



Welcome to Phoenix Montessori Academy! We are very excited that you have chosen our school to be a place of learning for your child. This manual is designed to answer many of the questions you may have at this point. It will reiterate many of the policies addressed in the Family Handbook, and will also provide suggestions and information specific to the Toddler classroom.

The main focus in the toddler environment is to enhance communication and social skills among our children. We will also be working to promote independence, self-confidence, and self-care skills through the use of “practical life” activities and various other Montessori Materials.

Our environment is set up to allow children to be self-sufficient and to gain self-confidence by completing tasks with little assistance from the teachers. Montessori children learn best through repetition, having a set routine, and consistency. Our role as adults, both parents and teachers, will be to provide an environment that is safe and conducive to this style of learning.

We hope that you will enjoy your experience in the toddler program at Phoenix Montessori Academy.

The Toddler Staff  
Tammie Wilson  
Roxanne Cooper

## ***General Information***

### **Observation**

Observing through the window unannounced and unnoticed is a great way to learn about your child and about his or her relationships with peers and adults. In addition, all parents are asked to schedule at least one in-class observation during the school year. Without exception, parents report that this has been a most valuable use of their time.

***Make time to observe our community at work!***

### **Family of the Week**

Our classroom had developed “Family of the Week” as a way for parents to contribute to their child’s class. Dates will be assigned to each family throughout the year. Things to bring:

- A large refill pack of wipes
- A box of tissues
- A bouquet of flowers
- Snack & juice for the week (a list will be sent home)
- A roll of paper towels
- Laundry (when needed)

***We would like for each family to bring in a refill pack of wipes even if your child is potty-trained. We use wipes for many things other than diaper changing.***

### **Group Time**

Unique stones, shells, bird nests, and other natural items as well as children’s books are great for sharing during group time. ***Toys are not permitted and will be sent home or stored in the teacher’s closet.***

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthday celebrations in our class are slated for 10:00 a.m. We ask that you bring a poster with one photo for each year of your child’s life to create a time line. Please see us for recommended and appropriate treats. You may take pictures or videotape the celebration.

### **Sick Policy**

Whenever your child is ill and won't be coming to school, please call the office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. to let us know that he/she will be absent. For the sake of the other children, please inform us immediately if your child has been diagnosed with an infectious illness. Some examples of infectious illnesses include: coxsackievirus (hand, foot, & mouth disease), impetigo, pink eye, ringworm, roseola, strep throat, chicken pox, croup, whooping cough, and head lice. Please note this is only a partial list.

Children with any illness, including infectious diseases, must stay out of school until 24 hours after the last symptom. This includes being fever free without fever reducing medication.

If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be taken to the office and we will contact you to arrange for them to be picked up right away. We understand how difficult this can be for working parents to break free during the day, so please make arrangements with a friend or relative in advance for an out of the ordinary pick-up.

Remember: Because colds, flu, and other childhood illnesses spread from child to child with alarming speed, please do not send your child to school if he/she has a fever, nausea, diarrhea, and any other symptom of illness.

### **Items Needed For the First Day of School:**

- Seasonal Change of Clothes  
(E.g. shorts, t-shirt, socks, and shoes if possible) (Potty training: 3 sets of clothes with at least 6 pairs of underpants)
- Diapers or Underpants
- Family Picture in a Wooden Frame
- Plain Slippers (NO CARTOON CHARACTERS)

**\*Please do not bring sippy cups, pacifiers, or toys to school.**

## *Daily Schedule*

### **Arrival**

All children should arrive between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. (All Day children can arrive as early as 7:30). Punctuality is crucial so as to not disrupt the work period. We ask that all parents say good-bye at the door and do not enter the classroom. This will make for a smoother separation as well as protect the concentration of those children who are already working.

*All toys, pacifiers, and sippy cups are not permitted at school. If these items are brought to school, they will be taken away and returned at the end of the day.*

### **Snack**

The children eat snack during the morning work period and after their afternoon nap. We use cups with no lids and the children serve themselves at their desire.

### **Work Period**

Our work period is from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. This is the time in which the children explore the environment.

### **Circle Time**

This is the time when we come together and sit as a group in a circle. During this period, which is usually from 10:15 a.m. until 10:30 a.m., depending on attention spans, we sing songs, count, read books, have sharing, group lessons and various other activities.

### **Outdoor Play**

We go outside everyday and ask that you dress your child appropriately for the weather. On sunny days, please apply sunscreen before coming to school.

### **Lunch**

The school provides milk for all children. All lunches must be in a paper bag with your child's name written on it. Packed lunches must consist of a well balanced diet. Health and Sanitation requires it to be ready to serve. No prep work can be done at school. (**No cutting or heating of food.**)

### **Dismissal**

School ends at 12:00 noon for half-day, 3:00 p.m. for full-day and 5:30 p.m. for all-day. All toddlers are picked up from their classrooms. Parents who arrive after 12:15 p.m., 3:15 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. will be required to pick their child up from the office and pay a late pick-up fee.

## *Toddler Class Schedule*

<b>Arrival</b>	<b>8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Work Period/ Snack</b>	<b>8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.</b>
<b>Clean-up/ Diapering</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.</b>
<b>Circle Time</b>	<b>10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.</b>
<b>Outside Play</b>	<b>10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.</b>
<b>Clean-up/ Diapering</b>	<b>11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>12:00 p.m. – 12:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Nap</b>	<b>12:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Diapering/ Snack</b>	<b>2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.</b>
<b>Circle Time</b>	<b>2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Work Period</b>	<b>3:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Outside</b>	<b>4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.</b>
<b>Clean-up/ Dismissal</b>	<b>5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.</b>

**\*\*Schedule may vary depending on the children.**

*Communication*

It is very important to have an open line of communication between teachers and families. To that end, we have a number of ways to keep in touch. There is a blank book outside the classroom for parents to jot down notes to the teachers. A set of folders is also located on the same table. Each child will have a folder for notes, newsletters, etc. We ask that parents check their child's folder every Friday. The file box located on the classroom door is also a place where you can place correspondence to us. There is a bulletin board outside the classroom that provides news and information, and a dry erase board, which is updated frequently with the most important news. Please make it a habit to check these areas often so as to stay up-to-date on class and school news and events. We also email a monthly newsletter that has information that pertains to things that are happening in the classroom in that particular month.

We will have 2 class meetings during the course of the year to discuss specific topics so you can learn more about your toddler and their Montessori experience. On the school calendar, you will find that parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. This is an excellent opportunity to share information about your child and set goals for the future. **Both parents are required to attend!** Additional conferences may be requested at any time during the year.

The class will have designated room parents who help facilitate projects and special events. Lastly, we can be reached by phone or email and all calls and emails will be returned at our earliest convenience. Please feel free to come to us with questions, concerns, and comments whenever you have them. We want the very best for your child, and will work very hard to provide it.

### *About our Environment*

Our classroom is arranged into different subject areas. These areas include: Practical Life, Art, Manipulatives, Language, Sensorial, Blocks, Puzzles, and a Quiet Reading Area. There are also indoor gross motor activities and classroom pets. The children are free to explore the environment on their own and choose their own activities. A child who is having difficulty getting settled might be directed to a specific area or apparatus, or have a work brought to him or her. The different works are rotated on and off of the shelves over the course of the year based on the interest and abilities of the children.

You may hear us refer to the “work cycle” from time to time. This refers to a pattern of activity with the materials. The steps involved are as follows: selecting a work, taking the work to a table or getting a mat, doing the activity, putting all of the pieces back in the basket or tray, returning the work on the shelf and pushing in the chair or rolling up the mat and putting it away. Even the very youngest child is able to learn to put away his or her work because each item has a specific place where it belongs. It is sometimes amazing how quickly the children learn where things go!

Our daily routine varies on occasion, but essentially follows the same order: arrival, work time, snack time, circle, outside play, lunch, and dismissal. One of Dr. Montessori's directives was to "follow the child," and we adhere to this practice. Some days more outside time is in order, other days more inside time is needed. Both environments, indoor and outdoor are equally educational and advantageous to the toddler, and we make the best use of both.

### *Arrival*

Our first goal for the children is for them to come happily into the classroom each morning. We have learned that it is best for separation to happen as quickly as possible. Therefore, it is important that all parents say goodbye in a timely fashion. Most children will cry and we will be prepared for this. It is a difficult time for both parents and children, and the longer it takes to say goodbye, the more difficult it becomes. We would also prefer that you not "sneak out" as we want the children to have trust in the environment. Talk with your child about coming to school and saying goodbye both the night before and on the way to class. A teacher will meet your child at the door, and bring him or her into the environment. We ask that you remain at the door, reassure your child that you will return, and then leave. Please feel free to remain outside the classroom for as long as you like.

If you need to communicate with a teacher in the morning, a teacher can come out to the hallway after helping your child get settled (if possible). In addition, there is a blank book on the shelf outside the door in which to leave written messages as well as a folder with our names on it. Please be sure that your child does not carry sippy cups, toys, etc., to the classroom, as the child will have to separate both from you and the object, doubling the difficulty. Eventually, this initial separation anxiety will lessen and finally stop altogether.

**Please note that the regular school day begins at 8:30 a.m.** Children can be dropped off between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. each day. A timely arrival helps your child get accustomed to the daily routine and also avoids disrupting the work period. We understand that tardiness is sometimes unavoidable due to doctor appointments and the like. Please let us know if your child will be late on a certain day by calling the front office and the message will be delivered to us.

## ***Snacks & Lunch***

As you probably already know, eating is very important to a toddler! Snack time and lunch are highlights of the day. These are important learning opportunities as well as “refueling” times. The children learn how to drink from a cup, use a spoon and fork, serve themselves, clean up their places, and practice table manners. Just as important, however, is learning to eat a variety of healthy foods to build bodies and minds.

### **Snacks**

We have snack twice a day during the regular school hours. Our aim is to offer “individual snack” during the morning work period. That is, snack will be set out for each child to serve him or herself when he or she is ready. That is something we work towards with each class of children, taking steps along the way, as the children are ready for it. The parents provide snack for the classroom, rotating on a weekly basis.

### **Lunch**

Lunchtime in the classroom is similar to a family meal. We all sit together, teachers and children, and enjoy each other’s company. The children are encouraged to try all of the different foods on their plates, and are apt to do so because other children are eating similar foods. We will provide you with a list of tasty, fun, and healthy ideas. Milk is provided for all students.

## ***Diapering & Toileting***

Even with the youngest of children, we begin to work towards the ultimate goal of toilet independence. A key factor in this is stand-up diapering. We feel that it is more dignified for the child, and it involves them more in the process. When a child has a bowel movement, we use the changing table. Children are encouraged to pull down and pull up their own pants, remove the diaper and even to wipe themselves, skills that will be helpful when toilet-learning time comes. The children are even invited to sit on the toilet at diapering times to help them become familiar and comfortable with it. We will be closely observing each child for signs of toilet readiness in order to make the move at the best possible time. These signs include: staying dry for long periods of time, awareness of elimination, interest in sitting on the toilet, interest in the toilet habits of peers and family members, ability to pull pants up and down, some verbal skills, and request for a clean diaper when one is soiled. We will be in communication with you as we notice signs of readiness, and together, parents, teachers, and child, we will begin the journey.

When the time comes, it is important that the toilet learning process is consistent both in the school and at home. Once the change is made from diapers to underpants, it is very disruptive to switch back and forth. Going back and forth, as well as using disposable training pants (pull-ups), will confuse the child and delay the process. **It should be noted that PMA's policy states that pull-ups are not allowed at school.** When your child is ready to start, we will meet to discuss logistics and clothing options. It is our intent to make this time as easy as possible for everyone, while still respecting the needs and dignity of your child. This is an exciting step on the road to independence!

### *Clothing Suggestions*

Although the other levels at Phoenix Montessori Academy have a uniform policy, due to the small size of toddlers, uniforms are unavailable for them. There is no official dress code for the toddler level; however, we have compiled a list of recommended and discouraged clothing. The primary focus of the Toddler program is developing and encouraging independence in the young child and these guidelines work toward that goal. We are happy to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have about this subject.

#### **Recommended Clothing:**

- Pullover shirts
- Elastic waist pants, shorts, skirts\*
- Dresses
- Velcro-strap or slide-on shoes

#### **Discouraged Clothing:**

- Overalls
- Onesies
- One piece rompers
- High top shoes or boots
- Watches, necklaces, etc. (these items are easily lost or broken)

It is important to mention that we go outside every day, warm or cold; therefore, seasonally appropriate clothing is a must. It can be quite warm in the classroom, so dressing in layers can be beneficial. Please check your child's bin as the seasons change to ensure that he or she has the proper change of clothes.

**\*Especially important for children learning to use the toilet.**

## ***Biting in the Child Care Setting***

Biting causes more upset feelings than any other behavior in childcare programs. Because it seems so primitive we tend to react differently to biting than we do to hitting, grabbing or other aggressive acts. It is upsetting and potentially dangerous; it is important for caregivers and parents to address this behavior when it occurs. Though it is normal for infants and toddlers to mouth people and toys, and for many two-year olds to try biting, most do not continue after the age of three.

### **Why do children bite and what can we do?**

Children bite for many different reasons, and careful observations will guide your appropriate and effective intervention. Taking the time to understand why this individual child bites is invaluable in changing the behavior while maintaining a positive care giving relationship.

***Watch*** to see when and where biting happens, who is involved, what the child experiences, what happens before and after.

***Ask*** yourself why the child bites others. Is there a pattern to the situations, places, times or other children when biting occurs? What individual or temperamental needs might influence the child's behavior? Have there been changes in his/her behavior?

***Adapt*** your environment, schedule or guidance methods to teach gentle and positive ways to handle the child's feelings and needs.

<b>When a child</b>	<b>You can</b>
Experiments by biting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately say “no” in a firm voice. Give him a variety of toys to touch, smell and taste and encourage sensory-motor exploration.</li> </ul>
Has teething discomfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide cold teething toys or chewy foods such as frozen bagels, teething rings or bananas.</li> </ul>
Is becoming independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to make age-appropriate choices and have control (the pretzel or the cracker, the yellow or the blue ball). Try and give positive attention as new self-help skills and independence develop.</li> </ul>
Is using muscles in new ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a variety of play materials (hard/soft, rough/smooth, and heavy/light). Plan for plenty of active play both indoors and outdoors.</li> </ul>
Is learning to play with other children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to guide behavior if it seems rough. (Take the child’s hand and say, “touch Jorge gently. He likes that.”) Prevent conflicts by redirecting one child to another attractive activity. Reinforce pro-social behavior (like taking turns with toys or pacifying crying child.</li> </ul>
Is frustrated in expressing his/her needs or wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Read” the child and say what he is trying to communicate. (“Are you mad when Ari takes your truck?” “You want me to pay attention to you.”)</li> </ul>
Is threatened by new or changing situations such as mother returning to work, a new baby, or parents separating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide some special nurturing and be as warm and reassuring as possible, adding some stability and continuity to the child’s life.</li> <li>• Help the child talk about feeling even when he or she says things like, “I hate my new baby.”</li> </ul>

**When a child bites another child:**

- ***We intervene immediately*** between the child who bit and the bitten child. Stay calm, don't overreact, yell or give a lengthy explanation.
- ***We talk briefly to the child who bit.*** Use your tone of voice and facial expression to show that biting is not acceptable. Look into the child's eyes and speak calmly but firmly. Say, "I do not like it when you bite people." For a child with more limited language, just say "No biting people." We can point out how the biter's behavior affected the other child. "You hurt him and he's crying."
- ***We help the child who was bitten.*** Comfort the child and apply first aid. If the skin is broken, wash the wound with warm water and soap. Apply an ice pack or cool cloth to help prevent swelling. Tell the parents what happened, and recommend that they have the child seen by a physician if the skin is broken or there are any signs of infection (redness or swelling). Encourage the child who was bitten to tell the biter "You hurt me."
- Encourage the child who bit to help the other child by getting the ice pack, etc.
- Observe *Universal Precautions*, if there is bleeding. (See Parent Handbook)
- ***We notify the parents of all children who were involved.***
- 

***Know your rights and responsibilities! (READ FAMILY HANDBOOK!)***

## *Applying Montessori in the Home*

1. *Whenever you can, arrange your home so that the child can manage for himself. Make his table and chair low enough, his toy shelves easily accessible, his clothing equipped with fasteners he can operate, his clothes rods the right height, etc.*
2. *Don't do anything for him that he can do for himself. "Any unnecessary aid is a hindrance to learning," said Maria Montessori.*
3. *Teach your child with real things. Take the time to show him how to handle materials and equipment carefully, and he will be capable of far more than you realize.*
4. *When you want to teach your preschooler a new activity or skill, plan it out first as a programmed teaching exercise. Break it down into small precise steps. Ask yourself, "What points of interest does this activity hold for my child? How can error be controlled by the activity itself? How can I isolate a single learning element I want my youngster to absorb?"*
5. *When teaching a small child, slow down your movements. Use as few words as possible. Let your movement guide your youngster's eye to what he is to learn.*
6. *Give your child enough time to do a task without hurrying. He usually works at a slower more deliberate pace than an adult and needs to repeat activities often after he appears to have mastered them.*
7. *See that your child has as much choice as possible in his activities. He can't live up to his potential unless he had the opportunity for independent work.*
8. *Don't insist that your child try a new activity if he isn't interested. Don't make him stick to a learning task when he doesn't want to.*
9. *Make discipline interesting when ever you can. Say, "See how quietly you can close the door."*
10. *Make creative use of silence. Encourage your youngster to be still for a moment so he can hear more acutely. This not only stimulates his sense of hearing, but also gives him a feeling of self-mastery.*
11. *When that child pleads to 'help me do it myself,' he means to help him develop his capacities to the fullest, whatever those capacities may be to become what he is and was meant to be, a unique, remarkable human being." Tomorrow, Aug. 1965*
12. *Emerson tells us that what each one of us needs most of all is someone to confidently express to us to do what we are capable of doing.*

## **The Home Environment Suggested Reading**

The Child in the Family

By Maria Montessori

Understanding the Human Being

The importance of the first three years of life

By Sylvana Quattrocchi Montanaoro, MD

Baby Safe House Plants and Cut Flowers

By John I. Alber and Delores M. Alber

Teaching Montessori in the Home (The pre-school years)

By Elizabeth G. Hainstock

At Home with Montessori

By Patricia Ortiz, Edited by David Kahn

Montessori and Your Child (A primer for parents)

By Terry Malloy

Montessori on a Limited Budget

By Elvira Farrow and Carol Hill

Montessori: A Modern Approach (chapter 4, page 104)

By Paula Polk Lillard

A Book about Anna

For children and their parents

By Aline D. Wolf

## TODDLER'S CREED

*If I want it, it's mine.*

*If I give it to you  
and change my mind later, it's mine.*

*If I can take it away from you, it's mine.*

*If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.*

*If it's mine, it will never belong  
to anyone else no matter what.*

*If we are building something together,  
all the pieces are mine.*

*If it looks like mine, it's mine.*

*Author Unknown*