



Infant Classroom Guide

Communication

Parents and teachers need to have constant communication in order to foster the child's growing development in their journey of self-creation. Parent-Teacher communication is an important part of getting to know one another. Sharing at-home and Montessori school expectations helps us to have consistency in our collaborative efforts to guide your child to be successful in both their home and school environments. For the most up-to-date information regarding our health, nutrition, courtyard, and aggression policies, please visit our website at <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

At drop off and arrival

Attachment and separation are part of a process children undergo from birth in order to become individuals separate and independent in the environment. Children from birth work towards self-construction and achieving independent functioning. In order to best assist your child towards being capable and building self esteem, we must provide a loving and supportive base for attachment. It is from this strong base they can reach into the world and detach to explore their environment.

Starting in a new environment can be challenging for parents, children and guides. We must understand that there can be a natural process of adaptation when this initial separation occurs. Arrivals and departures can also add stress to the group. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes early so you can help your child establish a routine for arriving and departing. The more confident you are in leaving the more confident your child will feel in being left.

Once you leave, we ask you do not to return as this causes undue stress on your child, the community and the guide. It is our expectation that you develop a sense of trust with our school prior to enrollment so you can model for your child a healthy experience in attending the infant community. Feel free to call and check on your child as much as you like. However, keep in mind our first priority is the children. When time permits we will check messages and call you back.

When picking up and dropping off it is important to be sensitive to the community by creating the least disturbance in the room as possible. When other children see you, they are reminded of their own parents and may feel sad. Please remove your shoes before entering the classroom and use a quiet voice.

The feeling of the need to communicate is mutual, so we do encourage parents to use a variety of tools to feel connected to your child's classroom. Again, appointments can be made through email or by handing a note to the teacher or by calling the school and leaving a message. Additionally, each classroom sends out monthly newsletters as well as posts pictures, reminders and updates. Lastly, we work hard at keeping the MOA website up-to-date and current. Below are a list of school emails for your use and their respective tasks:

General questions, observations, events, receipts, school calendar, closures, attendance (late pick-ups, change of pick up person)	Email: admin@montessoriofalameda.com School Phone: 503-335-3321
Montessori philosophy, enrollment/tours, special education, parent education, tuition inquiries, graduations, transitions, change of schedule, dis-enrollment, school operations, staff supervision & support	- Tammy Kennedy (Executive Director) Mobile Phone: 503-422-3608 Email: tammy@montessoriofalameda.com
Aftercare questions, attendance (late pick up)	- Krista Wianecki (Co- Director) School Phone: 503-335-3321 Email: krista@montessoriofalameda.com
Attendance (sick, vacation notices), overall classroom details, curriculum, activities, class events, class lists, newsletters, Shutterfly account access	Lead Guide – please email admin@montessoriofalameda.com and we would be happy to provide your teacher’s email address

- Personal contact information of the staff including mobile phone numbers are not allowed to be distributed for privacy purposes. If you need immediate assistance please feel free to call the school line at 503-335-3321. If there is no answer on the office line please call the cell phone of the Executive Director 503-422-3608.

Daily Classroom Schedule

Arrival & Pick-Up:

Please try to arrive between 8-8:30am each morning, to establish a consistent routine, both for your family and for our room. In the Haven, infants spend a lot of time on the floor and we try our best to maintain cleanliness. For this reason, please be sure to take off your shoes before stepping on any part of the carpet. We ask that you arrive promptly at your enrolled pick-up times so that we can provide as minimal a disruption to the environment as possible. While our school does stay open until 5:30pm, our expectation is that staff will leave the school at this time. Therefore, please pick up in a timely manner respecting the staff’s needs to finish cleaning and preparing the environment for the next school day.

The way adults interact can have a profound effect on the mood of our environment. We ask that parents maintain low voices and limit conversations. Please be aware that our goal is a peaceful and calm space for the children.

- **10 Minute parking** – MOA has 13 parking spots around the school designated for 10-minute parking to help with drop off and pick up. Please be aware that in the past, some parents have left their cars in these spots for more than 10 minutes and have received tickets. Additional parking is available on 42nd Street as well as on Going Street. Please never leave siblings unattended in the car.
- If you are not picking-up your child, please make sure you have filled out the “Authorized Pick-up Form” for the responsible adult. If an adult is attempting to pick-up your child and they are not listed on this form, classroom teachers MAY NOT release the child to them. To prevent any

miscommunication here, please visit our website to get a copy of this form
<http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

Pick Up:

Please pick your child up on time. MOA's late pick up policy is that the first time you are late you will receive a reminder of the policy. After that there is a charge of \$5 per minute which will be deducted from your Tuition Express account.

Outside:

We try to go outside every day, rain or shine. Please help your children to come prepared with the right clothes. We have a buggy for walks and we also use the courtyard. During the summer, we enjoy water activities, gardening and the sandbox. Our outside time is typically from 9:30-10:15am.

Circle Time:

We have gatherings throughout the day. We dance, sing songs, play instruments, read books and introduce new material. Occasionally, we do yoga and stretching as well as baby massage for the youngest infants.

Relationship with Food

Montessori philosophy supports the natural development of the child. Our philosophy recommends that babies breast feed, as the mother's milk is most nutritious. When a parent plans to enroll their child in the infant community, in preparation for this change, the parent needs to introduce bottle-feeding at home prior to the child entering our environment. This will insure a better adaptation for your child. Mothers are also welcome to visit and nurse their child. Prior to enrollment parents meet with the Director to establish a routine that will help the infant to adapt to the Montessori environment.

Parents need to make changes in routines at home prior to enrollment in a Montessori environment. Parents meet with a Director and Lead guide to establish a routine that will help the infant to adapt to the Montessori environment. Examples: from nursing to bottle-feeding and allowing to sleep unassisted. It is important that these changes are done at home prior to enrollment in the community for a swift adaptation process. This will assist the infant to have the smoothest possible transition process into the new environment and a new caregiver. It is crucial that families enrolling in the community follow the same philosophy to offer consistency in for the infant.

For the first 6 months mother's milk or formula provides all the nutrients your baby needs; however at 4 months the baby will need a more concentrated source of calories. Montessori of Alameda offers tasting opportunities between ages 4-6 months. This follows a natural development as the infant starts to get teeth. Once they have teeth this is the natural sign of the body that the infant is ready for more solid foods.

By 4 to 6 months the weaning process should begin. First foods should be rice, mixed with breast milk, then single ingredient purees. Root vegetables, apples and pears are popular among infants. Other foods suggested are: papaya, banana, broccoli, carrots, sweet potato, squash, and pumpkin. Initially these will be new tastes and your infant may choose not to try them. Wait and try another day. Homemade infant food is best as it is most nutritious and does not have thickeners and additives. At Montessori of Alameda we serve organic fresh fruits and steamed vegetables, whole grains and dairy or dairy substitutes. MOA is a nut free school. Due to the wide range of family preferences we do not serve animal products. Please refrain from sending jarred foods that are salty or high in sugar.

- **Snack:** We eat snack between 8:30-9:30am. For the mobile children, morning snack is provided. We serve organic fruits, steamed veggies and whole grains. We encourage independence at all meal times and use a full place setting (placemat, plate, fork, spoon and glass).
- **Lunch:** Lunch and afternoon snack is to be provided by the parents. Please provide healthy options that are low in salt, sugar and preservatives. No jarred baby food is permitted. For more information, please refer to the MOA Nutrition Policy listed on our website at <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

Toileting

A baby safe changing table is used to change and diaper non-standing infants. The changing table is disinfected in a sanitary manner after each use. Children who are walking are changed standing up as well as encouraged to sit in the toilet. Guides wear protective gloves when handling body fluids of children. Floors and toilet seats are sanitized after assisting children in the bathroom. Guides practice hand washing after handling body fluids.

It is the parent's responsibility to keep their child's diapers and underwear, clothing, wipes and extra clothing well stocked. Please do not bring in more than will fit in their space. Your guide will show you how much room each child has to store belongings in the infant and toddler rooms. We do not have facilities for disposable diapers and request parents to supply us with one all in one diaper for every hour children are in attendance. Visit our "A" store or www.babyworks.com where you can view samples of recommended diapers.

Please read "A Montessori Approach to toileting" from the Michael Olaf website:

A Montessori Approach to Toileting

What is Montessori about?

What are we trying to do as educators?

"Follow the child."

"Give the child the independence on the levels they can handle."

The parent and teacher are there to assist the child. The Montessori Teacher trained at the 0-3 level is called the Assistant to Infancy. This is an appropriate label for all teachers of Montessori pedagogy. We are the link between the child and his or her environment. We are there to assist the child, not to do it for them.

What does this have to do with toilet training?

Moving away from Montessori and any other theory for a moment—
If we look to nature and to "following the child", there are three things that no one can control, no matter how old you are: sleep, eating, and toileting.

Modern day living and technology, unfortunately manipulates and sometimes controls these patterns, causing all sorts of behavior problems and nervous disorders. We must look to the child.

What will help the child to be successful?



Feeling wet

- The child must feel wet. Children never feel wet due to modern nappies.
- Cotton nappies and cotton pants allow the child to feel wet.
- Children have the ability to control their bladder from the time they can sit up. At this point the process of myelinization has taken place around the sphincter.
- Children who feel wet and dry (cotton pants/nappies) learn that the preferred condition is to be dry. Therefore they start to hold their urine for longer periods.

Changing children in appropriate locations

- Always keep the potty and toileting activities in the same place. A potty that moves around the house confuses the child's sense of order, making it unclear where the appropriate place to go to the toilet is.



Keeping them in touch with the reality of the situation

- Show the children the dirty pair of pants/nappy, showing them where it should go. Very quickly they will begin to associate and understand the process. Often when adults change children it is all done so quickly that the child is not even aware of their bodily function. Therefore taking time is necessary and the child should never be rushed.

Children need to be involved in this process

- The child should assist in getting the clean pants/nappy and putting dirty pants/nappy in appropriate place. This gives the child the feeling of some power or control in this area. "I can do it, I can master my own body".

"Help me to help myself."



What should the adult do?

- We as adults must take ourselves out of this process once the child has the ability to do it for themselves.
- We must find ways to make them successful and feel confident, i.e. for children who walk, change them standing up, and use a low potty so the children can feel grounded, safe, and comfortable.



- We must never force a child to use a potty or toilet.
- We must never scold or over-congratulate.
- We must allow them the time to be successful. They need to learn through experience.

Going to the toilet is the most natural thing in the world to do. We must keep it in its proper place.

Avoid clapping and celebrating.

Stick to **reality**: wet and dry, dirty and clean.

Toilet training does not start at age 2 or 3 as the advertising would have us believe. Toilet training starts at birth. It is preferable to use cotton pants/nappies so the baby feels wet and dry. Through this the baby internalizes and understands the process of going to the toilet. Unfortunately society does not find the use of cotton nappies acceptable anymore. We live in a disposable age of throw away and convenience.

What can we do as Montessorians to assist the child?

- Encourage parents to use cotton pants/nappies.
- Provide nappy services.
- Suggest manageable solutions



- Use cheap disposable nappies, so the child feels wet.
- Use disposable nappies for long journeys and sickness. Maybe bedtime?
- The use of cotton training pants for older children at bedtime.
- When children are learning to walk the use of cotton training pants will facilitate their movement.

Feeling wet and being wet allows the child to understand the process

Bedtime Training

Even at bedtime the child needs to feel wet and to understand the feeling of peeing at night. This is not always desirable for parents/caregivers.

Manageable solutions

- Waterproof sheets and towels on bed.
- Set up the situation so it is manageable for the child and parent.
- All situations should allow the child to “help themselves.”
- The more the adult is taken out of the process the less stress is put on the child allowing him or her to master this process when they are ready, in their own time and pace.

Disadvantages of Disposable Nappies

- The child never feels wet.
- Understanding of bodily functions is not clear.
- The warm humid condition created by synthetic nappies is not good for the child. It also creates the wrong understanding of this area of his or her body.
- Nappy rash is often worse as the child stays in a disposable nappy for a longer period of time. Chemicals in nappies react with urine and can irritate the skin. (Advertising “This nappy can hold a liter of water!!!”)

When children are allowed to control this area of development themselves, they are successful—usually earlier than children who wear disposable nappies. But most of all they do it when they are ready.

“I can do it. I can master my own body.”

We should bear in mind the following points as we help to raise children in our modern day world:

- Present the child with the reality of the situation.
- Give control to the child on a level he or she can handle.
- “Help me to help myself”.

This is what Montessorian’s can give to a child when assisting them in this developmental process. No one should control or manipulate any developmental process of a child, especially in the areas of sleeping, eating, and toileting.

We must note that these guidelines are for children who have no medical or sensitive developmental needs. In such cases we should adapt our approach in light of the medical advice and psychological guidance which has been provided.



Freedom of Movement

When we think about movement we must have in mind that what the child is trying to master during the period of infancy is “voluntary” movement, movement under the control of the will. Montessori of Alameda believes and practices the preparation of an environment where infants and toddlers can move freely without restriction or contraptions such as walkers, jolly jump ups, playpens, cribs and highchairs. Parents who use these materials as a source of entertaining should keep in mind that these might create obstacles to the natural process of movement development. It is natural and comforting for a baby to be carried, held, snuggled, but the adult must also respect the child’s need for movement.

Montessori points out that muscles directed by the brain, called voluntary muscles, refer to being under the control of the will, one of the highest expressions of the mind. She adds that “without the energy of volition [decision, choice, desire, and preference] mental life could hardly be said to exist”. Young children use their movement to extend their understanding of the world as well as to develop the mind. Infants still do not have voluntary connections for movement but the same involuntary reflexive movements they bring create the connections for voluntary movement to develop. The development of motor skills in infants is related to the production of myelin, a fatty substance that allows sending and

receiving information to and from the brain to the rest of the body. This is a critical understanding during the period of infancy.

Our rooms are simple and beautiful with pastel walls. In our non-mobile room we have floor beds as well as floor movement mats so that infants have a full view of their surroundings and can also freely move. Infants placed on their backs have the opportunity to explore their surroundings and establish visual points of reference and assimilate images. When ready they will explore their hands and continue to explore their feet and then master rolling over on their own. When placed on their bellies children can strengthen their necks and backs and eventually slither and crawl. Our philosophy is to place objects near a child and then allow them to grasp them when interested. We also make use of mobiles placed at a right distance for visual stimulation, grasping and kicking. Our environment is specially designed for the child to use the skills for the sensitive period they are embarking on.

Having children wear non-restrictive clothing is extremely important during this stage of development. Infants need to be barefoot to develop creeping and crawling skills for best development of equilibrium and locomotion. The child should wear the least amount of clothing that the weather allows. An infant's body self regulates temperature and just because an adult is cold does not mean that an infant is. In order for infants to be happy in our environment we need the support of parents who are enrolling. We are looking for parents who are eager to learn how to help their child develop naturally on their own timeline, as nature would allow them to do. If you are spending sleepless nights rocking and walking the halls to assist your child to sleep it will be difficult for your child to adapt to our environment. Infants need to be placed in their beds and encouraged to fall asleep unassisted. Our school does not support the use of pacifiers as research shows that pacifiers are detrimental to an infant's mouth and speech development, creates dependency on a foreign object for oral stimulation.

Sleep

At birth a baby already knows how to regulate his sleep for optimum physical and mental health. If we respect this intuitive knowledge after birth we are well along the path of preventing problems in sleep which often exhaust new parents and babies. We must be careful not to train a child to be dependent on us to go to sleep. When a parent quite naturally and out of feelings for love, always holds a baby until it goes to sleep, and then for some reason is unable to do so, the security is taken from the infant and she can become worried to go to sleep. It is natural for a baby to fall asleep while being held, rocked, and nursed, etc. To prevent the creation of dependence on any of these situations, it is important that the child has a private space from birth on where she can go to sleep and wake up many times during the day and night on her own with feelings of security and happiness. Then the infant can stay in touch with its own natural rhythm and needs for sleeping and being awake.

What to Bring/Not to Bring

Infant Room Supply List

- Cloth Diapers (10-14 depending on schedule-at least one pair per hour of enrollment)
- Bottles/breast milk or formula (if needed)
- Lunchbox (provide lunch and afternoon snack)
- Backpack or wet bag (for sending home and bringing in clothes)
- Extra Clothing
- Appropriate outdoor clothing
- Blanket

- Shoes
- One package of wipes
- One box of tissues
- One photo of child
- One family photo
- Sunscreen (when necessary)
- Current daily schedule

Please make sure your child brings appropriate, labeled, outdoor clothing as we go outside every day. Ex: fleece, raincoats, shoes, hats, mittens or gloves, etc.; whatever is appropriate.

Our environments are full of engaging Montessori materials that are important in your child's exploration and discovery. Some materials are big and some are small and intricate, making them difficult to replace. We work with even our youngest children by modeling utter most care for the materials and world around us. We encourage you to do this at home as well.

Children with Special Needs and Disabilities

Special education evaluation and services are provided by the student's home district. Many laws and regulations apply to special education and disability services, and Montessori of Alameda must comply with these standards. If a student is exhibiting behavior that is concerning to a parent or teacher, the student may be referred to a team, to include the classroom teacher, a special education teacher, an administrator and any other appropriate individuals. The team will meet to discuss the best course of action for evaluating, accommodating and/or serving the student within the regulations and options available.

MOA A-Store

We get many requests throughout the year from parents and the community wondering what we recommend for setting up the home environment with items such as toys, cloth underwear/diapers, books, self-care, language, etc. We are pleased to announce the MOA A Store is here to help! We have built an on-line store through Amazon that contains only products we recommend. It is a great place to shop for your home environment or gifts. These are the same prices you would find on Amazon. Whether you are searching for more cloth underwear, a vegetable cutter or a book, this store has a wide variety of items, all dedicated to fostering your child's development.

Our school will receive a small commission when you purchase through this portal. This commission will go directly into a general fund for enriching classroom materials and our teacher's professional development. Please make this site one of your "favorites" and have fun shopping! Pass it on to family, friends, neighbors and colleagues! On this site you will also find "Classroom Wish Lists", this is where our teachers have listed items they would like to enrich their classroom environments.

To start shopping, visit our website at www.montessoriofalameda.com. Click on the "Support MOA" button on the lower right side of the home page. Then click on fundraising; here you will see a link and a little, yellow "A" button. Either will take you to our Amazon store. If you have any other questions about how to use this valuable tool, please contact a member of administration.

Parent Volunteer and Observation Sign-Up

If you are interested in volunteering in your child's classroom, please let your child's teacher know. Some options include: sharing during circle time either by reading, singing, sharing artifacts, helping with food tasting, gardening, outdoor play etc. If you have a special interest or idea, please do not hesitate to come forth. For more information, please visit our website at www.montessoriofalameda.com and click under the "Parent" tab for information and requirements.

If you are interested in becoming a substitute for MOA please contact a member of administration for further details. Please note in advance that to be a substitute you will need to have an up-to-date CPR, First Aid and Food Handler card (this can be accomplished locally for a minimal fee). Also, you will need to register with the Oregon Childcare Division, observe in our classrooms and receive training from a MOA administrator.

If you are interested in observing, you may make an appointment with the lead teacher or a member of administration. Observations are offered by watching through our one-way mirrors in our central hallway or by sitting quietly in the classroom's observation chair. Please note that during the infant and toddler years, children (typically between 7-15 months) go through periods of "Stranger Anxiety", which is a form of distress caused by the presence of an unfamiliar person. If at any point during an observation, a child or children get upset because of this, we will kindly ask you to reschedule. We appreciate your understanding.

We ask that all observers wait at the white front doors and a member of administration will meet you. Here we will have you sign in, give you a visitor's badge to wear while in the facility and present you with some observation guidelines for the Montessori classroom. At the end of your observation, we encourage you to fill out our observation feedback form. We find this information helpful in guiding the future of our programming.

School Closures and Power Outages

For power outages, the state childcare regulations state that a maximum period of 20-minutes is allowed without electricity; after that time frame, children in any school or childcare center will have to be sent home.

In regards to school closures, we follow the Portland Public School's announcement of school closures. When there is an announcement, either a delay or closure, you can expect an email from MOA with the status of our school. We are all hoping that such situations won't happen, but want to make sure you are aware of the policy in case it does. Here is a link that will take you to the **Portland Public School Alerts** site <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/about-us/6178.htm>. At this site there are options to sign up for "flash alerts", which is a great service, where they call your phone or send you an email with PPS school closure information. MOA will send out its own message but we do closely follow PPS's decisions.

In the case of a natural disaster we have a 3-day emergency kit for each child. The kit fee is included in the "New Student Enrollment Fee" and the kit has a 5-year shelf life.

Getting Ready for the Seasons

We want to take a paragraph or two to remind you to help your child in choosing appropriate clothing for the weather. Kindly make sure that you mark/tag your child's clothing, many children have similar clothing and sizes, so having them labeled helps.

The changing of the seasons can occasionally make children (and adults) vulnerable to colds and allergies. We kindly ask each family to donate at least *one box of tissue* per child. We will use each box as a community and hopefully it will be enough to last us the whole winter season! We give lessons in class about how to appropriately blow our noses and we encourage you to do the same at home. Many presentations will help your child take care of this task successfully. Please review our Health Policy here <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

Parent Education

Montessori of Alameda offers parent education nights. These are designed not only to educate parents on the Montessori philosophy but more so, to create a platform for greater communication as well as build a stronger link between the teachers and parents. The teachers usually pick out the topics discussed on these nights based on your interests and/or questions as well as what makes sense for the time of year. We try to hold such meetings quarterly for an hour and a half. Childcare is usually available, if at least 8 families sign-up for it in advance. The fee is typically \$12/night per child.

Additionally, MOA has a school library with books and video resources that are available for parents to check-out and enjoy at home! If you wish to learn more about a certain topic, please feel free to share with your lead or a member of administration and we can help guide you to some resources.

Throughout the year we also try to distribute appropriate and interesting articles and even encourage your attendance at some parenting seminars that are occurring in the Portland Metro area. Leads work hard at adding classroom information in their monthly newsletters as well. But if you ever have questions, please ask! We love talking about the Montessori method and child development with you!

School Calendar and Occasional Events

School Calendar

The school calendar can be found on our website <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/calendar/> and it can be synced with your cell phone calendar.

Parent Coffee Meetings

Parent Coffee Meetings are held occasionally throughout the year as a means for families to touch-base and have a sharing moment with each other on a variety of topics. Please check the most up-to-date school calendar available on our website for times and locations.

Special Parent-Child Events

Throughout the school year MOA hosts several different activities both inside and outside the campus. For example our annual Pumpkin Patch visit, our Spring Festival, our Skate Party @ Lloyd Center, and others. These events are designed to get to know other families and build our community spirit! Each

classroom also holds three smaller events during the school year just for their individual classroom. Please talk with your child's lead teacher for more information.

Shutterfly Classroom Accounts

Each classroom has a Shutterfly account where photos are posted of the children. You must be a member of the account to view photos. Please ask your teacher to add you as a member.

Tuition Express Access On-line

Tuition Express is the system MOA uses for tuition payments. It has an on-line feature so you can view tuition activity anytime as well as print receipts/reports. Parents find this helpful for flexible spending account reports, tax documentation and to simply view monthly activity. Each receipt has MOA's tax number and other pertinent information on it. If you need access to this please email admin@montessoriofalameda.com and we will get you the sign in information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the classroom via email at haven@montessoriofalameda.com.