

Policies and Procedures Parent Handbook



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Philosophy

Montessori education is based upon a profound respect for the individual child and the contribution he/she can give to humanity. It involves a process that seeks to guide the child to his/her own natural potential through the child's "absorbent mind" using special materials that reinforce a more permanent learning. The carefully prepared Montessori environment recognizes the spontaneous urge of the child to learn, allowing him to choose his own daily work from a broad curriculum of botany, zoology, geography, art, language, math, and cultural subjects. The child exercises intellectual, physical, and psychic freedom within the controlled Montessori classroom. This environment helps the child to achieve self-discipline and confidence at an early age and is the very foundation for his role as a happy, functioning member of a social community.

Mission Statement

The mission of CHI Montessori Academy is to offer a culturally rich Montessori environment that provides children with the freedom to explore, learn, grow, and develop their natural gifts and talents supported by trained Montessori teachers and nurturing guides.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

The CHI Montessori Academy, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

History

CHI Montessori Academy officially opened its doors as a home school in College Park on September 8, 2009. It started as a dream two years before when several educators began a conversation about an ideal school. The creators of the school, Sharon Suitt and Elizabeth Bland, were both retired Atlanta Public School educators who believed in the importance of an early childhood education and parental involvement. Sharon received her Montessori diploma from North American Montessori Center (NAMC), in November 2007 and her Montessori training for the Primary Class at Kennesaw State University under the direction of Feland Meadows, Ph.D. Dr. Meadows is the Goizueta Endowed Chair of the Early Childhood Department at Kennesaw State University and President of the Pan American Montessori Society. CHI Montessori continued to operate as a home school for 4 years in the residence of Ms. Sharon. As the waiting list for openings outgrew the available space, Ms. Sharon was encouraged to search for a center location to accommodate several families with infants and toddlers requesting Montessori education for their younger children, as well.

Operational Procedures

CHI Montessori Academy provides a Montessori program that is accredited through the Pan American Montessori Society. Chi Montessori will operate the academic year beginning in August through the end of May. The school is open Monday through Friday from 8am until 5:30pm. Children remaining after 5:30 pm will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute payable at pickup. Breakfast will be served for the primary and elementary students at 8:00 am with instructional lessons beginning at 8:30am. Toddler students eat breakfast in the classroom beginning at 8:30. The toddler work cycle begins at 9am.

The 2026-2027 school year will begin on Monday, August 3, 2026 and end on Friday, May 28, 2027. CHI Montessori Academy will be closed for summer vacation. However, a theme-based summer camp program will be provided during June and July. CHI Montessori Academy will observe the following holidays during the 2026-2027 school year:

- Labor Day Monday, September 7
- Columbus Day Monday, October 12
- Thanksgiving Holiday Monday – Friday, November 23-27
- Winter Holidays December 21, 2026 through January 1, 2027
 - School reopens on Monday, January 4, 2027
- M. L. King Jr. Birthday Monday, January 18
- Presidents' Day Monday, February 15
- Parent Conference Day March 29-April 2
- Spring Break April 5 through April 9

In the event of inclement weather, CHI Montessori Academy will follow the Atlanta Public School closings.

Enrollment

CHI Montessori Academy accepts children as young as 6 weeks up through 6th grade grouped into four age-appropriate instructional clusters

- The Infant Program specifically embraces children ages 6 weeks up to 12 –15 months of age or not yet walking. These children sleep in cribs, drink from a bottle or are nursing, or maybe just learning how to drink from a cup. The infants in this program receive loving attention throughout the day from two trained teachers continuously throughout the day. The infant schedule allows the children to sleep, eat, play and learn on their own individual schedule. Teachers in the Infant Room are immediately aware of the needs of each child and attend to the child's needs gently and always in a caring manner. Diapers are checked and/or changed at least every hour or more often if necessary. Infants may be changed in the child's crib or at the changing station where warm running water is within arm's reach.
- The Toddler Program accommodates children that are walking from around 15 months up to 36 months of age but not yet potty trained. These young learners are beginning work in the early Montessori Method materials with the help and assistance of a lead teacher and trained assistants. The Toddler Program supports young children learning to use the toilet on their own but with guidance as needed. There is a range of developmental practices for children gaining their independence as young walkers and talkers. An emphasis at this level

is placed on gross and fine motor development and language development in a supportive and nurturing environment. Toddlers are given every opportunity to use the restroom on a modified schedule to encourage the “natural” rhythm of their bodies as they begin to adjust to a routine. At no time is any child chastised for “accidents”. This is to be expected as part of the learning process.

- The Primary Program is for children 3 years of age and potty-trained up to 6 years, which includes children in the kindergarten group. The Primary program under the direction of a lead teacher trained in the Montessori Method along with an assistant teacher encourages each child to work with materials at their own pace and of their own choosing to accomplish the goals established by both the child and the guide together. The child in this program has reached a stage in which repetition and manipulation of the environment is critical to the development of concentration, coordination, independence, and a sense of order. The child learns skills for everyday living, sorting, grading, classifying – all of which lead to a development of skills in writing and reading, and the formation of the mathematical mind.
- The Elementary Program is a multi-age learning environment for children 6 to 9 years old or the equivalent of first through third grade. The elementary classroom is a warm community with two highly trained and certified teachers with materials that invite exploration and research. Maria Montessori summed up the 6 to 12 classroom thusly: *“The elementary child has reached a new level of development. Before he was interested in things: working with his hands, learning their names. Now he is interested mainly in the how and why...the problem of cause and effect.”* Children learn to face challenges with confidence, and begin to find their own place in the world around them.

The Director, Assistant Director and/or Lead teacher will conduct an interview for each student/family seeking to enroll in CHI Montessori to determine the appropriate placement along with other requirements.

New students are admitted to CHI Montessori on a two-week trial basis, after which parents, teacher and Director will confer. In the event the team determines that the academic and/or social environment at CHI Montessori is not suitable for your child, the Director will assist parents in identifying a learning setting that may be more appropriate for the needs of their child.

Admission Requirements

At CHI Montessori Academy tuition payment is due at the beginning of each month and payable in Brightwheel by the 5th of the current month. Tuition paid after the due date incurs a late penalty of \$50 assessed to the payment account automatically. A two-week delinquency justifies immediate dismissal.

Parents may prepay full tuition for the semester (Aug. to Dec. OR Jan. to May) and receive a 5% discount toward their tuition. Families that prepay the entire year's tuition will receive a 10% discount on tuition. Any family with two or more children attending CHI Montessori may receive a 10% discount on the youngest child's tuition. The tuition costs for the current 2026-2027 school year are as follows:

- Elementary: 6-9 years old \$1025monthly*
- Primary Class: 3 – 6 years (potty trained) \$1025 monthly*
- Toddler Program: 15 mo. – 36 mo.(walking) \$1050 monthly*
- Infant Program: 6wks – 15mo. (not walking) \$1075 monthly

*** Extended day (3-5:30pm) aftercare programs students will incur additional costs. The academic day concludes at 3:00 for all students. The cost for aftercare is \$200.00 monthly.**

In addition to the base tuition, an annual materials fee of \$200.00 is required for each student to be paid at enrollment or the start of school.

Payment of tuition is expected regardless of vacation days, holidays, or sick days. If you find it necessary to withdraw your child, please provide a two-week notice as a courtesy to parents on the waiting list.

Parents are expected to supply and maintain accurate enrollment/admission information for their child. State regulations require evidence of age-appropriate immunizations or a signed affidavit against such immunizations within 30 days of the child's enrollment. A completed medical record for your child will be part of the enrollment package required for admission. It is the parent's responsibility to escort the child into and out of the school each day as well as sign their child in and out on the daily attendance sheet.

Emergency Procedures

CHI Montessori staff is trained in CPR and Basic First Aid and all staff is trained in emergency operations procedures covering all areas of emergency situations according to guidelines of Georgia Emergency Management.

Parents may review these procedures with the director. An incident report will be completed for children that experience a mild scrape or bump. This form gives the time, location, and nature of the injury and will be given to the parent on day of the incident. Parents must sign the report when they arrive to pick up their child. Minor injuries that do not require immediate medical

attention (minor cuts, skinned knees, etc.) will be treated as necessary by the center staff trained in first aid.

Monthly fire/severe weather drills are conducted each month with all the children to prepare them in the event of an emergency that requires implementation of immediate evacuation procedures.

- In the event of fire, gas leak, bomb, and physical plant problems: students will be escorted away from the building to the playground area and will remain in place until each parent has been contacted and all children are picked up. All staff will remain with the students throughout any emergency event. No staff will leave the premises until all children are safe.
- Protection of children inside the building in the event of a severe weather occurrence: All students will gather on the first floor gallery of the school building and huddle away from windows. Infants will remain in the area farthest away from the windows in the infant area of the main floor of the school building until the “all clear” signal is given.

In the event of a serious emergency to any child, the steps to be taken to protect and care for the children will be prominently posted within the school.

CHI Montessori Academy is required to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children Services. Located in the center parent bulletin board area will be posted notices to include the license, copy of rules, review of evaluation report, communicable disease chart, statement of parental access, names of persons in charge, current weekly menu, emergency plans for severe weather and fire, and statement for visitors.

Illness

For the protection of all children, parents will be notified by email and phone call to work, home, and/or listed emergency contact numbers, in the event a child becomes ill, injured, or exposed to a notifiable communicable disease. A sign posted on the parent communication board and school website will also inform parents of exposure to a communicable disease. Children should be kept away from school if they show any of the following symptoms:

- An temperature at or above 101°
- A temperature within the last 24 hours
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- An unexplained rash
- Nasal discharge or discharging eyes or ears
- Severe sore throat

Parents should exercise every precaution and keep their child at home should any of these or other similar symptoms occur. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent or guardian will be required to pick up their child within one (1) hour after being notified. Until parents have picked up the child, they will remain secluded from other children in the office area with the school director. The Academy is required to report any suspected case of notifiable communicable disease to the local county Health Department.

Should your child require immediate emergency medical attention by a medical professional, children will be transported to Children's Hospital by ambulance with the director accompanying them for emergency medical care. The adult will remain with the child until a parent or guardian arrives. An incident report will be filed with Bright from the Start within 24 hours of the event.

Please make plans now for a backup person to pick up your sick child if you should be temporarily unavailable. No child is released from school to an unauthorized person. If someone is to pick up your child, you must notify the school in writing or by phone prior to the child's release. This is for your child's safety and the school's legal liability.

Medications

If your child requires medication to be administered at school, follow these guidelines:

- Medications must be in original packaging. The container must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. Prescription medication must have the prescription number; doctor's name and pharmacy phone number as well as times medication is to be administered.
- Administering medication will be limited to no more than two weeks unless written authorization from the physician is in effect. Staff will monitor and record adverse reactions to the medication given at any time and that information will be shared with parent.
- An *Authorization to Dispense Medicine* form must be filled out completely and signed by the parent, which includes the procedure for delivery and pick up of medication at the school.

Food and Rest

CHI Montessori Academy will meet the nutritional needs of the child by serving a well-balanced breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. Menus will be

posted weekly and will follow the nutritional guidelines provided by *Bright from the Start*. Meal and snack menus of foods served, however are subject to change but will be posted on the school website for review. If there are allergies or medical exceptions to the foods served, parents are asked to notify the teachers as early as possible so alternate provisions can be arranged.

An experienced on-site cook will prepare and serve meals, family style, in the cafeteria. Breakfast, lunch, and snack will be prepared for toddlers, primary and elementary students, eating together with their teachers. Toddlers will be encouraged to self-feed as appropriate, with support and guidance from the teachers and assistants.

Infants feeding will follow the written instructions given by the parents for formula or breast milk feeding. Provisions will be outlined for formula/breast milk bottles, which are identified with child's name and current date, with updates for the handling of leftover formula/breast milk and the introduction of feeding solid foods. The parent will also indicate if the child uses a pacifier that is to be labeled with the child's name.

Georgia law requires a supervised nap or rest period during the day for preschool age children. We encourage children to bring a light blanket labeled with their name for naptime. If your child has a special sleep toy for comforting, it is permissible to bring it along each day. Please clearly label all items.

Infants will be put to sleep on their backs in their own designated crib. Families are expected to provide enough diapers and wipes for the week and two (2-3) complete changes of clothes daily. Clean crib sheets will be provided by the school daily.

Clothing

Students at CHI Montessori are expected to dress comfortably to enable them to move freely and enjoy outdoor play. To encourage independence, choose clothing that is easy for your child to put on and take off without much assistance. This will give children a positive feeling of taking care of their own needs. All children should wear properly fitting, flat, soft-soled shoes or socks only for indoors. Staff and students will wear a separate pair of shoes for outdoors (Please do not send flip-flops or sandals for outside play). All children must have at least one set of weather appropriate clothing clearly labeled with their name at school at all times. If your child has an “accident” and does not have a suitable change of clothes, you will be notified to bring your child a change of clothes.

All articles of clothing must be labeled with the student's name.

Discipline Policies

The Montessori philosophy is such that each person within the environment has certain rights. Ground rules are established by and for the students in each class and are expected to be followed for the social cohesion of the entire group. The goal is self-discipline through purposeful activities. The idea behind the Montessori Method of self-discipline is to *like what you do, not necessarily do whatever you like!* When the rights of an individual are infringed upon, positive steps for correction are made. Children in the Montessori classroom are encouraged and taught to “do the right thing”, willingly and with “grace and courtesy” thereby eliminating any need for external corrective measures.

Parental Involvement

Parent involvement is encouraged and expected at CHI Montessori Academy. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time, announced or unannounced. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep the staff advised of any significant changes in information pertinent to the child and the family, i.e., phone numbers, work location, emergency contacts, family physician and authorized persons to pick up your child.

In choosing CHI Montessori Academy for your child's first educational experience, you have already demonstrated an interest in participating in your child's academic future. There are many opportunities for parent involvement, including quarterly parent meetings, "*Show and Share*" programs, and holiday events. As participants in your child's educational experiences, periodic conferences will be held to inform parents of their child's growth and accomplishments. As individual plans for teaching and learning will be discussed, your input is vital to our work with your child.

We look forward to partnering with the parents of students attending CHI Montessori Academy for many years to come as we embark on a lifelong journey of fun, learning and growth.