



## Toddler Community Parent Orientation Fall 2023

Phone: 612-825-5914 Email: [tc@cmsmpls.org](mailto:tc@cmsmpls.org), [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org)

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### 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. Children will walk down the hallway to their classroom, where Guides will greet your child. There will be hallway staff to help with this transition as needed. We will help children remove outdoor clothing, change into school underwear and indoor shoes, and put away their belongings.

**Please notify the school (admin and classroom) in advance to excuse any absences or late arrivals:** email [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org) and [tc@cmsmpls.org](mailto:tc@cmsmpls.org) or call 612-825-5914.

### Before-Care Arrivals

If you have signed up for Before Care, please:

- Arrive for the drop-off time of **7:30-7:35 am**.
- Walk your child down to Room 104.

**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.

**After Care Pickups (4:45 - 4:55pm).** Please come to the main hallway between 4:45-4:55pm; a TC staff member will bring your child to you during this pick-up window.

### Items to Bring

If possible, it is helpful for you to supply a wet bag for sending home wet or soiled clothes. This makes it possible for us to limit our use of plastic bags. Children who stay all day should bring a blanket, and pillow if desired, for nap, which will take place in our room. This will be sent home on Fridays for washing. You may consider sending your child with a child-sized backpack to help easily and independently manage belongings going back and

forth. See below for notes on extra clothes, inside shoes, and lunch.

## **Clothing**

Children will need extra sets of clothes and a pair of indoor shoes to keep at school. Clothing should be easy for your child to manage independently as much as possible, i.e., elastic waistbands and only simple fastenings, and feel comfortable when working and playing outside. This includes inside shoes, which should have a rubber sole. 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. We will always be available to help children with un/dressing, especially at the beginning of their transition into the community.

**CROCS AND FLIP FLOPS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE TODDLER COMMUNITY. These shoes slip off easily and children often trip over the toes. Shoes should fit securely. A simple, closed toe shoe that slips on or has Velcro straps is just right. Secure closed-toed shoes prevent slipping and cuts from sharp objects on the floor.**

**Please label all clothing sent or worn to school with your child's last name or initials.** Otherwise, be forgiving of us as it is difficult to keep track of all children's belongings! Each child has a basket with his or her name on it for extra clothes to be kept in the toileting area inside the classroom. Please bring: pants/shorts (4); shirts (4); and socks (4 pairs). *Please no onesies, as these are next to impossible for children to be independent in managing.* If an item gets sent home please send a replacement the following day. In addition, if your child normally wears cotton underwear during the day at home, please provide three extra pairs. If your child is wearing cloth or disposable diapers, please provide these as well. We will let you know when your child is almost out to send more.

*If your child is two years old, they will need a mask to wear when entering and exiting the building and in shared spaces (the hallway bathroom). At this time we are not requiring full-time mask wearing for children in the TC.*

## **Snack/Lunch**

We provide a mid-morning snack for children in the Toddler Community. The children often help prepare it and we eat it together as a community.

Full-day children will eat lunch in the Toddler Community. Please pack a nutritious lunch that does not require refrigeration (or you may include an ice pack). Consider putting warm items into an insulated container or Thermos. We are required to follow USDA guidelines for snack and lunch. Each lunch should include: a protein, fruit, vegetable, and grain to put in their lunch. Dinner leftovers are great for lunch the next day! We ask that you do not include a dessert. **Please note that we are a NUT FREE school.** If you send soy or sunflower seed butter, please indicate with a brief note in your child's lunchbox. Thank you!

We aim for a pleasant, sit down meal. Please pack containers that your child can manage (with some assistance is fine, especially at first). Feel free to have them try at home to see if the containers are practical! At the end of lunch, uneaten food is kept in your child's containers to bring home; this way you will know how much was eaten. Please send a water bottle labeled with your child's name on it when they begin school; we will wash and sanitize water bottles daily and they will remain at school.

### **Allergies/Medication/Health**

Several 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 administrator 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. Your child should be fever, diarrhea, and vomit free, and off a fever-reducing medication before returning to school. We want the children and teachers at our school to be and stay as healthy as possible!

Young children are playful explorers taking risks! They are still very much learning to control their bodies and perfect their balance as they engage in large and fine motor activities. This often results in bumps and bruises as they refine these skills. We strive to provide a safe environment and limit accidents as much as possible, but know that these will occasionally occur. Injuries requiring a first aid response and behavior incidents will be documented and shared with you through Transparent Classroom. If you receive one of these forms, please review and sign electronically.

In addition, biting can be a common behavior in children of this developmental age. Biting can happen for a variety of reasons, such as not having the language skills to resolve conflicts verbally or the emotional maturity or impulse control to stop from biting when angry or frustrated. Some children may want to interact with their peers and just not know how yet, while others are seeking oral stimulation or simply need more personal space. We introduce language and model appropriate behavior to help children know how to respond in social situations. To the best of our ability, inappropriate behavior, like biting, is identified and gently halted as the child is redirected to constructive behavior.

## **Visiting the Toddler Community**

Thursday parent observations will begin in November and run through March. Parent observations at this time will take place between 9-9:25am. After the observation parents will meet in the Family Engagement Center and debrief about their experience with a Montessori-trained staff member.

## **Birthdays**

To remain as consistent as possible with our regular daily routine we keep the school celebration just among the children. If you would like to commemorate your child's birthday, you may send in a favorite book (new or used) to be shared with the children.

## **Conferences**

Parent conferences will be held twice a year. Fall conferences will take place in person on Wednesday of MEA weekend; spring conferences will take place in person on March 1. 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 set up an additional meeting for another time. If the times and days offered do not work for your family or you would prefer a phone or video conference, that may be arranged as well.

## **Groceries**

Each week a different family supplies the Children's House with groceries used for food work and snacks. We will post a sign up online and email it to all families. 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 or this is a hardship in any way, please bring your receipt to an admin to be reimbursed, or let the Family Engagement Coordinator know and the school will cover groceries for that week.

## **Communication**

The school's main phone number is 612-825-5914, the main email address is [admin@cmsmpls.org](mailto:admin@cmsmpls.org) and the website is [www.creeksidemontessorimpls.org](http://www.creeksidemontessorimpls.org).

Please do not hesitate to contact the Toddler Guides with questions or concerns about your child. Trust that we will do the same and reach out with questions or concerns! Out of respect to the children, let's refrain from bringing up concerns in front of them. The best way to reach us is via email: [TC@cmsmpls.org](mailto:TC@cmsmpls.org). We aim to respond to emails within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. The guides are also always willing to set up a time to talk with you in person, by phone, or video chat instead.

**We want to know if your child has a sleepless night, a tough morning transition, or a lingering cough!**

**Additionally, please keep us in the loop about big events at home: a move, a relative visiting, a sick pet, or a parent traveling out of town. This information helps us better understand your child's behavior and moods.**

We will send a daily note through Transparent Classroom indicating the eating, sleeping, and toileting highlights from your child's day, along with any reminders, announcements, and items needed at school. Please let us know if you have a different communication preference for this information.

### **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:

- Daily notes about bathrooming and snack
- Photos of your child at work and play
- Conference reports in fall and spring
- Injury reports that tell how and when your child received an injury, and the care they received
- Incident reports that communicate atypical behaviors

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.

### **Children's Work**

We collect work like paintings, paper cutting, gluing, and sewing and send them home every few weeks. We strive to create an atmosphere that values the process over the product. We want to highlight the time, effort, and attention your child put into their work over the beauty of the final product.

### **Other Notes**

The classroom is set up to be a community for the children where they can be independently successful. We put a lot of emphasis on independence in our rooms, at

transitions, and at lunch. Your support at home is greatly appreciated.

Have questions about ways to support your child on this path? We are always happy to help!

Children sometimes like to bring toys from home to school. It is best if these items remain either at home or in the car. However, if children do bring a toy into school we will ask them to keep the item in their coat hook basket. Since every child is welcome to use any material in the classroom, personal items can cause confusion both for the child to whom the item belongs as well as peers. These items tend to become a distraction since it may be hard for the owner to share them.

### **Daily Schedule**

7:30-8:30 Before Care

8:30-8:45am Arrival

8:45-10:30am Work Cycle/Snack

10:30-11:30am Collective/Outdoors

11:45-11:55am Half Day Pick Up

12:00pm Lunch

12:45-3:00pm Nap

3:30-3:45pm Full Day Pick Up

4:45-4:55pm All-Day Montessori Pick Up

### **Staff Hours**

Janette Leslie, Co-Guide 7:30am-2:45pm

Natalie Friesen, Co-Guide 7:30am-4pm

Sarura Yerro, Aide 7:30am-4pm

### **Clothing**

“I can do it myself!”

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

- Appropriate clothing that he or she can manage
- To be SHOWN HOW to manage it
- TIME to perfect the new skill

## **Clothing Considerations and Tips for Success!**

### **SOCKS:**

- Show your child how to stick one thumb, then the other into sock, put toes in, and slide sock up onto foot.

### **PANTS:**

- Using the toilet at this age requires pants that can be pulled down QUICKLY. ☺
- Leggings are a better option for under dresses, as they are easier for young children to manage than tights.



### **More considerations:**

- Overalls are discouraged due to challenging clasps
- No belts
- Pant legs that are too long may be tripped over
- Elastic waist pants work best
- Buttons, snaps, and zippers can be more challenging

### **SHIRTS:**

- Long sleeves should not cover hands
- Buttons and snaps on shirts are difficult
- Neck holes should be wide enough to easily go over the head
- Onesies are very difficult for children to manage. It's best to stop using them once children are walking so they can be comfortable and practice dressing and easy undressing.

### **SHOES:**

- Need to be easy to get on and off
- Need to be safe: CLOSED TOE and SECURE FIT
- Child should be able to RUN in shoes



Velcro



Slip-on

**\*Crocs, flip flops, and other sandals are NOT SUITABLE for school**

### **A NOTE ABOUT DRESSES:**

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