



PONDEROSA Montessori School

Transforming Children into Life-long Passionate Learners
Through a Multi-Sensory Self-Directed Experiential Curriculum

Parent Handbook

Ponderosa Montessori School
Infant through Elementary (K-6)
(including After-School and Summer Camp)
Hours: 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

304 Rover Blvd.
White Rock, NM 87547
505-672-9211

Email: school@PonderosaMontessori.com
Web: PonderosaMontessori.com

PONDEROSA MONTESSORI Inc. is not-for-profit and is incorporated under the directorship of a Board of Directors. Ponderosa goals are to offer high-quality Montessori education in a warm, ordered, loving environment for infant to elementary children. The policies and programs set forth in this handbook may be changed as circumstances warrant.

Table of Contents

1	Ponderosa Montessori School	1	5.15	<i>Playground Rules, Lunch Rules, Classroom Manners</i>	7
1.1	<i>Ponderosa History</i>	1	5.15.1	Classroom Rules and Manners	7
1.2	<i>Ponderosa Mission Statement</i>	2	5.15.2	Lunch Rules and Manners	7
1.3	<i>Ponderosa Goals and Objectives</i>	2	5.15.3	Primary Playground Rules	8
1.4	<i>Program and Administration</i>	2	5.15.4	Elementary Playground Rules	8
1.5	<i>Licenses</i>	2	6	Policies and Procedures	8
2	Hours of Operation and Classrooms	3	6.1	<i>Clothing</i>	8
2.1	<i>Daily Schedule</i>	3	6.2	<i>Napping</i>	9
3	Admission Procedure	3	6.3	<i>Confidentiality</i>	9
3.1	<i>School Visit</i>	3	6.4	<i>Health, Sickness, and Medication</i>	9
3.2	<i>Enrollment and Pay Tuition</i>	3	6.5	<i>Child Protection and Emergencies</i>	10
3.3	<i>Disenrollment</i>	3	6.5.1	Abuse/Neglect	10
4	Financial Information	4	6.6	<i>Child Guidance Philosophy and Procedure</i>	10
4.1	<i>Sibling Discount</i>	4	6.6.1	Aggressive Behavior/Biting	11
4.2	<i>Billing Procedures</i>	4	7	Parent Participation	12
4.2.1	Monthly Billing	4	7.1	<i>Parent Education</i>	12
4.2.2	Schedule Changes	4	7.2	<i>Information From Home</i>	12
4.2.3	Extended Care	4	7.3	<i>Potty Training</i>	12
4.2.4	Early Withdrawal	4	8	Prerequisites for Moving from Transition to Early Childhood Classroom	12
4.2.5	No Make-Up Days	4	Appendix A	– A Guide to Parent Observations	13
4.3	<i>Registration/Supply Fee</i>	4	1	Purpose	13
4.4	<i>Early Drop-Off/Late Pick-Up Fee</i>	4	2	Procedure	13
4.5	<i>Schedule Change Fee</i>	4	3	Hints on Observing	13
4.6	<i>Fee Credit – Vacation Credit</i>	4	3.1	<i>Visual Perspective</i>	13
4.7	<i>Late Tuition Payment Fee</i>	4	3.2	<i>Learning</i>	13
4.8	<i>Returned Checks Fee</i>	5	3.3	<i>Child to Child Interactions</i>	13
4.9	<i>Bank/Collection/Court Costs/Attorney Costs</i>	5	3.4	<i>Teacher to Child Interactions</i>	14
5	Academic Procedures	5	3.5	<i>Sociability</i>	14
5.1	<i>Calendar</i>	5	3.6	<i>Autonomy</i>	14
5.2	<i>School Cancellation – Snow Delays</i>	5	Appendix B	– Ponderosa Montessori Curriculum	15
5.3	<i>Classroom Objective</i>	5	<i>Sensitive Periods for Learning</i>	15	
5.4	<i>Attendance</i>	5	<i>Infant & Toddler – 6 weeks to 23 months</i>	15	
5.5	<i>Arrival and Dismissal</i>	5	<i>Transition – 2 to 4 years</i>	16	
5.5.1	Parking Lot Procedures	5	<i>Early Childhood – 3 to 5 years</i>	16	
5.5.2	Infant, Toddler, Transition, & Early Childhood Procedures	6	<i>Elementary – K through 6th Grade</i>	17	
5.5.3	Elementary Procedures	6	<i>After-School and Summer Camp – K through 6th Grade</i>	17	
5.6	<i>Lunch and Snacks</i>	6	<i>Extended Day</i>	17	
5.7	<i>Communication</i>	6	<i>Montessori Curriculum Subject Areas</i>	17	
5.8	<i>Conferences</i>	6	Practical Life	17	
5.9	<i>Classroom Participation or Observation</i>	6	Sensorial	17	
5.10	<i>Pocket Items</i>	7	Mathematics	17	
5.11	<i>Elementary Homework</i>	7	Language	18	
5.12	<i>Elementary Testing</i>	7	History	18	
5.13	<i>Field Trips</i>	7	Science and Social Studies	18	
5.14	<i>Birthdays</i>	7	Health and Fitness	18	
			Arts and Crafts	18	
			Music and Creative Movement	18	

Ponderosa Montessori School

Parent Handbook

“Unless we adults are enlightened as to the way his mind develops, we are likely to become the greatest obstacle to his progress.” – Maria Montessori

1 Ponderosa Montessori School

1.1 Ponderosa History

Ponderosa Montessori School has served North-Central New Mexico since 1967 when it opened as a traditional daycare. Serving the North-Central New Mexico region is important due to the high volume of commuting families employed at the largest employer in Northern New Mexico, Los Alamos National Laboratory.

In 1971, Ponderosa classes converted from a traditional early childhood daycare when the school implemented the Montessori method resulting in dramatic positive changes in the children due to the individualized Montessori teaching style for every child. The school realized the reality, and adopted the Montessori philosophy that each child has their own unique individual needs that were not being met with traditional daycare methods. The elementary classroom was added in 1984 serving kindergarten through sixth grade.

From 1994-2010, Ponderosa was the training center for certifying new Montessori teachers, ensuring that the Montessori method continued throughout New Mexico. In 2010, Ponderosa was converted to non-profit status as a 501(c)3 school serving infants through sixth grade, including after-school care.

The school is dedicated to Dr. Montessori’s philosophy and principles. The Montessori Method of education, developed in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, is a child-centered educational approach based on scientific observations of children from birth to adulthood. Dr. Montessori’s Method has been time tested, with over 100 years of success in diverse cultures throughout the world.

Ponderosa Montessori offers the following programs:

1. Infants (6 wks – 11 mo)
2. Toddlers (12 mo – 23 mo)
3. Transitional Early Childhood (2 – 4 yrs)
4. Early Childhood (3 – 5 yrs)
5. Elementary School (K – 6)
6. After-school (K – 6)
7. Summer Camp (K – 6)

Multiage groupings are a hallmark of the Montessori Method: younger children learn from older children; older children reinforce their learning by teaching concepts they have already mastered. This arrangement also mirrors the real world, where individuals work and socialize with people of all ages and dispositions. It is a view of the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. It is an approach that values the human spirit and the development of the whole child—physical, social, emotional, cognitive.

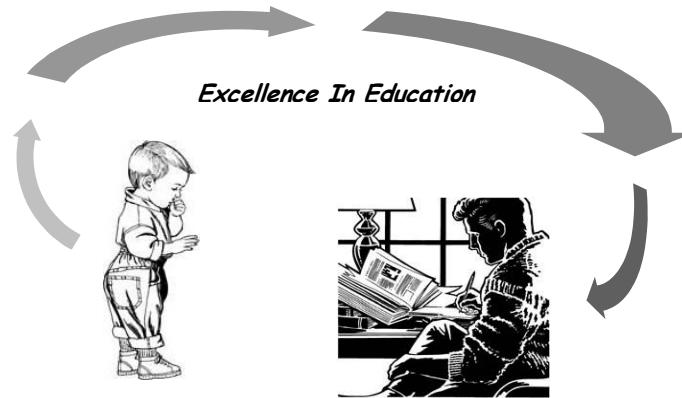
The name "Montessori" was never trademarked. Thus, organizations may use “Montessori” in their title or description and yet never use Montessori-certified teachers nor actually implement the authentic Montessori educational methods. Ponderosa has set a high standard requiring all Lead Teachers to be current Montessori-certified teachers and to implement the Montessori methods in the classroom.

Ponderosa Montessori School is the only Montessori elementary school in White Rock, New Mexico. Ponderosa is the only authentic Montessori school in Los Alamos County that requires certified Montessori teachers in each classroom.

"Free the *child's* potential, and you will *transform* him into the world.", said Maria Montessori.

1.2 **Ponderosa Mission Statement**

Ponderosa Montessori provides EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION through a stimulating Montessori environment that supports children in developing the fundamental habits, attitudes, skills, and ideas essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning.



"It is the child who makes the man, and no man exists who was not made by the child who he once was"
– Maria Montessori

1.3 **Ponderosa Goals and Objectives**

Ponderosa Montessori's goal and objective is to provide a carefully planned stimulating environment to assist children to develop at their natural rate. Some of these specific goals are to:

1. Develop a positive attitude toward learning.
2. Develop a sense of high self-esteem.
3. Develop habits of initiative and persistence.
4. Foster inner discipline and a sense of order.
5. Develop and foster an abiding curiosity.
6. Build habits of concentration for lifelong learning.
7. Develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge.
8. Develop socially acceptable behavior.
9. Develop and maintain that sense of "Wonder" and acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.
10. Help develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations.

"Never let children risk failure until they have a reasonable chance of success." – Maria Montessori

1.4 **Program and Administration**

Ponderosa Montessori School is located at 304 Rover Blvd. and is not-for-profit and incorporated under the directorship of a Board of Directors. The Board works with the onsite school Director to ensure the school vision is implemented. The school Director may be reached at 505-672-9211 or school@PonderosaMontessori.com.

Teachers guide the classroom and help direct the children's activities academically, spiritually, emotionally, and physically in a prepared Montessori environment that challenges each child to reach his/her fullest potential. Please see the current staff list located in each classroom.

*"The instructions of the teacher consist then merely in a hint, a touch – enough to give a start to the child.
The rest develops of itself."* – Maria Montessori

1.5 **Licenses**

- Licensed by Children, Youth, and Families Department of the State of New Mexico
- Licensed by Los Alamos County

2 Hours of Operation and Classrooms

Hours of Operation: **7:30 am to 5:30 pm**
School Core Hours: **8:30 am to 3:30 pm**
Extended-care Hours: **7:30 am to 8:30 am and 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm**

Classrooms and Programs:

1. Infants (6 wks – 11 mo)
2. Toddlers (12 mo – 23 mo)
3. Transitional Early Childhood (2 – 4 yrs) – child shows interest in potty training
4. Early Childhood (3 – 5 yrs) – child is potty trained and able to independently care for their personal needs
5. Elementary School (K – 6)
6. After-school (K – 6)
7. Summer Camp (K – 6)

2.1 Daily Schedule

Each classroom has a similar daily schedule with unique variations based on the age group. Class schedules are posted in the individual classrooms. Diapers are changed at scheduled times and when needed. Children who are toilet training are taken to toilet about every hour and when needed. A typical daily schedule will be as follows:

7:30 AM	– 8:30 AM	Before-School Care
8:30 AM	– 11:00 AM	Classroom Work Time (Infants and Toddlers include nap)
9:00 AM		Bathroom and Change Diapers. Wash Hands.
9:45 AM		Group Ellipse Time
10:15 AM		Snack
10:45 AM		Bathroom, Diapers, Wash Hands. Get Ready to go Outside (Coats, etc.)
11:00 AM	– 12:00 PM	Playground
12:00 PM	– 12:30 PM	Inside, Diapers, Wash. Lunch in Classroom or Outside
12:30 PM	– 1:00 PM	Playground
1:00 PM	– 3:00 PM	Rest and Classroom Work Time
3:00 PM	– 3:30 PM	Wake, Bathroom, Diapers, Wash. Snack. Playground
3:30 PM	– 5:30 PM	After-School Care

3 Admission Procedure

3.1 School Visit

Interested families should schedule an appointment to observe the classroom and playground activities, visit and discuss the Montessori methodology with the teaching staff, and meet with the Director.

3.2 Enrollment and Pay Tuition

Ponderosa has a Fall School semester running from August through May and a Summer semester from June through the first part of August. Each semester requires enrollment. Summer and fall enrollment opens in February every year. The first wave of enrollment is strictly for in-house enrollment, then we contact our waiting list, and finally we end with open enrollment to the public. Mid-year enrollment is accepted based on availability.

Enrollment requires payment of the first month's tuition and registration fees, a copy of your child's current immunization records or the state-approved waiver, and all necessary enrollment paperwork (Enrollment Agreement and New Student packet) completed ***PRIOR to the first day your child attends (State requirement).***

3.3 Disenrollment

New students will have a two-month probationary period to ensure the student's placement is in both the student's and the school's best interest. Ponderosa Montessori School reserves the right to disenroll a child if it is not in the best interest for the child or the other children in the classroom.

Ponderosa Montessori School expects respect between the staff and families. Should a family member display inappropriate or abusive behavior towards any of the staff or Board, Ponderosa reserves the right to disenroll the student. Ponderosa Montessori School tries to work with families experiencing financial difficulties. However, the school cannot sustain itself without paying its bills. Ponderosa Montessori School reserves the right to disenroll a student who is more than 30-days behind in tuition payments.

Ponderosa Montessori requires a minimum of **30-days' written notice from parents to disenroll** their child(ren).

4 Financial Information

Monthly Tuition is charged for the School Core Hours (8:30 am – 3:30 pm) and Hourly Extended Care is charged for all hours outside the core (7:30 – 8:30 am and 3:30 – 5:30 pm). See the current Tuition Schedule for current rates.

4.1 Sibling Discount

Families with multiple children attending Ponderosa will receive a Sibling Discount for each additional child on Tuition only. See the current Tuition Schedule for discount rates.

4.2 Billing Procedures

4.2.1 Monthly Billing

Tuition is charged on a monthly basis. Remember, some months have fewer school days and some more. The same tuition payment is due each month **except August which is 3/4 month of the base tuition.** (Exception: drop-in hours, late fees, and accounting fees are billed the following month.) Holidays, school closures, absent days, or vacation days do not reduce monthly tuition. **No vacation credits are issued for the school year.** Summer may be billed as a single invoice.

A statement showing a breakdown of your total tuition (tuition, extended care and drop-in if applicable) is emailed around the 24th of each month. Please keep the invoice as your tax record. **Payment is expected by the 5th of the month unless other arrangements have been previously made in writing. Record the invoice number and your child's name on the payment.**

4.2.2 Schedule Changes

Billing for schedule changes received after the 20th of the month will be not be reflected until the next billing cycle.

4.2.3 Extended Care

Extended Care hours may be contracted and are **charged in half-hour increments.** Contracted hours are charged daily **regardless of attendance.** Drop-in hours are provided on a space-available basis only, at the designated rate (see Tuition Schedule). Please contact the Director for availability.

4.2.4 Early Withdrawal

A thirty-day advance written withdrawal notice must be given to the Director, or tuition will be charged for the complete month. August tuition is non-refundable after July 1 and April/May tuition is non-refundable after April 15.

4.2.5 No Make-Up Days

New Mexico's Child Care Licensing Bureau determines the staff to child ratio. We carry full enrollment meeting this ratio and cannot accommodate make-up days for time missed.

4.3 Registration/Supply Fee

Non-refundable Registration/Supply fees are \$300 for the Fall School semester and \$100 for the Summer due with each corresponding enrollment application.

4.4 Early Drop-Off/Late Pick-Up Fee

A late pick-up or early drop-off fee of **one-half-hour at the current Drop In rate** (see current Tuition Schedule) is assessed if a child arrives or leaves beyond the contracted enrollment agreement times. When a child is picked up **after 5:30 pm**, an additional \$10 fee will be assessed plus \$1 per minute the child remains at school. For example, the additional fee for a child picked up at 5:40 pm will be \$20; the fee for a child picked up at 5:50 will be \$30.

4.5 Schedule Change Fee

One schedule change per school year and one schedule change per summer will be done for free. Additional schedule changes will be done for a fee of \$25/per change/child.

4.6 Fee Credit – Vacation Credit

No fee credits (e.g., for vacations, absences, etc.) will be given during the regular Fall School year. During the Summer Sessions (June through August), **each full-time child** (e.g., full day, all summer sessions) is entitled up to two one-week Vacation Credits. Vacation credits are for Tuition only and apply only to students who attend ALL summer. Summer vacation credits **must** be arranged with the Director at least **one month in advance** and must be taken in a **5 consecutive day block.** Single days may **not** be accumulated over sessions. Please see the current Summer Tuition Schedule for the current Vacation Credit rate.

4.7 Late Tuition Payment Fee

A late tuition payment fee of \$25 will be assessed to any account where payment is not received by the 5th of the month unless prior written notification, and written agreement, with the Director has been made. Ponderosa reserves the right to disenroll a child for delinquent payments.

4.8 Returned Checks Fee

A \$35 fee is assessed for a returned check. Any bank charges for returned checks will be passed on to the customer.

4.9 Bank/Collection/Court Costs/Attorney Costs

Ponderosa will charge all bank, collection, attorney, and court costs directly to the customer.

5 Academic Procedures

5.1 Calendar

Ponderosa publishes a school calendar each year that notes the dates of special events and school closures. We encourage parents to participate in various activities throughout the year in support of your child. Ponderosa Montessori School is CLOSED during Christmas break, Spring break, and noted Holidays. Classes are also closed two to three days before summer session begins and the two days to one week before the fall school term.

5.2 School Cancellation – Snow Delays

Ponderosa Montessori School follows the cancellation or delay decisions made by the **Los Alamos Public Schools (505-663-2223 LAPS Info-Line)**. Ponderosa will **open 30 minutes before the LAPS** designated opening time (e.g., if LAPS opens at 10:20 am, Ponderosa school will open at 9:50 am). Ponderosa will **close 30 minutes after the LAPS** designated closing time (e.g., if LAPS closes at 2:00 pm, Ponderosa school will close at 2:30 pm). If the LAPS is not in session, then Ponderosa will follow the **Los Alamos National Laboratory (505-667-6622 LANL Info-Line)**

5.3 Classroom Objective

Dr. Montessori recognized that the only valid learning impulse is the child's self-motivation. The teacher prepares the environment, directs the activity, and offers the stimulation; but it is the child who learns. He/She is motivated through work itself (not by the teacher's personality) to persist in a given task. The Montessori child acquires an "inner discipline" from exposure to both the physical and mental order of the Prepared Environment and the freedom of movement and choice, which is at the core of Dr. Montessori's philosophy. Social adjustment, though a necessary condition for learning in a schoolroom, is not the purpose of education. Patterns of concentration, persistence, and thoroughness established in early childhood produce a confident, competent learner in later years. Montessori empowers children to observe, to abstract, to think, and to judge, and allows them to experience the joy of learning. Montessori provides a framework in which intellectual and social discipline go hand-in-hand.

5.4 Attendance

Attendance records are required by law and it is the parents' responsibility to sign their child in and out each day **noting the actual time of arrival and departure**. If your child is going to be absent, kindly contact the school prior to class time as to the cause. Elementary students follow the NM Compulsory School Attendance Law.

If you have verification that your child has a contagious or infectious disease, please call the school immediately so a note may be posted to inform other parents. The State licensing division has strict regulations regarding children attending school while ill. **We reserve the right to send your child home should we make the judgment he/she is either contagious or too ill to function adequately in class and we reserve the right to request a doctor's note stating that your child is well enough to attend school and will not infect other students.** This is for your child's protection as well as that of his/her classmates and the staff.

5.5 Arrival and Dismissal

School staffing is determined by enrollment. To maintain our staff/child ratio, it is imperative that arrival and dismissal times are closely adhered to. Ponderosa Montessori School opens at 7:30 am; children will not be admitted before that time. We ask that children do not arrive earlier than five minutes before the start of their contracted time (e.g., scheduled 8:30 am should arrive no earlier than 8:25 am); and depart on time.

Promptness in a child's life is very important; please ensure that your child arrives on time. Our days begin with a group session for introducing new activities and to set the day's pace. Late arrivals are awkward and uncomfortable for the child and can be very disruptive to the class. Be prompt when picking up your child at the end of his/her day.

Your child will be released only to persons named on the Transportation Authorization form and who can provide proper identification. We are very strict about this point and will not allow any child to be released to a person we do not know or of whom we have not been previously notified.

5.5.1 Parking Lot Procedures

Enter the parking lot by the mailbox (entry furthest from buildings) and exit by the Elementary building. All unattended cars in the parking lot must have the engine turned off and the car in park. Children should at no time be left in unattended cars. Be courteous and drive slowly.

5.5.2 Infant, Toddler, Transition, & Early Childhood Procedures

Infant, Toddler, Transition, and Early Childhood students are delivered and picked up at the classroom door. New Mexico state licensing regulations require that the adult delivering or picking up the student must walk the student into his/her class and sign their initials on the Sign In/Out sheet and **note the actual time of arrival/departure**.

5.5.3 Elementary Procedures

Elementary children may walk or ride their bicycles to school. A written permission slip (available in the office) must be returned to the school before we will dismiss a child to leave alone. Students need to announce their arrival and departure to the attending staff member. Please instruct your child on this procedure.

5.6 Lunch and Snacks

Each child should arrive with a lunch and morning and afternoon snacks packed in a lunchbox. Be sure to LABEL all containers and the lunch box. The child should place the lunchbox in the appropriate class shelf. Elementary children should place their food in the appropriate snack basket labeled Morning or Afternoon and lunch placed in the Hot or Cold baskets.

Please pack healthy and nutritious snacks such as cheese, yogurt, fruit, vegetables, hard boiled eggs, and whole grain crackers. Sugar-based and processed foods are strongly discouraged. **Candy, soda pop, and other highly-sugared food will be returned home.**

All food needs to be ready for the child to eat; pre-cut, mixed, peeled, etc. A refrigerator is made available for storing lunches and snack items if necessary.

Keep portions small, as we encourage children to eat their protein, vegetables, and/or fruit, in that order. Small portions allow them to enjoy other food items in their lunches. Judge portions by what remains in the lunch boxes after school (uneaten portions are put back in the lunch boxes).

Foods considered a **choking hazard, such as hotdogs, grapes, carrots, etc., MUST be cut LENGTHWISE to keep children from choking.**

5.7 Communication

The Director will use email to communicate most school information. A good communication flow with your child's teacher is highly desirable and should be the primary vehicle for questions that may arise. You are encouraged to talk regularly with the teachers regarding your child's education and development. **Your child's notes, handouts, etc. will be placed in your mailbox, so be sure to check it on a daily basis.**

In addition, Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled at least 2 times each year. A monthly newsletter is published informing parents of current school and classroom activities. The School asks you to bring suggestions for improvements to the Director. If you need to register a complaint, or if you have any grievances regarding the staff, the school, or anything else, please bring them to the attention of the Director.

5.8 Conferences

Ponderosa schedules parent/teacher conferences each semester. Conferences provide a critical line of communication between the school and parent. Parents shall sign up for a conference meeting time in their child's classroom. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time by calling the Director to arrange an appointment. Should a teacher feel the need for an information exchange, the school will schedule an agreeable time with the parents. All conferences are confidential conversations between the school and parents.

5.9 Classroom Participation or Observation

Parents and grandparents are welcome in our school anytime and are a vital part of the school as a whole. We encourage parents and families to spend time at the school and participate in scheduled Family activities or share a talent. **We have an open-door policy, please feel free to drop in at any time.** Volunteers are encouraged in areas of classroom support (assisting teachers, special programs, and field trip support), and buildings and grounds work parties. Parents are invited to assist the school in fund raising activities for the purchase of new school equipment and school social and educational events. If you are willing to help in any way, please call the Director to volunteer.

A classroom observation should consist of up to one hour in the classroom. Please contact the Director to schedule visits. An appointment with the teacher for discussing your observation can be arranged. (Refer to Appendix: A Guide to Parent Observations) **Please check in at the office when you arrive.**

"The child has his own laws of development; it is a question of following these, not of imposing ourselves upon him."
– Maria Montessori

5.10 Pocket Items

Occasionally, small "school" equipment pieces (beads, wooden cubes, cylinders, squares, plastic disks, etc.) make it into pockets. We would greatly appreciate the return of school equipment pieces. Sometimes pockets conceal small "home" items; we ask for your help in discouraging pocket storage.

5.11 Elementary Homework

Homework is gradually introduced to the elementary children as a preparation for home study in their future educational careers. It is used primarily to promote independent work habits, to use skills they are establishing, and to memorize material to be used later in class. For children to get the full value from homework, parents must help create the proper conditions and atmosphere for concentration and study. A quiet room where family members are also reading or studying is ideal.

Our emergent readers need support and encouragement. We ask that you schedule 10 to 15 minutes nightly for "partner reading" with your student. Partner reading steps are:

1. Talk about the title of the story, the pictures in the book, the names of characters, and other topics that draw your child's interest.
2. Assist with decoding phonetic words and sight words in the first sentence.
3. Re-read the sentence together. This helps solidify word recognition, comprehension, and expression.
4. Continue to use steps 1 and 2 throughout the remaining sentences in the paragraph.
5. Then, partner read the completed paragraph.
6. Finally, partner read the complete page or story.

5.12 Elementary Testing

Ponderosa Montessori School does not give standardized basic skills tests. We believe the academic progress of students at Ponderosa speaks for itself, and see little benefit to standardized tests, and have found over the years that these tests measure memorized facts rather than what a child knows and their problem solving skills. The academic progress of students at Ponderosa have always been advanced, and to use a tool that measures children to be only average or below creates an artificially negative feeling in the minds of the child, parent, and teacher.

"The instructions of the teacher consist then merely in a hint, a touch – enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself." – Maria Montessori

5.13 Field Trips

During the course of the year field trips that enrich learning experiences are sometimes taken. All field trips will be announced in advance and all children must have a signed permission form on file at the School before participating.

5.14 Birthdays

Ponderosa Montessori School classrooms enjoy celebrating your child's birthday with a very simple party. Feel free to bring a treat to celebrate with the class; however, please check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies.

5.15 Playground Rules, Lunch Rules, Classroom Manners

5.15.1 Classroom Rules and Manners

1. Respect others (do unto others as you would have them do unto you)
2. Respect yourself (do your very best at everything you do)
3. Respect the classroom (use items for their intended purpose)
4. Do not leave without telling the teacher where you are going and with whom
5. No running or yelling inside
6. Children must tell a teacher good-bye before leaving

5.15.2 Lunch Rules and Manners

1. Stay seated (20 minutes)
2. No food sharing
3. No candy or gum
4. All uneaten food goes back in lunchbox
5. Can sit with friends of choice (unless rules or manners are ignored)
6. Eat with mouth closed
7. Don't talk with food in mouth
8. No popping of lunch bags
9. Stay out of others lunch
10. No shouting to someone at different table
11. Food remains on napkin or plate
12. Appropriate conversation for meal time
13. Minimal (Appropriate) burping

5.15.3 Primary Playground Rules

1. Children cannot go through Gates without Adult (Teacher or Parent)
2. Walk on Sidewalk
3. Run in Sand/Gravel. Sandbox toys stay in sandbox. Digging with Sandbox toys in other sand areas is not allowed.
4. Helmets required to ride Bikes. Ride in Clockwise direction. Park Bikes in designated areas when not in use.
5. Climb up Ladder one at a time
6. Slide down Ladder on our bottom. Use Slides for sliding – not running up.
7. No Work, Rocks, Sticks, etc. on Ladder or Slide
8. Children may jump from Low Platforms.
9. Max of 3 Children in Net. No Swinging Net from Outside.
10. Chalk only on Sidewalk
11. Brooms for Sweeping Sidewalk
12. Corral Work stays in Corral
13. Shovels for Scooping Sand. 1 Child/ 1 Shovel
14. Balls for Kicking or Playing Basketball (or Catch with Adults)
15. Truck requires 2 Feet on the Wood Platform
16. Do NOT pull on Tree Limbs
17. Trees are not to be climbed or pulled on. No climbing or sitting on Fence or Trees.
18. No rock, sand, snow, or stick throwing. Sticks are not to be carried or used for playing.
19. Sidewalks will be clear and clean at all times
20. Swings for swinging only. Swing facing the school. No twisting, no bailing out of, no pole climbing.
21. No standing or jumping on the Picnic Tables or Benches.
22. Ball games, chasing games, etc. done only in designated areas.
23. No monster or super hero games, gun shooting or tackling.

5.15.4 Elementary Playground Rules

1. No throwing rocks or other objects (snowballs in designated area only)
2. Students have the right to select playmates (no one excluded from games)
3. No spitting, hitting, or tackling
4. No destroying another student's creative work
5. Karate is not allowed
6. A student may wear or use other's belongings ONLY if both agree and it is both safe and healthy to do so.
7. Use only designated areas of playground
8. Use put-ups – not put downs
9. Personal SPORTS equipment at school used at user's own risk
10. No hiding games
11. Do not leave the playground without asking permission of a teacher

6 Policies and Procedures

6.1 Clothing

At Ponderosa, we ask that children come to school dressed appropriately. We work to promote grace and courtesy at Ponderosa, and certain styles or types of clothes distract from etiquette and manners. We ask that girls wearing dresses or skirts have shorts underneath, and no bare tummies please. Simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to-manage play clothes are encouraged. In the Montessori classroom, it is important to move quietly. Therefore, we ask that the children bring slippers to be kept at school for inside wear. Thongs or flip-flops are discouraged as they are dangerous, particularly outside when the children run and climb.

At least one change of clothing for Infant, Toddler, Transition, and Early Childhood children is requested. Please put clothing in a plastic bag with the child's name on it, **and label everything**. We do keep a few articles of clothing at school in case of emergency; please return them laundered after use.

During the cold snowy winter months, the children will go out for fresh air most days. Make sure that your child is dressed in appropriate winter clothing—labeled snow pants, jackets, hats, mittens or gloves, and snow boots. Please make sure that all buttons/snaps are present and all zippers zip. Children without the proper attire will remain on the sidewalk and are restricted from playground activities.

Ponderosa uses the following child care weather guidelines for outdoor play.

Child Care Weather Watch Guidelines										
Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
Air Temperature	Wind Speed in mph									
	Calm 5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40		
40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27	
30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13	
20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1	
10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15	
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43	

Comfortable for out door play
 Caution
 Danger

6.2 Napping

Child Care Licensing requires all pre-K children that attend school for more than five (5) hours will have a rest period. The Infant and Toddler teachers will work closely with each family to know their individual child’s napping and feeding schedule. The school will follow those individual schedules.

Students in the Transition class will be napping in the afternoon. **Each child will need a labeled crib sheet and a small pillow.** These napping items will be laundered at school every week. No pacifier or bottle please.

Ponderosa provides the Early Childhood student with a mat/sheet for each child to rest on in their classroom. Those children who do not sleep will be allowed to participate in a quiet activity that does not disturb other children. The sheets will be laundered at school every week. No pacifier or bottle please.

6.3 Confidentiality

Information provided by parents to Ponderosa Montessori is considered private and personal. We will not disclose this information without the consent of the parents. We ask that parents do the same with information we provide to them.

6.4 Health, Sickness, and Medication

State Law requires that all children be properly immunized or provide an exemption before entering school. You are required to provide the School with a health record before the first day he/she attends class. Returning student health records must be updated and returned to the School's office. Remember to change incorrect telephone numbers, emergency contacts, as well as immunization boosters.

A medication form must be completed and left at the School before medication can be administered which includes sunscreen. All medication (including non-prescription) **MUST BE** in the original container and labeled.

Children who become sick at school must be separated from the other children until the parent(s) arrive to remove the child from school. **Parents will be notified and given 30 minutes to pick up their child(ren).** After the 30 minutes we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the enrollment paperwork.

Parents will be notified of any fever or behavior which indicates the child is not feeling well. The child will be sent home if the armpit/forehead temperature is 100.4° F or greater, or if the child shows signs of illness. **Children must remain home 24 hours after being sent home or fever free. If your child is not well enough to participate in regular scheduled activities such as outdoor play, walking field trips, or requires more attention from teachers than usually needed, they will need to remain at home. A child or staff diagnosed with a contagious or infectious condition shall not return to the school without a signed statement from a physician.**

The following illnesses require children to be kept home:

1. Chicken Pox (keep home until all blisters crusted over; minimum 7-10 days)
2. Conjunctivitis
3. Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease
4. Hepatitis
5. Impetigo
6. Lice
7. Measles
8. Meningitis
9. Mumps
10. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
11. Rubella
12. Scabies
13. Strep Throat
14. Tuberculosis

Furthermore, please **do not send your child to school on days when any of the following symptoms have been present within the last 24 hours – they MUST be symptom free for 24 hour PRIOR to returning to school:**

1. Fever (temperature is 100.4°F or more)
2. Rash
3. Cough
4. Discharge of green mucous from the nose
5. Diarrhea
6. Vomiting
7. Sore throat
8. Swollen or crusted eyes
9. Acute body aches (i.e. headaches, stomach aches)
10. Sores on the body

The following infectious diseases, confirmed or suspected, require immediate reporting by telephone to the school and to the Office of Epidemiology at (505) 827-0006.

1. Anthrax
2. Avian or Novel Influenza
3. Bordetella species (including Pertussis)
4. Botulism
5. Cholera
6. Diphtheria
7. Hantavirus
8. Haemophilus influenzae invasive infections
9. Measles
10. Meningococcal infections, invasive
11. Pertussis
12. Plague
13. Poliomyelitis, paralytic and non-paralytic
14. Q fever
15. Rabies
16. Rubella (including congenital)
17. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
18. Smallpox
19. Tularemia
20. Typhoid fever
21. Viral hemorrhagic fever
22. Yellow Fever
23. Others:
 - a. Suspected food borne illness in two or more unrelated persons
 - b. Suspected waterborne illness in two or more unrelated persons
 - c. Illnesses suspected to be caused by accidental or intentional release of biologic or chemical agents
 - d. Severe smallpox vaccine reaction
 - e. Other conditions of public health significance

6.5 Child Protection and Emergencies

It is the number one responsibility of Ponderosa Montessori to monitor the well-being and protection of all children at Ponderosa. In the event of an accident or sudden onset of illness, Ponderosa Montessori will not hesitate to seek proper care for a child. Child contacts will be called after first aid is given in the following order; 1) parent, 2) emergency numbers indicated on the enrollment form, 3) the child's doctor. The local 911 emergency number is called in an extreme emergency; for this reason we require you to sign the emergency release statement on the enrollment form before your child enters school. The signed consent statement will accompany the child so that treatment can be given immediately in your absence. All accidents requiring some kind of medical attention are documented and signed by parents, as well as staff on duty, and are placed in your child's file, as per State requirements.

School-wide fire drills and shelter-in-place are held monthly and quarterly, respectively, to give the students the knowledge and confidence during emergencies. All teachers are trained and certified in infant/child CPR and maintain a high level of supervision of all students in their care, be it in the classroom, playground, or during nap time.

In the unlikely event that a child is discovered missing from school, the school will go into immediate lock-down. Designated teachers/assistants/parents will be stationed at each entrance/exit area. A designated person(s) will search the area around the school. The Director will contact the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person. The local police and CYFD will be notified immediately. **Strangers on school property will be approached by staff and questioned.** We will call the police to report strange people and activities.

6.5.1 Abuse/Neglect

The staff at Ponderosa Montessori are committed to protecting children and helping them to grow. Any unusual bruises or inexplicable behavior will be brought to the attention of the child's parents. In addition, it is our legal obligation to report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to both CYFD and the local law enforcement agency.

6.6 Child Guidance Philosophy and Procedure

The liberties provided within the Montessori environment help the child to establish an inner-discipline, where concentration, focus, and independent learning happen without contention or interruption. This inner-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner where children choose work without interference from others. This approach alleviates many confrontational issues that might be present in other environments. The children develop patience and respect for the environment and the materials as they wait for their opportunity to work with each. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's more mature behavior.

Children are respected and misbehaviors are handled with the following, positive responses:

1. Inappropriate actions are checked, not the child. Generalizations are avoided so that the child does not feel trapped by misbehavior stereotypes.
2. Careful physical restraint (bear hug) is permitted when a child appears out of control. Single-handed grips usually evoke a defensive if not destructive response and, as such, are avoided.
3. Opportunities are provided for the child to express and define his or her feelings. Active listening should prevail even when the student seems entirely wrong.
4. The adult sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words and sudden reprimands.
5. The child may be isolated from other children somewhere within the room with an activity to do. We do not refer to this as a “time out” or punishment as it is intended to be a positive opportunity for redirecting the child.
6. The child may be kept at the side of an adult until he/she shows signs of calmness or cooperative efforts.
7. After trying the first two methods of redirecting, the child may be removed from the classroom to a place where adult supervision is available.

Should a staff member of the School feel a child is not capable of functioning within the limits of the School's philosophy; the procedure is as follows:

1. The teacher will present and discuss the problem with the Director.
2. The parents will be called and asked to remove the child for the remainder of the session or day.
3. The parents will be called for a special conference with the teacher and Director.
4. The conference will serve the purpose of exchanging ideas to help the child. If there is a serious question of whether the child can function happily in the School, the School may set a limited “probationary” period of one to four weeks to try to work out the problems.
5. At the end of the probationary period, the parents and the Director will hold a conference to make the decision as to what further action should be taken to best meet the needs of the child.

The **following disciplinary practices are prohibited** at Ponderosa Montessori School:

1. Physical punishment
2. Withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities
3. Abusive or profane language
4. Any form of public or private humiliation including threats of physical punishment that is hazardous to the physical or mental health of the child

6.6.1 Aggressive Behavior/Biting

When young children are together, aggressive behavior sometimes happens, such as biting, hitting, pushing, pinching and other forms of aggression. Young children do not tame their aggressive instincts naturally; they need to be taught. We use the following phased approach to deal with aggressive behavior at Ponderosa Montessori School:

1. The first time a child bites or acts aggressively, we work with both the instigator and the victim. We use words to discuss the children's physical and emotional feelings ending with an acknowledgment of these feelings by the instigator. An accident report is filled out and the parents of both children involved will be notified. This alerts the teacher to observe the child and work closely with him/her. The teacher will validate the child's feelings, pay attention to the positive behaviors, provide additional opportunities for successful interaction, and try to determine what in the child's life might be creating feelings of aggression. As is the standard at Ponderosa, we will continue to model and emphasize non-aggressive methods of dealing with emotions and feelings. The child will not be labeled as it defeats what we are trying to accomplish.
2. If the biting/aggressive behavior continues and the staff feel it is jeopardizing the well being of the other students, the parents will be called and asked to remove the child from the classroom. At this point, a conference will be called between the parents, teacher(s), and Director to discuss the situation with the goal of determining the cause of the aggressive response. A plan of action will be established between the parents and the school, and with a satisfactory agreement, the child will be readmitted on a probationary status. The probationary period will be 1 to 3 weeks depending on the particular situation.
3. If at the end of the probationary period the situation has not improved, the parents have the option to pay the school to have a one-on-one adult with the child. The cost will be \$12 per hour in addition to the monthly tuition. This kind of observation, supervision, and care can often bring the root issue to the surface and bridge the child over the aggressive responses. This arrangement can continue as long as the school and parents are in agreement that it is beneficial to all parties.
4. If all the steps above fail, the parents will be asked to pull the child from the school.

7 Parent Participation

7.1 Parent Education

The School holds an open house before the fall term for parents and children to familiarize themselves with the staff and classrooms. The School offers several Parent Education Meetings to familiarize parents with the Montessori methods and materials. Please check the yearly school calendar and monthly newsletter for specific dates and events.

7.2 Information From Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform the Director or Lead Teacher as soon as possible. In return, the Director or Lead Teacher will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment that may affect your child. All information will be regarded as confidential. Common causes of distress include:

- either parent being away from home for any reason for an extended time
- new person living in the home
- illness or hospitalization within the family
- new sibling
- accident or death in the family
- new caretaker
- new employment
- moving
- death of a pet
- parent separation and divorce

7.3 Potty Training

With all learning, consistency is the key to success. Once your child demonstrates an interest in toilet learning or potty training, the teachers make a great effort to help facilitate this learning process. Because this process requires as much adult dedication as child participation, we feel it is extremely important to share with parents what we will be doing during your child's school day to help toilet learning be fun and exciting as well as a successful experience.

Timing is essential. If toilet learning begins too soon or too late, the process will take longer. In order for toilet learning to be successful, a child must be physically and cognitively ready. Physically, their nervous and excretory systems have developed to a necessary level. Cognitively, they must understand what it means to use the toilet versus wearing diapers (what is it used for, as well as why, and how do we use the toilet). Verbal communication as well as adult modeling at home can facilitate this understanding. Fortunately, the onset of physical and psychological readiness typically begin at the same time.

We ask that parents commit to work jointly with the school to achieve the toilet independence for the sake of the child. Positively encouraging your child at home is essential. If your child is brought to school in diapers/pull ups after toilet training has begun we reserve the right to charge the tuition rate per 2-3 year old classroom.

8 Prerequisites for Moving from Transition to Early Childhood Classroom

Each child is assessed prior to moving to another classroom. All teachers involved, working with the Director, must agree the child is ready and the child should spend some time in the new classroom.

“The tiny child’s mind absorbs all his surroundings ... In his waking hours he should be with us to see what we do and hear what we say ...” – Maria Montessori

Readiness Skill for Moving from Transition Class to Early Childhood Class

1. Developmentally ready. Accepts redirection – emotionally ok.
2. Shows self control
3. Does not run in class
4. Uses a quiet voice
5. Does not disturb others who are working
6. Ability to work independently. Finds work for him/herself – uses work respectfully and puts work away
7. Bathroom independence. Takes him/herself to the bathroom unprompted and unassisted. Accidents happen “sometimes”.
8. Adequate attention span, able to focus on work for a reasonable amount of time.
9. Shows control and respect during circle time
10. Able to participate in self-served snack and lunch
11. Shows beginnings of critical thinking skills and problem solving
12. Listens and follows instructions and direction
13. Accepts redirection
14. Is able to express him/herself

“His/Her impulses are so energetic that our usual reaction is to check them ... But we must consider that exploring his/her environment is the child’s natural way of learning.” – Maria Montessori

Appendix A – A Guide to Parent Observations

Ponderosa Montessori School has an open door policy; you are always welcome to visit your child's classroom. The following observational notes are included to help you understand and enjoy your child and the Montessori Prepared Environment. By following this observational guideline, your child's day will be interrupted as little as possible.

1 Purpose

The parent observation is an opportunity for your child to share with you a dynamic picture of what life is like with Montessori friends, teachers, learning materials, and his/her "home" for the working day. We know from experience that what you will actually see is colored by the excitement that your child has at having you here. To minimize this excitement factor, both for your child and others in the class, we ask that you observe the following procedure. We also offer hints for observing and interpreting what you see.

2 Procedure

When you enter your child's classroom, you will find an adult-sized chair in each room. Choose a place, and in fifteen minutes, switch to another vantage point. This will enable you to get a chance to see the entire class area. Please do not walk around with your child.

When you sit down, children may come up to you – either your child or others. Please try not to engage them in conversation. A polite "hello" and a direct response as to who you are is fine, and then quietly ask the child to return to work. The children will have been told before you come that your work is to watch them working and they will understand your response to them in that context. If your own child cries or clings or is silly or ignores you completely, do not be surprised. Children respond differently when their parents visit the classroom than they do during the normal school day or at home. It is a skill of the classroom teacher to deal with your child's response and it is fine for you and your child to spend the observation time watching the class together if he or she is not able to leave your lap.

The teachers will be unable to converse with you during your observation. If questions occur while you are watching, please write them down. Your child's teacher will be glad to answer these questions at the conclusion of your visit while the children are outside, or you may schedule a conference time.

Your observation time should be approximately one to one and a half hours in length. We recommend you schedule your time between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. When your observation period is over, it is best if your good-bye is brief and positive. It is helpful if you prepare your child for your classroom visit ahead of time and let him/her know that you will leave but will see him/her at the usual dismissal time. Some children will take your leaving in stride and others will cry and want to leave with you. Rest assured that even the most agitated child will calm down very shortly after you leave.

3 Hints on Observing

We have found it helpful to offer a guide for observing and interpreting the dynamics of the Montessori classroom. Many parents, upon first entering the environment when it is abuzz with children, feel overwhelmed by the diverse activities that are going on. The suggestions below are intended to be focus points for your attention.

3.1 Visual Perspective

There is more to the Montessori classroom than the activities of the children. Naturally, the first tendency of parents is to focus and follow their own child's activities. Alternate your observation between a wide-angle view of the entire classroom and then focus in on your child. This way you will have a true picture of your child's day.

3.2 Learning

Notice that children learn in different ways. You will see groups of children working cooperatively with some materials while others will be working individually. Other children may be walking through the classroom not engaged in any direct activity but observing what others are doing. It will help if you alternate your focus on these three learning patterns. Note also the ease and joy with which the children work. You still see the intense self-gratification that the learning process affords your child.

3.3 Child to Child Interactions

Listen to the way (the style and content) in which children talk to each other. Hear the level of respect as well as the normal pushes and pulls of childhood. Very often, observers new to Montessori are surprised that a child will jealously guard his or her work and tell another classmate that they are disturbing this work, and that, as a result of this verbal communication, the other child will leave. Other new observers are bemused by the politeness with which one child will ask another if he or she would "care for a piece of apple" and the other will respond "yes, please, thank you."

3.4 Teacher to Child Interactions

Watch the way teachers interact with children. Notice the way in which a teacher corrects a child and look at the instances in which she does not. Listen to the teacher's tone of voice with the child.

The interaction process of the teacher and child is based on the teacher being a facilitator of the child's autonomous learning process. She guides, not directs. She prepares the environment, gives the child the tools to utilize the materials, and then does whatever else is necessary to help the child to do it without assistance. Sometimes this "whatever else" involves direct encouragement, and at other times indirect appreciation or judicious absence. There is basic respect for each individual child's particular style of learning in the Montessori classroom. See if you can pick this up.

3.5 Sociability

Watch the ways in which the children offer assistance to one another with the materials and with everyday tasks, and the ways that they are directly sociable with one another. The snack table is a good area to keep an eye on to see this dynamic.

The Montessori classroom contains a range of both ages of children and of materials that are appropriate for the different developmental levels. Note how the children choose materials that are appropriate to their developmental level. Notice how the younger children observe the older children's work by being near them and how the older children will assist the younger ones with work that they have already mastered. These seeming "academic" activities have a strong social component to them, one that includes a sense of responsibility and community with all those in the class.

Pockets of purely social activities are always present in the classroom. Children may be clustered around a table discussing the latest cartoon superhero or the "in" vogue doll, or they may be making plans to play at one another's houses, which they have not yet told their parents about! Whenever a birthday nears, a child's upcoming party is certain to be a major item of discussion. Children are children in the Montessori classroom and the child's natural desire to form friends and be part of an ongoing community is ever present.

3.6 Autonomy

Observe the independence of the children as they do things for themselves in their classroom environment. Watch the young children take responsibility for their personal environment and how they carry a glass pitcher of water or a tray with fragile materials. Notice each child's work selections, how they take it from the shelf, focus on the work cycle, and how the work is returned to the shelf so that the next child can use it.

The autonomy of the Montessori classroom ensures that the child will have available all needed materials, in good working order, to complete a task that has been chosen by that child. The structure of Montessori provides the child with as much time as he or she needs to complete this task with success as the primary reward. As you look around the classroom notice the materials, how attractive they are in placement, color, and cleanliness. The child is attracted to learn by this environment.

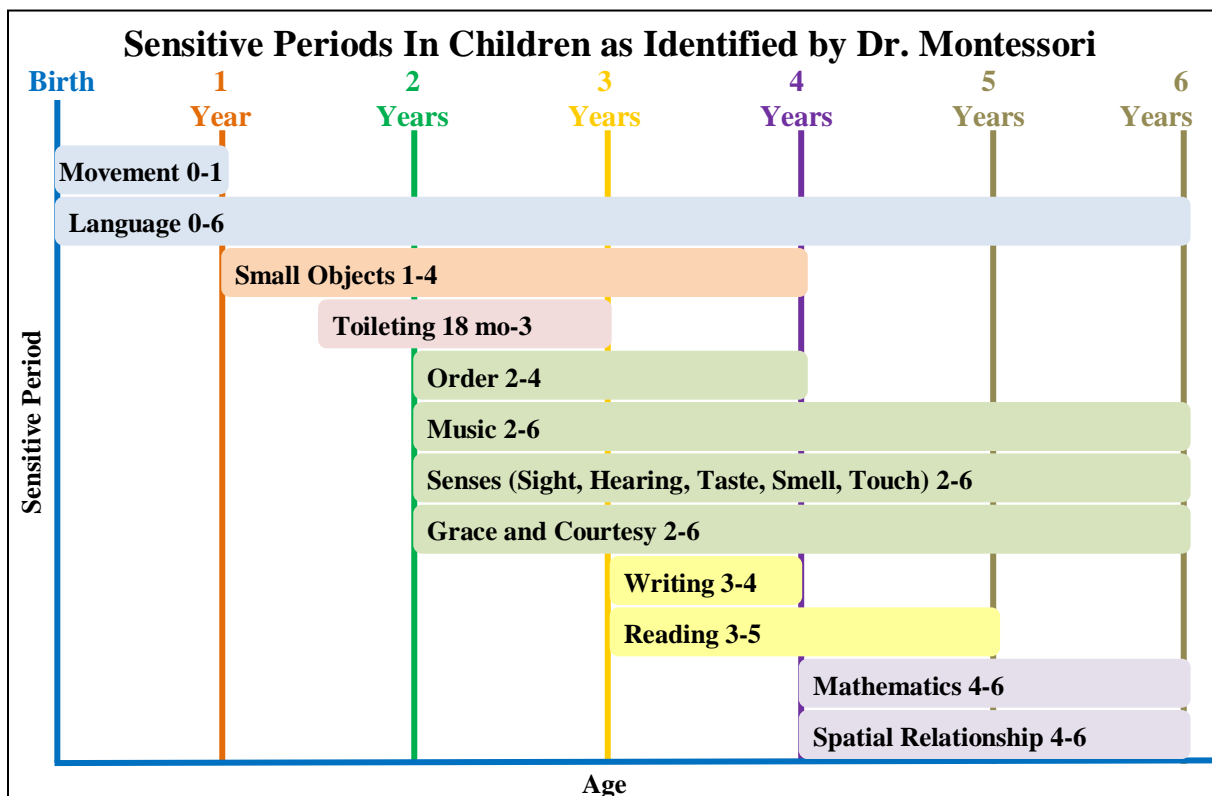
We look forward to your visit to your child's class and are eager to share with you the excitement that we feel in being a part of your child's growing years.

Appendix B – Ponderosa Montessori Curriculum

Sensitive Periods for Learning

Sensitive periods are developmental windows of opportunity during which the child can learn specific concepts more easily and naturally than at any other time in their lives. Dr. Montessori discovered that children in the “Absorbent Mind” period (0 – 6 years) passed through several “Sensitive Periods” where children are drawn to certain aspects of the environment, excluding others. **Sensitive periods are brief periods of time where learning is effortless.**

“It is this sensibility (sensitive period) which enables a child to come into contact with the external world in a particular intense manner. Every effort marks an increase in power.” – Maria Montessori



Infant & Toddler – 6 weeks to 23 months

The aim of our Infant/Toddler program is to nurture basic trust and to assist in the normal development of each child’s personality. This is accomplished by responding to the child’s communication of the need to be loved, accepted, and respected. Once trust is established, the child is able to focus on cognitive and motor development through freedom of movement and sensory exploration. Activities encourage and feed their natural curiosity. This learning, which leads to independence, occurs as infants participate in their daily routines of care.

In humans, the Sensitive Period for language begins at birth. The human voice immediately captures the newborn’s interest and attention. During the first year, children learn to create sounds and eventually put them together to form words. Over the next two years, language develops quickly and by three, children are communicating in grammatically correct sentences. Words fascinate the children and they hunger for more.

As infants grow into toddlers, they move into a larger environment that continues to stimulate their brains and encourage their increasing independence. Cognitive activities are used as opportunities for the child to expand his/her ability to focus on objects, identify and match simple objects, and track moving objects. We provide many opportunities for growth and development (e.g., self-feeding, art, music, reading, science, gross motor, fine motor, dramatic play, water play, and toilet learning). Appropriate activities and experiences prepare each child for a smooth entry into the Transition class.

“This kind of activity which serves no external purpose gives children the practice they need for coordinating their movements...”
– Maria Montessori

Transition – 2 to 4 years

Children enter a “transitional” stage between 24 and 36 months. They enjoy their developing mobility and are ready to get on with their environment. Their “Absorbent Mind” soaks up environmental stimulation unconsciously and holds it ready for future abstraction and classification. Our Transition Classroom is designed around the Sensitive Periods. Transitional children are kinesthetic learners. The Montessori multi-sensory manipulative materials develop and heighten sensory awareness. The children learn by doing and move from the concrete to an abstract understanding of each material’s underlying qualities supported by the associated language.

Communication develops and the young child gradually learns to “do” for him/herself. The transitional environment provides countless opportunities for the children to become “masters of self”. Assistance is offered only when needed, allowing them time to develop and perfect required muscular movements for meeting their needs. Language fills the environment providing endless opportunities to feed the transitional child’s hunger for words. Reality-based pictures and objects classified by environment are available for the children to explore independently and in groups.

The sensitive period for movement is strong. The transition classroom offers many opportunities for gross and small motor development. Children carry their work to specified areas thus developing large muscular awareness. Circle time further explores the body movements through songs and games. The Montessori materials provide small muscular movements that strengthen the hand and develop eye-hand coordination.

An orderly environment is essential for the transitional child. The security of knowing that they will always find what they need in the same place, and that the day’s activities will be consistent removes uncertainty and frees them from worry. Functioning in an orderly environment allows the children to begin creating the internal order necessary for intellectual development. From our safe environment, following their lead, we venture out into the community to observe and name what nature provides for our enjoyment. Our children build confidence with their developing ability to communicate and to independently care for their personal needs.

Early Childhood – 3 to 5 years

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that learning must be self-directed; no human being is ever educated by another.

“And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher’s task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.” – Maria Montessori

A truly educated individual has a highly developed, natural curiosity and love for knowledge that continues long after formal education has ended. Dr. Montessori saw that the goal of education should be **NOT to fill the child with facts** from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to **cultivate the child’s own natural desire to learn**. The Montessori classroom meets this objective by allowing each child to experience the self-directed excitement of learning, and by helping the child perfect his/her natural learning methods to maximize innate abilities in future learning situations. The Montessori materials support these dual long-range goals, with their immediate purpose of concretely providing the child with specific information.

The Montessori Method provides a self-paced journey toward abstraction through manipulation of carefully designed concrete materials that isolate single concepts allowing the child to focus without distraction. The Montessori environment promotes concept mastery through concrete manipulation that support individual learning style in a non-competitive atmosphere.

“Never let children risk failure until they have a reasonable chance of success.” – Maria Montessori

In the Early Childhood classroom, children are immediately drawn to the Practical Life exercises. Colorful trays holding “adult” tasks call out to the children, “Come do me!” They immediately understand the logic of each Practical Life task as they see these tasks performed daily in their homes.

Dr. Montessori firmly believed that the optimum time to introduce encoding (writing) and decoding (reading) was between the ages of 3 – 6 years. Children are deep into the Sensitive Period for language, and are hungry for building vocabulary and understanding the phonetic structure of their native language. The Montessori Language materials provide the manipulative and multi-sensory materials to assist in language development. Pre-reading and pre-writing begin indirectly in Practical Life and Sensorial. Concentration and muscular control develop, and observational skills increase. The early language materials focus on tracking, matching, categorizing, and recognizing similarities and differences. The early writing exercises increase dexterity and recognition of proper formation.

Maria Montessori discovered that children are able to acquire culture at an early age; they are hungry to understand their world and where they fit in it. The Physical Geography manipulative materials bring the global picture down to their grasp. The large wooden puzzle maps and landforms are among the most popular activities in the classroom. At first the children use the maps simply as puzzles, but gradually they learn the names of the continents and countries along with climactic conditions, animals, plants, and human interaction. Common land formations are built and sensually explored, then located on the different maps.

Elementary – K through 6th Grade

The Montessori Elementary Program offers individualized instruction; the children work and receive assistance individually, which promotes an intimate contact between the children, the teachers, and the work. The teacher is directly involved with learning experiences, not a "talk-and-chalk" stance before an entire class. The Elementary Program permits a variety of approaches using dynamic and colorful manipulative materials that materialize abstract concepts. These beautiful materials are used throughout the entire curriculum.

After-School and Summer Camp – K through 6th Grade

Our After-School program provides the perfect combination of recreation and education. Children will end each day excited about the broad range of engaging activities that allow them to develop their interest and skills. Providing our program in a safe and engaging environment is Ponderosa Montessori's highest priority. Children are presented with opportunities for fun, socializing and learning. We also provide the time, the place, and the assistance to ensure your child completes their homework. We make summer even more fun with exciting themes, activities, and field trips.

Extended Day

The Extended Day Program takes place in the classrooms and combines the Montessori curriculum with special projects and informal play. This program maximizes the opportunity for greater socialization and provides opportunities for learning.

Montessori Curriculum Subject Areas

Practical Life

Practical Life begins with exercises such as pouring, washing dishes, buttoning or zipping clothes, etc. The main goals of the Practical Life exercises are the development of independence by learning to care for themselves and the environment, synthetic muscular movement that produces a successful outcome, and self-confidence through exploring and understanding living skills and social graces. Indirectly, they provide preparation for writing by strengthening the pincer grip through squeezing and manipulative exercises; for the development of language skills such as vocabulary, sequencing, matching, and sorting; and for advancing the mathematical mind through problem solving, volume exploration, and comparisons. Children gradually expand their concentration span and develop good work habits as they complete each task and return the materials to their original location. The Practical Life exercises provide the confidence to move out into the larger environment.

Sensorial

Dr. Montessori referred to the Sensorial Materials as a "mental gymnasium." Just as a piano student practices to develop tactile key recognition and dexterity, children must also practice to develop observational skills that will later be used to classify and categorize their world. The Montessori Sensorial materials provide the auto-educational activities needed to develop and refine the six senses (i.e. visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, stereognostic). Children know immediately if they are on the right path as each piece of material contains a "control of error," an indicator that illustrates what adjustments need to be made in the thought process or mechanical manipulation. Through repetition, children begin to distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what they already know. Dr. Montessori believed that this process is the beginning of conscious knowledge. It is brought about by the intelligence working in a concentrated way on the impressions given by the senses.

Mathematics

Montessori children begin formal math studies with the knowledge obtained indirectly from their Practical Life and Sensorial experiences. They understand the concepts of quantity, which is inherent in all the sensorial materials, identities and differences, along with the ability to grade like qualities, and develop the means to compare, classify, and make judgments. The math curriculum moves in a progressive sequence from concrete visualization to abstraction: from rods, to written numerals, to beads, to symbols. The child first manipulates lines when adding and subtracting, then rectangles when multiplying and dividing, and solids in exponential work. Fact memorization comes through "repetition of work" using many parallel exercises where they explore the same concept in multiple materials.

Language

Language is an important part of the entire Montessori curriculum as it provides clarity for the child's mind; that is, to give him or her conscious awareness of language in order that it may be used more effectively. The child develops an understanding that words are a graphic form of language. The Montessori language curriculum is phonetically-based and provides multi-media, multi-sensory materials to develop decoding and encodings skills. Dr. Montessori's concept of isolation of difficulty is used extensively in the language area. Children focus first on learning letter sounds. Next, the ear is trained to hear beginning and ending sounds. After this, children move into decoding three letter short vowel words, and move gradually toward long vowel recognition, irregular patterns, and multi-syllable words, using varied reading and writing exercises that offer variety rather than monotonous repetition. Word attack and spelling skills, word studies, penmanship, grammar, sentence construction, punctuation, and capitalization are addressed as the skill level increases.

History

History weaves a colorful tapestry through the Montessori curriculum. Timelines, long paper strips that can be unrolled and stretched along the classroom floor with line markings to represent consecutive periods of history, provide concrete tools for the study of history. The children begin their History study by making personal time lines, starting with their birth and making comparisons with their classmates. Time is the tool that allows us to move backwards to explore the early formation of the earth and the magnificent plants and animals that inhabited it. The children research man's past: his first written work on cave walls, language development, numerical systems throughout the ages, and how he provided for his basic needs. Looking backwards creates appreciation for our current lifestyles.

Science and Social Studies

Dr. Montessori saw science and social studies as classroom necessities. Initial science experiments are designed to give the child a basic knowledge that will make possible the understanding of the solar system development, the earth and its configurations, life on earth, and the needs of plants and animals. Subject areas for social studies and science are: anthropology, astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, economics, geography, geology, government, history, philosophy, physics, political behavior, sociology, and zoology.

Montessori biology is structured in such a way as to give children a means of classification, so that they can structure and relate the facts of biology. The ultimate goal is an ecological view of life and a feeling of responsibility for the environment. Children will see that each individual life on earth is seemingly selfish (fighting for its own survival) but in reality each serves the good of the whole. Montessori calls this the "Cosmic Plan".

Geography begins with the sandpaper globes then transitions to the hemisphere map, study of continents, the study of the land forms, and study of the creation of the universe. The study of geography is designed to show how the physical configurations of the earth contribute to history. The study of geography and physical geography is the basis for the study of economic geography, which shows the interdependence of all people.

Montessori history follows the development of the solar system, life on earth, the development of humankind, early civilizations, and recorded history. The child sees the long labor of humankind needed to accomplish all that is enjoyed here today.

Montessori offers the children an understanding of the plant and animal kingdoms through observation, experimentation, and language lessons. Children begin with the concept of living and non-living. The children's natural curiosity is stimulated through observations and discoveries that allow them to draw their own conclusions. The plant and animal kingdoms are studied in an orderly fashion and foster a love and appreciation of the scientific method and all living organisms. Children also learn to care for plants and animals living in the classroom.

Health and Fitness

The children learn what their bodies need to promote health. They cook nutritious foods that relate to their classroom studies.

Arts and Crafts

Art activities strive to maintain the great joy the children find in creating something of their own. The children are free to explore and express their imaginations in a variety of mediums. The importance of the process is stressed, not the end product.

Music and Creative Movement

Music, creative movement, and drama are integrated into the academic program of Ponderosa Montessori School. The universal language of music touches the hearts of all and is explored through rhythm, melody, intensity, creative movement, and musical history. Songs, finger plays, stories, drama, poetry, and dance are all part of our program.



PONDEROSA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

304 ROVER BLVD.

WHITE ROCK NM 87547

TEL: (505) 672 9211

Email: School@PonderosaMontessori.com

Website: PonderosaMontessori.com

RECEIPT OF PARENT HANDBOOK

**PARENT AGREEMENT
PONDEROSA MONTESSORI SCHOOL
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____
Parent/Guardian Name(s) *Child's Name*

have received, read and understand the Ponderosa Montessori School Parent Handbook. I understand and agree to the policies and procedures of the school. I have received a tuition schedule and agree to my monthly tuition obligation and the financial policies of the school. I have on file with the school the latest immunization record for my child.

I understand that if I am unable or unwilling to pay my tuition or comply with the policies and procedures of the school, my child will be withdrawn from Ponderosa Montessori School and I will pay all fees due.

Signature of Parent/Guardian One

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian Two

Date