



## Primary Classroom Guide

### Communication

Parent-Teacher communication is an important part of getting to know one another. Most of all it helps us have consistency in how we can collaboratively guide your child to be successful in both their home and school environments. Parents and teachers need to have constant communication in order to foster the child’s growing development in their journey of self-creation. 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

You can expect that Teachers will be at the door (or at pick-up location) to greet or say good-bye to your child and give/receive **quick** feedback about your child and your child’s day. We thank you for your understanding that Teachers **will not and cannot give** you a long time for communication at these times because the priority is for the teachers to make sure that they are fully aware of the other children within the community; their where-abouts, what activities they are engaged in, and making sure that all the children are safe-which is the priority **at all times** for both the physical and emotional being of the child. If you feel that you do need to speak with your child’s teacher, please make sure to email him/her to set up a mutually convenient appointment so they can focus on the important information you would like to share. Teachers will do the same.

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, posts pictures to Shutterfly, and sends out 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: <a href="mailto:admin@montessoriofalameda.com">admin@montessoriofalameda.com</a> 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: <a href="mailto:tammy@montessoriofalameda.com">tammy@montessoriofalameda.com</a>
Aftercare questions, attendance (late pick up)	- Krista Wianecki (Co- Director) School Phone: 503-335-3321 Email: <a href="mailto:krista@montessoriofalameda.com">krista@montessoriofalameda.com</a>
Attendance (sick, vacation notices), classroom details, curriculum, activities, class events, class lists, newsletters, Shutterfly account	Lead Guide – please email <a href="mailto:admin@montessoriofalameda.com">admin@montessoriofalameda.com</a> 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.

### Arrival and Pick-Up

**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. We ask that you arrive promptly at your enrolled pick-up times so that we can provide as minimal disruption to the environment as possible. While our school does stay open until 5:30pm, our expectation is that staff are leaving 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 42<sup>nd</sup> 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/>.
- 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.
- Walking with your child directly to class –Please walk your child all the way to their classroom door. Please DO NOT leave them at the gate. Going into the classroom, for the child, means that they are going into their own space. This helps give them a feeling of ownership of their classroom; establishing life-long daily routines; problem-solve about what they want to do once inside; regulate natural feelings of excitement, anxiety, happiness, fear etc. and helps them gain overall self-independence. For this reason, we ask that you drop your child off on time, at the door, instead of coming into the classroom with them.

Please make eye contact with the greeting teacher, give your child a consistent good-bye so they know you are leaving and make sure they enter the classroom safely before leaving. Take time to remind your child, that some children might already be at school working, so he/she needs to enter the room quietly; his/her teacher will be there to greet them.

For **Dismissal or Pick-up**, please come to your child's classroom door or outdoor area and make eye contact with one of the teachers, so they know you are here. At this point, your child's teacher will make sure your child has cleaned up their work, can gather their belongings and meet you at the door. Once

your child reaches you (or your authorized pick-up person) you are responsible for your child. This does not mean that we will not supervise or watch your child anymore. It only means that we know that you are taking charge for your child while we tend to the remaining community of children. You will lead him/her in finishing gathering their belongings (if necessary) and exiting the school quietly.

Always be aware of the gates and what is happening close to them. Please walk with your child out of the gate and do not allow your child(ren) or older siblings enter the code and open the gate as this creates a safety issue. Please handle our gates gently and be sure to close them securely. Notify us immediately if you notice a gate that needs to be adjusted or fixed.

Try to find what works best for you and your child. Get your child involved by offering two choices. For example: "would you like me to hold your hand while we walk to the gate or would you like to walk to the gate by yourself?" Simple choices can help guide and motivate your child to make a positive decision.

### **What to Bring/Not to Bring**

Please make sure your child brings appropriate, labeled, outdoor clothing as we go outside every day. Ex: fleece, raincoats, rain boots, running shoes, slippers, hats, gloves, etc. For safety, children wearing clogs, cowboy boots, flip-flops, rain boots or crocs will be asked to not play on the play-structure. Please send children to school in safe footwear.

Please send your child with a nutritional lunch (see more below) in a character-free lunchbox.

Please refrain from bringing backpacks as they are not necessary. In the primary classroom, the expectation is that your child is independent in the bathroom. If a child soils their underwear in the primary classroom we will help them get into dry clothes we have at school. The primary classrooms are set up to support your child in their growing independence and this includes the use of the bathroom. Children are invited to go to the bathroom when needed, use the toilet and toilet tissue, wash their hands and exit the bathroom freely. We do not have group bathroom times or give constant reminders. We want your child to know what it literally "feels" like to need to go to the bathroom and how to regulate that natural urge by using the bathroom. Knowing this, we ask for your support in talking openly about using the bathroom at school (sometimes assuring them that no one will take their work), giving extra demonstrations at home on how to wipe thoroughly, etc.

Please do not send toys/objects from home as they are disruptive in our environment. We have many beautiful works for your child to do; we would hate for a toy that they feel is important to get misplaced at school. Also keep in mind that jewelry, costumes, shoes that light up, make sounds or have characters also cause distractions for the children.

Parents are not expected to bring in any extra clothing as the Montessori environment has all the necessary materials for them to be successful. Children wear aprons when using water or participating in art. This will protect their clothes from water spills so no extra clothing is necessary. Children share a cubby with another friend and we have limited space available for storage. Each child has a space for a coat, shoes and lunchbox only.

## **Food Exposure: We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL**

At school children are exposed to food and have eating moments during several occasions throughout the day:

- Open Snack (open from 8am-10:45am)
- Food Preparation Work in Practical Life (open from 8am-10:45am)
- Lunch (Usually from 12:00-1:00pm)
- Cooking Day (varies between classrooms)
- Cultural Sharing (occasional; varies between classrooms)

As a general rule, MOA serves only healthy snacks made of whole wheat ingredients, organic fruits or vegetables, nothing high in salt, sugar, processed or refined and must be **NUT FREE**. We also consider the food consistency and form because we want to make sure that even with crumbs and liquid spills that children can be successful in cleaning up after they eat. We use these guidelines in addition to each classroom's specific allergy needs. During each "eating moment", we make sure that children get into the routine of first washing their hands, creating and maintaining their eating space, sitting down with good eating posture, and finally, washing their dishes and cleaning up their eating space when finished. See our Policy at: <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

If your child has an allergy, we will definitely work with you closely to ensure they receive the same eating experiences as their peers. We might also ask for your help to find ingredient alternatives so that your child can participate in special cultural cooking exposures.

### **Snack and Lunch**

For snack, we have a designated snack table in each Primary classroom, where children can enjoy self-served food in quantified portions (ex. 2 slices of apple and 4 rice crackers). This helps them in understanding what the word "snack" means and how to create manageable portions as to not spoil one's appetite for lunch.

For lunch, we place nametags at each table around the room. This gives everyone the chance to get to know each other in the classroom better and experience eating with different children daily. We follow through on table manners ("excuse me" "please" "thank-you" etc), respect of friends' food and preferences, having nice conversation with table partners as well as cleaning up eating spaces when finished (crumbing, sweeping, sponging, and washing dishes). Children need to bring their own eating utensils in their lunch box.

### **Cooking and Tasting**

Each classroom provides various cooking experiences. In each cooking experience, we discuss and talk with your child about the history, origin, geographic location and ingredients of all the dishes that we create. We called this process "getting to know our food"...just like we are taking the time to get to know a friend. We encourage this practice at home, as it makes children excited to try new things and connects them to food in a more local way (knowing where our food comes from) and global way (knowing that different foods come from different places...and some have very different tastes).

After each cooking day, you can expect the recipe and the history to be emailed to you. We like sharing so you could have the opportunity to enjoy some cooking moments with your child(ren) at home. We always encourage your child to taste/try new/different foods. We call this call this "tongue exploration".

After which, they can share their opinion about the taste and choose to say either: "I like it!" or "I think I prefer something else" (instead of saying "I don't like it."). Below is an example of what you may receive when your child has a "tongue exploration" at school.

 <b>MONTESSORI OF LAMEDA</b> Food Tasting Experience		
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Today, we did a cooking project called: _____		
Your child _____		
Liked it!	Tried it.	said "I Prefer Something Else"

### **Occasional Sharing**

For cultural exposure, you are welcome to bring in a native dish or delicacy to share in our classrooms (we will always let you know of any specific allergies within the classroom). In this way we can share diversity and celebrate differences among people and cultures. Over the years, most families have chosen to come in and do this volunteer work together with their child's birthday celebration. But with or without occasion, please be reminded to first communicate with your child's lead teacher when you are coming in and what you will bring. Again, we need to make sure that we meet our food criteria ingredient categories and consider the allergies list.

For those of you who have signified their intention in donating food for snack and food exposure, we are glad to provide you with a list of things that you can bring in. Every Monday, we provide sign-up sheets for ingredients that your family can bring for your classrooms Cooking Day or food preparation works.

### **Nap and Rest Time**

Children who need to rest are free to do so at any time during our inside time. For those who are napping or taking a longer rest after lunch, we offer cots. We provide bed sheets for each child to put on their individual cots. Non-commercial/cartoon character blankets need to be brought in every Monday by the family and will be left in school during the week. The blankets will be sent back on the last day of the week that your child is enrolled (some Thursday and some Friday) so it to be washed at home. The school will launder all the bed sheets.

We truly understand that some of you would really prefer to have your child nap; we agree that this is very important to their health and development. Oregon regulates that we are to offer a 15 minute rest, after which we cannot force any child to continue lying down and/or rest. We do make strong suggestions by sitting next to them, reading stories or by offering quiet work. Every child needs time in the day to slow down and let their body be in a resting state, unfortunately, we cannot force children to sleep.

## **Bathroom Moments**

The children are free to enter and exit the bathroom area without asking permission. For us, if a child's body is telling them to urinate or have a Bowel Movement, then we want them to know that they can freely and independently take care of this urge confidently. The only time we ask the children to inform us that they need to use the bathroom is during our outside time. Our goal is always to make sure they are safe by being close by in the case that they may need extra help.

If your child needs privacy, we have shared with them that they may request so by saying "I need bathroom privacy please" and we will be glad to ask friends not to come in and respect their friends' personal bathroom time.

## **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 and Maria's Place 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.

## **School Materials**

Our environments are full of engaging Montessori materials that are important in your child's exploration and discovery of a life-long learning and creativity. Some materials are big and some are really small and intricate, making them hard to replace. We would like to ask you, as parents, to be vigilant in checking your child's pockets and lunchboxes for school materials that they might have "accidentally" brought home. We will definitely appreciate the return of these materials as soon as possible and a small discussion with your child will be of great help too.

## **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, training pants, 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 gifts for your home. These are the same prices you would find on Amazon. Whether you are searching for more cloth underwear, a vegetable cutter, a gift 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](http://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.

### **Work Drawers**

Did you know that each child has their own work drawer? While children do work all day long, Montessori focuses on the process versus the product. With this however, there are some paper extensions that children have an opportunity to explore. From drawing, painting, making a collage, bracelet or necklace, to tracing, writing, map-making and more, you child will keep these finished works in their work drawer. Some works may take them several days or even several weeks to complete, so we ask that you help us in only taking finished works home. Additionally, some of your child’s work may be saved in their year-long portfolio that will be presented to you at the end of the year.

Every **Thursday**, is the day to bring home finished works from school. These are great discussion pieces for you and your child. “What is this?” “How did you make it?” “What do you like about it?” We encourage everybody to take the time to appreciate the concentration and creativity your child presents, without focusing on the actual finished product. Remember, we learn through doing-that is the process. We want each child to take pride in their craft. We encourage you to create a portfolio at home.

### **Parent Volunteers 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, etc; head a one table project with the children; help do a one-on-one listening with our readers in class; and many more. 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](http://www.montessoriofalameda.com) and click under the “Parent” tab for access to our parent volunteer form.

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 and observe either through the one-way mirror in our central hallway or by sitting quietly in the classroom’s observation chair. 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.

### 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. During the Fall and Winter months, encourage layers such as fleeces, sweatshirts and raincoats along with hats, gloves and shoe wear. Kindly make sure that you mark/tag your child's clothing so that they can easily keep track of their belongings. 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/>.

During warmer sunnier days, we ask that the first application of sunscreen be done at home before your child comes to school. If your child stays longer than half-day, the second application of sunscreen will happen before their afternoon outdoor time. If you do want your child to receive a second application of sunscreen, you will need to fill out the "sunscreen permission slip" and turn it in to your child's teacher. Without this form, we may not apply any additional sunscreen. This permission slip will ask you to indicate whether we can use any type of sunscreen or if your child needs to use a special type to avoid allergic reactions. Just like any other work, we do give your child a lesson on applying sunscreen all by himself/herself.

### Power Outages and School Closures Due to Weather or Other Disturbances

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.

### Birthday and Other Celebrations

We use birthdays as a time to share and celebrate the child's life by creating a timeline of events. For example, when Sally was 10 months old she learned to crawl, when she was 1 years old she learned to walk, and when she was 2 years old she learned to ride a tricycle. We ask parents to bring in one picture for every year of their child's life and we ask the celebrant to hold our model earth while they walk around the "sun". They walk around one time for every year of their life; the other children in the



classroom sing “The earth goes around the Sun as many times as their age is now. Parents may choose to donate a book to the class in the child’s honor; this is a special gift for the classroom but certainly not necessary.

If you wish to join your child this day, please inform the lead teacher so he/she can inform you of the details of this celebration. Often times when parents come in for this celebration (because it is unusual to have parents in the room), the celebrant is expecting that they will be spending the rest of the day with their mom and dad. Please let your child know that you will only be visiting for this special celebration. This is your choice, we just ask that you have a conversation with your child to let them know what to expect ahead of time. For example, “I will be going back to do some work while you work in the classroom” or “I would like to pick you up after your celebration to spend the day with you-would that be okay?”

Montessori of Alameda does not celebrate holidays that are media driven. We celebrate events as part of cultural studies. For this reason we do not participate in holidays such as Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Mother or Fathers day, Halloween, etc. As a sign of respect and neutrality we focus on the purpose and reason for the celebrations. Our teachers talk about the history of MANY celebrations around the world throughout the year. We continually talk about different families, world religions, and beliefs, cultures, foods, traditions, celebrations and all respective topics as part of our cosmic curriculum.

### **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 3 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](mailto:admin@montessoriofalameda.com) and we will get you the sign in information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

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