spring
- Injury reports tell how and when your child received an injury, and the care they received
- Incidents/Behavior reports

All of the reports we send you need to be read and electronically signed via email. These reports are an important way for us to share observations or incidents from your child's day and we are also happy to schedule follow-up conversations (via phone or Zoom) to discuss them more.

In addition, you can use Transparent Classroom to look up contact information for parents of children in your classroom.

Teacher Communication

Please do not hesitate to contact the guide with questions or concerns about your child. Trust that we will do the same and reach out with questions or concerns! You may email or set up a time to talk or by phone. Out of respect to the children, please refrain from bringing up concerns in front of them. Below are teacher contact emails:

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Children's House 1 Laura Gerhardt CH1@cmsmpls.org

Children's House 2 Heidi Quiring CH2@cmsmpls.org

Children's House 3 Sarah Walker CH3@cmsmpls.org

Children's House 4 Gaby Orozco-Delmont CH4@cmsmpls.org

Each parent has their own needs for communication with their child's teachers. We will strive to meet those needs. With that said, each Children's House serves 20-23 children. Unlike the Toddler Community, we do not send home daily notes. Guides will be present at pick-ups for quick communication, or you can schedule a phone call or Zoom meeting. Reach out by email, phone, and/or through handwritten notes. We aim to respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday.

We want to know if your child has a sleepless night, a tough morning transition, or anything else that may impact their day. Additionally, please keep us in the loop about big events at home: a move, a relative visiting, a parent traveling out of town, a family member's new schedule, a sick pet. This information helps us better understand your child's behavior and moods.

Independence

The classroom is set up to be a community for the children. In the classroom they can be independently successful. They get and sometimes make their own snack when they are hungry, they use the bathroom on their own, and they choose materials that they are drawn to. We put a















lot of emphasis on independence in our rooms, at transitions, and at lunch. Your support at home is greatly appreciated. Questions about ways to support your child on this path? We are always happy to help!

Clothing “I can do it myself!”

Independence is central in the Montessori approach throughout development. In Children’s House, your child will take a new leap forward in functional independence. Being able to dress oneself is an exciting milestone! Just like learning to walk, talk or feed oneself, it will happen in progressive stages and, in the beginning, takes time (a lot of time!). Your child needs:

- appropriate clothing that s/he can manage
- to be SHOWN HOW to manage it
- TIME to perfect the new skill

The following chart can be useful in choosing appropriate clothing for your child:

Clothing Considerations	Age 2 ½+ (easier)	Age 4 ½+ (trickier)	Age 5 ½+ or NOT SUITABLE for Children’s House (See notes)	
<p>SOCKS: Show your child how to stick one thumb, then the other into sock, put toes in, and slide sock up onto foot.</p>			 <p>(Some younger children do well with tights, especially the thicker knit kind. But if your child still wets frequently, leggings are a better option with those darling dresses!)</p>	
<p>PANTS: Using the toilet at this age requires pants that can be pulled down QUICKLY. ☺</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No belts - Pant legs that are too long may be tripped over 	 <p>Elastic waist band</p>	 <p>Snap and zipper</p>	 <p>Belt/Buckle</p>	 <p>(Overalls can sometimes be managed younger than 6 years old)</p>
<p>SHIRTS: Long sleeves should not cover hands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buttons are difficult for younger children 	 <p>Comfortable and easy</p>	 <p>Buttons and/or snaps</p>	 <p>Onesies are next to impossible for children to manage. It’s best to stop using them once children are walking so they can practice dressing and undressing.</p>	
<p>SHOES: Need to be easy to get on/off</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to be safe: CLOSED TOE and SECURE FIT - Child should be able to RUN in shoes 	 <p>Velcro closures</p>	 <p>Laces</p>	 <p>High tops present an additional challenge</p>	 <p>Crocs, flip flops and other sandals are</p>

				NOT SUITABLE for school
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A NOTE ABOUT DRESSES:

When choosing a dress for school, remember that your child should be able to run/play in sandbox, etc. (get a little messy). In addition, fancy dresses can get in the way of some activities.