

Dandy Lion Montessori School

Where Children Learn how to Learn

Waiting List Policy

To keep our waiting list meaningful and manageable, we require applicants to complete the entire registration process, and pay the non-refundable Annual Registration Fee, before being placed on it. This not only assures that applicants are serious, but facilitates their ability to react quickly to an unexpected opening. While ideally the waiting list is kept on a first come, first served basis, there are several caveats:

- Obviously, a part-time opening requires a fit with an applicant willing to accept the available schedule.
- When possible, preference is given to preexisting part-time children wishing to add time to their schedule, to previously enrolled children, or others already familiarized with the Montessori curriculum elsewhere.
- Continuity of income being important to the success of the school, preference may be given to an applicant prepared to act immediately to accept an unforeseen opening and/or also applying for the summer program.
- It is important to the Montessori Method of education to try to maintain a balance among the ages, sexes, and temperaments of the children in a classroom. An opening occasioned by the withdrawal of a 4^{1/2} year-old boy, for example, might be offered to a similar child before a 2^{1/2} year-old girl, application dates notwithstanding.

School Hours

Please recognize that this is a **school**, not a daycare facility. While we offer extended hours to meet the needs of working parents, you may **not** drop-off or pick-up your child at just any inopportune time. Our daily schedule is strategically designed so that the noon hour, and the first and last half hour of each day, is our “recess” or playground time. This allows the inevitable flux of daily arrival and departure times to occur when least disruptive to our academic program. The morning session begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 12:30 PM, and the afternoon session runs from 12:30 PM until 3:30 PM. Although we try hard to convince parents to at least arrive before the bell rings at 8:50 or 12:50, arriving late or departing early up to 30 minutes only deprives children of some of their essential social exercise. Thirty minutes should be more than enough leeway so, to safeguard student concentration, once begun at 9:00 or 1:00 we do everything possible to prevent **any** class disruptions. For instance, teachers will **not** be disturbed for a phone call during class time unless there is a true emergency.

Not simply daycare, we are not a public school either. Parents may freely choose, without fabricating some excuse, to keep their child home on any day that our inflexible schedule is inconvenient to theirs, and full-day students are free to come or go during the noon recess window. We just cannot abide capricious class disruptions by anyone regarding our program as merely a babysitting service obliged to accommodate their erratic schedule. While it might seem that only the punctually challenged might be a problem, please understand that even an occasional transgression is intolerable. With over sixty children enrolled here, if everyone did it only once a month this would average an untenable three class disruptions per day. Therefore, a Book Fund “contribution” of \$5⁰⁰ will automatically be assessed to the account of any child arriving or departing anytime between 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM for **any** reason.

To be effective and avoid any need for excuses, deception, or judgments, **no** exceptions will be made — even for rare and forgivable (but no less disruptive) circumstances. Tardy or early departure times as little as **one** minute must be recorded by staff on class attendance records and the accounting process **will** automatically bill for them regardless of cause. Doctor appointments and emergencies do happen, and it is unfortunate to have to charge for them, but if you do find it unavoidable to arrive during class time we request that you park on the street. This includes even when arriving a few minutes early and waiting for the class to end. Early arrival of parent vehicles in the parking lot inevitably attracts the attention of students who are likely to start anticipating their own parent’s arrival rather than concentrating on their work.

If you and your child have difficulty parting, this is **much** easier on everyone if done on the playground, so **please** try to have it over with no later than 8:45. The **best** plan is to make your departure matter-of-fact and expeditious, and **never** allow the “one more hug/kiss” routine to ever get started. Rest assured that protracted parting dramas are harder on parents than children. After they have installed the guilt trip that ruins your day, they usually forget the whole episode within a couple of minutes when they can join friends in cheerful play on the playground once you finally leave.

Baby-sitting

For several good reasons, it is our policy that, as a specific condition of employment, our teachers are **not** permitted to baby-sit, or transport to or from school, any children enrolled in our school. Please avoid awkwardness by never asking, even in an emergency.

SCHEDULING AND CREDIT POLICIES

To maintain the quality of our program, yet keep it affordable for the average family in our community, it is essential that we maintain full enrollment and collect tuition for every space each month. This requires careful planning and a **firm** collection policy. Our Administrative Office **alone** makes all scheduling and credit decisions, freeing others to focus on the education of children. We ask that our teaching staff not be bothered with administrative inquiries. The Administrator is resolute in adhering to these policies, so to avoid future misunderstandings, please read carefully the following:

- Applicants are declaring their intent to remain enrolled for the full academic year, and agree to give at least 30 days written notice before withdrawing from the program. Likewise, we agree to give at least 30 days written notice before any tuition increase takes effect.
- This is a tuition-based educational institution, **not** an attendance-based daycare facility. Tuition is collected in **advance** to reserve a **space** in our program, without regard to whether a child actually attends on any given day, or the reason for any absence (planned for or not).
- Think **tuition** — not childcare. Trying to compare the cost per hour, day, or week of our program, with traditional childcare, is a two-fold mistake. The educational value is simply incomparable. With long and short months, Winter and Spring breaks, and holidays, the actual number of school days each month fluctuates anywhere from 15 to 23 (the avg. is 20), confounding attempts to calculate a unit cost.
- Again, you are paying for a **space**, and no refunds will be made, or credit given, for absences during the academic year, for any reason.

SCHEDULING

- We cannot always guarantee part-time applicants specific days of the week, but once established schedules are generally fixed for the year.
- Rearranging a part-time child's schedule is difficult at best, usually requiring the cooperation of another party willing to switch days.
- Incidental swapping or adding days is only possible when there is a predictable absence so we appreciate being informed as soon as possible when a child will be absent. We cannot offer free "make-up" days for absences or holidays, so please don't even ask.

TUITION PAYMENTS

- Monthly payments are simply 1/10th of the annual tuition fee for the 10-month academic year.
- The summer program is available at these same monthly rates in July and August.
- You may elect to have tuition fall due on either the 1st or the 15th of the month. A five-day grace period allows for months when these dates fall on a weekend, holiday, or other non-attendance day.

PROMPT-PAY DISCOUNT

- As an incentive to minimize accounting chores, we offer a generous prompt-pay discount for simply paying tuition on time. To earn it, an account must be current, and payments received no later than the 5th for those due on the 1st, or by the 20th if due on the 15th.
- To ensure this incentive remains effective, there will be no exceptions for payments made even one day beyond the grace period.
- Anyone anticipating difficulty making a payment on time should discuss it with the Administrative Office before it is due.
- Any check returned unpaid by your bank must be redeemed with **cash** plus a \$20 accounting fee. Since the grace period has usually passed by the time a check is returned, any prompt-pay discount taken was unearned and the full amount must be paid, making for a very expensive banking error. After a second occurrence, personal checks may no longer be accepted for payment.

PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

- Accounts missing the prompt-pay discount are already 5 days past due. Once 10 days past due, we may not allow the child to attend school until the account is brought current. For your child's sake, please help us avoid this unpleasant decision.
- After 15 days past due, we may deem you to have withdrawn from the program by default, and the space forfeited to someone on the waiting list. We will be very sad for the child, but must keep our program economically viable for all the other children.
- Once withdrawn for **any** reason, full payment of all past due amounts, plus a new Registration Fee, is required before a child is again eligible for the waiting list, where we may give preference to a previously enrolled child.

SUMMER VACATIONS

- We define "vacation" as a planned absence of one or more full weeks for which we receive written notice at least three weeks in advance.
- We allow ¼ month credit for each full week of "vacation" taken during the **summer** months (July and August) only.
- Year-round students **not** taking "vacation" during the summer months, after maintaining their account current for a full year, may receive up to ½ month credit in the month of August for vacations taken during the previous academic year.
- Students taking the summer off may reserve their space for the next year by prepaying September's tuition **before** departing.

BOOK FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

- Unlike many schools, we do not have annual book or materials fees. Instead, we have a **Children's Book Fund** that is funded by incidental charges for transgressions of a few inviolate rules we find it necessary to enforce. We ask that you cheerfully make these contributions when assessed. Try not to get angry with us for collecting them, and we will avoid expressing our displeasure at having to assess them.
- We are required by law to ensure that an authorized adult signs each child in and out with a **full** signature every day. To enforce this rule, we assess a \$5 Book Fund charge for **each** occurrence of missing or illegible signatures on the sign-in/out logs. Please advise your surrogates of this necessity when asking someone else to drop-off or pick-up your child, for the responsibility remains yours.
- To safeguard the children's concentration, we must deter tardiness and/or early pick-ups. The first and last half hour of each class session is recess time, so one can be up to 30 minutes late arriving or early departing without disrupting the formal class period. Therefore, tardiness or early pick-ups between the hours of 9:00 AM and Noon, or 1:00 and 3:00 PM for any reason will incur a \$5 Book Fund charge. You can understand that, to be consistent, this must include understandable (but no less disruptive) situations like Doctor appointments, etc

LATE PICK-UP CHARGES

- Arriving even one minute late to pick-up a child, past the time you have contracted for, automatically incurs an incidental childcare charge. This is not a punitive charge, it is just the standard \$5 per hour (or any part thereof) charge for incidental childcare, but when only a few minutes late it can seem like one. Try to be on time to avoid the aggravation, but **don't** risk an accident or ticket just to save \$5.
- Arriving after we close at 5:30 PM, however, can cause your child stress and is a very real imposition on our staff. As a deterrent, we charge a late pick-up fee of \$10 per ¼ hour or any part thereof. This means that those from one to fifteen minutes late at closing time are charged \$10. Those sixteen to thirty minutes late are charged \$20, etc. Repeated violations here are unacceptable — we don't want your money, we want to go home! **PLEASE** be responsible, and have a relative or friend you can call in an emergency to pick-up your child by closing time.