



Toddler Classroom Guide

Communication

Parent-Teacher communication is an important part of getting to know one another, hear more about at-home and Montessori school expectations and most of all, 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 well-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 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. 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 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/>.
- 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.

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. For more information, please refer to the MOA Nutrition Policy listed on our website at <http://montessoriofalameda.com/parents/>.

Outside: We go outside every day, rain or shine. Please help your children to come prepared. During the summer, we enjoy water activities, gardening and the sandbox.

Circle Time: We have gatherings throughout the day. We dance, sing songs, play instruments, read books and introduce new material.

Relationship with Food

In the Toddler room, the school provides snacks as part of practical life and grace and courtesy. Parents send a healthy lunch with organic natural foods low in salt and sugar. Suggestions are fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy or soy products. Please indicate on enrollment forms if your child has an allergy. Children set and clear the tables; practice grace and courtesy, wash and dry the dishes and participate in daily community life. Montessori philosophy sets a pattern for life and love of being and contributing to a family or society. This process helps to build a good citizen by active participation and responsibility starting from birth. Children set the table and during snack time they help to prepare the snack, an example might be by slicing bananas, or spreading cream cheese on a whole grain bagel. At lunch time they repeat the process except they get their lunch box from their cubby and place their food on their plate and put their lunch box under their chair. When lunch is over the children scrape plates and categorize them, plates in one bin, silverware is in another, etc. Older toddlers wash the dishes in a 2-sink process. Each day there is a wet cloth for them to wash their face and hands after snack. These items are placed in the laundry basket and washed daily. After the meal all dishes are put in a dishwasher for sterilization.

Food Exposure: We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL

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. Due to the wide range of family preferences we do not serve animal products. 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. 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, 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 eat together at one table. This gives everyone the chance to get to know each other in the classroom better and experience eating with 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).

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.

Toileting

It is our philosophy that toileting is part of practical life or care of self. In our environment children in the toddler room wear training pants to school except during naptime. Parents are responsible for sending 14-15 pair of training pants labeled in permanent ink. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a "wet bag" or reusable zip lock bag for children's clothes that are going home. The theory behind Montessori's approach to toileting is that this is a natural function and a child needs to know that we keep all body parts clean and dry. The guides in the classroom will help assist the children in changing themselves when needed. This sends the proper message that it is not desirable to have wet or soiled pants and we change them immediately. This process helps a child to become conscious of his/her body parts and absorb the information we are sending. As soon as a child is walking they begin to wear underwear. Underwear is easier to change and allows more freedom of movement and sets the child up for success "to dress and undress independently". In our community, toddlers can wear underwear and slippers (robbies) and a warm t-shirt (free from logos or media propaganda) this will help each child master personal care.

Our guides understand that it is a natural body function to eliminate waste from the body, very similar to breathing. The guides do not react to what modern society might call "an accident" we also refrain from any negative comments as to smell or visual descriptions. We do not want the child to feel they did something wrong or made a mistake. We also do not exaggerate by putting on a parade or similar commotion when using the toilet is accomplished. Montessori philosophy is that the reward in using the toilet is having clean pants. There is no need for bribery or treats for using the toilet.

Tips for using this philosophy at home: When a child wets their pants and the floor, stay calm, try not to react or make a negative comment like "uh-oh." Do not call it an accident or a mistake. Simply model for the child how to use the bathroom and wash your hands, then let her/him try. Then give them dry underwear to put on (keep extra clothing in the bathroom for convenience) also you can show your child how to clean the floor, letting them help when ready. Again making sure to wash your hands when finished. It is recommended that you have some small cleaning supplies that are your child's size so they can help more easily.

What to Bring/Not to Bring

Toddler Room Supply List

- Training Underpants(14-15 depending on schedule-at least one pair per hour of enrollment)
- Lunchbox (provide lunch and afternoon snack)
- 1 Child-sized Backpack or Wet Bag (for sending home and bringing in clothes)
- 2-3 changes of clothes (labeled)
- Appropriate Outdoor Clothing
- Blanket
- Outdoor Shoes
- A pair of indoor shoes (slippers or Robbez)

- One package of wipes (when requested)
- One box of tissues (when requested)
- Sunscreen (when necessary)

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 in a character-free lunchbox.

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.

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.

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.

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 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 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 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. 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.

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 year 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 and we will get you the sign in information.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.