

Keystone Montessori School Parent Handbook



Preschool & Kindergarten: Pages 2 - 14

Jr. Montessori & Mini Montessori: Pages 15 - 25

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PRESCHOOL & K CLASSROOM: Keystone Montessori, LLC is an independent, non-denominational private school program located in Murrysville PA that was developed in 2008 to help fulfil the potential of every child enrolled through the profound educational insights and educational materials of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Keystone Montessori, LLC is registered and licensed as a childcare facility through the State of Pennsylvania. Daily program is posted on main bulletin board in classroom. Generally, there are over two hours of individual work time, individual or group snack time, large muscle movement time, and circle time.

Montessori educators "follow the child", adjusting their strategies and timelines to "fit" the development of each child, as all children learn at their own individual pace. All in a calm, supportive and relaxing environment where the children "choose" their work and build their skills at their own pace. *A personalized education.*

Maria Montessori (August 31, 1870 – May 6, 1952) was an Italian physician, educator, philosopher, humanitarian and devout Catholic; she is best known for her philosophy and the Montessori method of education of children from birth to adolescence. Her educational method is in use today in a number of public as well as private schools throughout the world. She died in the Netherlands in 1952, after a lifetime devoted to the study of child development. For over 40 years she traveled all over the world: including India, US, London, lecturing, writing and establishing training programs. In later years, 'Educate for Peace' became a guiding principle. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Montessori.) Keystone Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, disability, sex or national origin.

PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM: is designed to accommodate children who range in ages 3 yrs to 5 yrs (Kindergarten). Children must be completely independent in the bathroom. Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. till 3:30 p.m., Fridays 8:30 – 11:30. Morning session 8:30 – 11:30, afternoon session 12:30 – 3:30. Lunch is from 11:30 – 11:55 and rest time is generally from 11:55 – 12:25.

TOPICS WE STUDY

The solar system, famous artists, life cycles, birds, science concepts, being a good friend, doing good deeds for others, yoga, recycling, time, calendar, money, math, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, the human body, healthy eating, peace, nature, seasons, holidays around the world, roots, plants, trees, geography, seven continents, maps, land formations & flags of the world.

Areas of the Classroom: Math, Language, Geography, Science, Sensorial, Art, Practical Life, Independent Snack, Peace area, Learning Loft

MULTI-AGED PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

The Montessori curriculum is structured over a three year period, advancing and progressing with the child's age and personal ability. Each year builds on the other as it takes three years to complete the whole curriculum. The third year (Kindergarten) is particularly important as it is the culmination of the first two years in Montessori. It is recommended that a child remain in the same classroom and with the same teacher, as each year they find themselves in a familiar environment. A child would need to spend energy on adjusting to a new environment if they switch schooling, when they could use that energy for growing and learning in a familiar environment instead.

KINDERGARTEN GRADUATION

The Montessori Preschool classroom is designed for children attend for 3 years - *through the kindergarten year*- and the ceremony celebrating the completion of this three-year cycle is honored.

CALENDAR- KMS calendar is located online at www.keystonemontessoriprogram.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWSLETTERS

A newsletter (distributed monthly) will alert you to important classroom information. We strongly urge you to read your newsletter to stay on top of any recent changes and upcoming events, etc.

PHASE-IN

At the beginning of the school year, an orientation-style schedule will be used to acquaint students attending school for the new school year. The length of time at school will increase daily, so that by the end of the phase-in, all children will be ready to attend regular hours. This gives the children the opportunity to adjust to the routine and to the rules of their classroom in a calm, peaceful and secure manner.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parent, teacher, child, and school relationships are very important in a child's life. An alliance based on mutual respect and support will enhance all individuals' understanding, knowledge, and insight and offer a loving learning environment. How to give support to your school:

Be involved, volunteer

Be informed about the philosophy, attend all conferences & meetings

Be a partner; support the teachers with the knowledge that you both want what is best for your child

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR MONTESSORI PARENTS

By Dr. Maria Montessori: The Absorbent Mind, The Secret of Childhood, The Discovery of the Child.

By Angeline Stoll Lillard: Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius.

By Paula Polk Lillard: Montessori From the Start. Montessori Today.

By Richard Louv: Last Child in the Woods.

By Lynne Lawrence: Montessori Read and Write: A Parent's Guide to Literacy for Children.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & SNOW DELAYS

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous school may be postponed, closed early, or canceled. The safety of the children, parents, and staff on the roads is of utmost importance to KMS. We will follow the local Franklin Regional School District cancellation schedule. Watch for Franklin Regional updates on your T.V.

If Franklin Regional is delayed 2 hours, we will begin classes at exactly 10:30 am. The AM session will then operate from 10:30 – 12:00. The PM session will operate as normal (12:30 – 3:30).

Lunch will occur from 12:00 – 12:20. Lunch Bunch for half-day children will not be offered on 2-hour delay days, only full-day children will be permitted to have lunch at KMS.

When Franklin Regional School is closed due to inclement weather, Keystone Montessori will also be closed for the day due to unsafe conditions on the roads. (Please note: Franklin Area Schools are not in our district).

Many local news stations will e-mail you when a school closing has been added to their list. Sign up through their websites. The school is not able to compile an e-mail list for notifying parents due to the efficiency and effectiveness that the news stations have in notifying subscribers with each and every change and update all through the event/storm (including in the middle of the night.) Staff will not be able to keep abreast of all the changes and updates at the same rate that the news stations are able to do so. Sign up to receive updates on Franklin Regional School District via Internet news stations.

Snow make up days will be scheduled on an as needed basis and is dependent upon the total (full day) closings that have occurred. Information will be sent home if a make-up day is warranted.

HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS

Fees are not reduced during months that have holiday breaks. Our rates include allowances for all holidays and teacher in-services. Teacher in-service dates enhance the overall program when staff are able to make changes and updates to the classroom materials, to the curriculum, to discuss each student's progress and to attend conferences to advance their skills.

Make up days and reduced tuition rates are not able to be given for family vacations. No fee adjustments will be made for the absences, as the child's space is reserved while he or she is absent. When a child is going to be absent, parents need to notify the teacher.

TUITION POLICY & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Keystone Montessori is operated entirely from tuition payments as its principle source of income and has no additional outside funding. Therefore, it is essential that tuition payments are submitted in a timely fashion in order for the school to operate efficiently. Tuition Payment Schedule is provided with your registration packet, as well as located online at www.keystonemontessoriprogram.com.

A locked tuition box is located on the wall in the entrance area of both classrooms. Questions regarding tuition, payments and tax documents can be directed to the secretary: **KMStuition@gmail.com**

See your individual monthly payment amount– *depends upon your individual schedule*. Please track your payments, no additional billing will be sent out prior to your tuition due date. Tuition payments are paid toward the entire month, regardless if your child misses due to illness or vacation.

ADDITIONAL FEES

Late payment fees: \$15 will be applied to your account if your payment is more than 10 days late. A late fee of \$10 will then be applied to the student account for each week that the tuition continues to be overdue. Students are not able to attend classes when an overdue payment exceeds 30+ days (until payment is received). The school relies on tuition payments being on time in order to pay salaries, pay our lease obligations & purchase consumables.

An (NSF) non-sufficient fund check fee: of \$20 will be charged by KMS if a check is returned.

EXTRA CARE NEEDED

If extra care is needed for your preschool or K child beyond the usual time that your child is scheduled, arrangements can be made while adhering to the following guidelines: Parent must pay for each hour used beyond the child's normal schedule (regular hourly rate).

Written notice must be provided: child's name, date needed, time of day needed.

Owner will inform family if that opening is available in the schedule. If that opening is not available and we already have 20 children in attendance then we will not be able to accommodate your needs.

CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

AM: Morning arrivals begin at exactly 8:30 am (staff greeter will be at the entrance from 8:30 – 8:35 am).

Morning departure time is from 11:25 – 11:30 am.

PM: Afternoon arrivals begin at exactly 12:30 pm (staff greeter will be at the entrance from 12:30 – 12:35 pm).

Afternoon departure time is from 3:25 – 3:30 pm.

ARRIVING TO SCHOOL ON TIME

Arriving on time teaches your child responsibility and provides for a smooth peaceful transition from home & parent, to teacher & classroom. Morning arrival, in particular, is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each student and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the morning. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum for the fulfillment of the entire educational experience for each child already in attendance. Children who are late miss a very important part of their school day.

Entering the classroom during community meeting can be uncomfortable for your child and disruptive to the teachers and the other children. Arriving late will often heighten the anxiety of the child entering a class that is already in progress and full of children. We do understand that every once in a while things happen and you will be late. But if you are consistently late, please try to make every effort to change your routine so your child arrives at school on time and can be part of a peaceful arrival. Children who arrive late while a Celebration of Life is in progress are not able to enter Community Meeting. The child will be asked to quietly wait near the snack area so they do not disrupt this very special ceremony.

Late Pick-up Fees: Will be charged if your child is not picked up from school after their designated departure times (11:25 - 11:30) or (3:25 - 3:30). Fees will be assessed at \$3 for every minute that the child remains at the school. Fees will begin (per minute) at exactly 11:31 and also exactly at 3:31. A "late pick up form" will be provided to the parent when their child remains at the school after our departure times. A copy of the form will also be provided to the KMS Fiscal Department to be applied to the family account. The staff at KMS must adhere to a strict time schedule in order to ensure that every child and classroom receives the maximum benefit of their teacher's work. We appreciate your respect of this requirement.

Our policy also pertains to children who remain at the school past the morning session (11:30 am). Teaching staff are working diligently to either clean, get set up for the next class session, return phone calls, and/or assist children with their lunches. Our top priorities are those children who are scheduled to be in our presence from 11:30 – 3:30. Promptness at departure time is also very important to a young child. Many children often become upset when they continue to remain at school once their friends have all left.

A majority of the teaching staff have school aged children who are arriving home on the school bus and their time frame for when they need to depart the school facility is extremely tight. Please assist us in providing a good working relationship with our teaching staff that needs to arrive home in time for their own children.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

Please read the following procedure very carefully; review it with other people who may help transport your children to and from school (grandparents, spouses, nanny, and neighbors).

Do not allow your children to enter the school building or exit the school building unattended. When walking from the building to the car or vice versa, make sure that your child is physically with you and not walking or running in the parking lot alone. Should you pause to converse or visit with staff or parents have your child remain physically with you. Together, we can ensure the safety of all children. Enter the parking lot slowly & carefully, watching for other children and parents entering the building. Please do not allow your child to enter your personal security code to the key pad. It is only for adult use.

Please make sure that all adults authorized to pick up your child are included on your emergency contact form in order to provide a smooth and peaceful departure for your child (neighbors, grandparents, nanny, friends). Please inform them that we will verify their driver's license with the information/name on the Emergency Contact Form if we do not recognize them personally. Teachers and parents rely on pick-up and drop-off times to run smoothly. We all need to do our part to ensure the safety of the children. Thank you for your cooperation.

OUTDOOR SAFETY POLICY

In order to address the safety of children in the outdoor play area we ask parents and families to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Each individual child will be dismissed from the gate, by the teacher, once the caregiver is close by
- Only teachers are permitted to open the gate latch and release each child from the outdoor play area
- Children are not permitted to climb the fence, or open the gate latch

PARKING SPACES FOR KMS

Please use designated parking spaces that are located in the front of the school building and to the right side of the school building near the outdoor play area. Do not use any open spaces that are located near the County Line Collision garage, which is located adjacent to the school.

Parking is tight in our school complex due to the operation of several other businesses. When entering and exiting the facility please be cautious of other vehicles and pedestrians. We are not responsible for damage to vehicles in the parking lot.

FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL & SEPARATION

These suggestions are offered to help you in preparing your child for his/her first week at school. When children begin the Montessori experience, it is a big step in their young lives, and they need the interest and emotional support of the family.

The first few weeks of school may be difficult for some children. Many children at this age enjoy their preschool experience and find comfort in a relaxed and consistent routine. When you arrive at school, give your child a friendly good-bye and leave your child in the care of the teacher. Make it a warm and brief good-bye. Then exit and refrain from returning, even if tearful cries beseech you.

The teacher will comfort a disappointed child and their success is dependent upon no interruptions. If your child discovers that you will return when he cries, a habit may begin that will grow more difficult in time. It works best for the child if the parents do not linger. Your child will sense your confidence in the teacher, and his fear should be dispelled. Any comments regarding your desires of this process can be discussed on the enrollment form and directly with the teachers.

It is completely normal for a child to cry and take time adjusting to school: On the first few day of school, please don't linger too long in the class or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about the separation. It is very important to reassure him about where you will be during the day. Some children may be sad for a little while during the first few days, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviate their fears. The teachers are wonderful in helping children through these situations. The Separation anxiety form will be utilized when working

with a child that is experiencing anxiety. The teachers may request that a particular child have a reduced schedule for a few extra days in order help ease their anxiety.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A student may be withdrawn from the school at any time. At that point no additional tuition is due, and no tuition will be refunded. However, if tuition has been paid in full for the school year, or in advance for the upcoming quarter, then fees will be prorated and refunded at the discretion of the school.

If you decide to withdraw your child, for any reason, please give the school a 30 day notice. If a 30 day notice is not able to be given, tuition for that month is still due. The 30-day notice provides us ample time to fill the newly vacant spot. The school does not receive any additional outside funding and tuition money provides the main and only source of income. Thank you for your cooperation.

SCHOOL TRAIL PERIOD

Occasionally the teachers and the parents may find that our program is not meeting the needs of your child. Some children may demonstrate that they might not be developmentally ready to be in school. They may show lack of interest in the Montessori materials or be overly concerned about parental separation. Some may even act fearful or aggressive towards other children. In this situation, we will ask for a 2 – 3 week trial period. If he or she does not become more relaxed and comfortable, we will ask you to withdraw your child. Your unused tuition will be refunded.

Other children enrolled: We want your child's educational experience to be pleasant, relaxing and fulfilling for them. Additionally, it is our goal to make sure that the other children are receiving the best education and experience that they can be provided with as well. A child that is repeatedly disruptive for several weeks or even months will adversely affect the overall flow and atmosphere of the peaceful learning environment.

SECURITY SYSTEM

Our school is equipped with a security system on the main door. Information regarding your access to the school will be provided on an individual basis. Please do not share any information regarding the schools security system, the access codes or parent/child information. Safety of the children is a top priority at KM. Please do not allow your child to enter your personal security code to the key pad. It is only for adult use.

NOTE FOR THE TEACHERS (Communication)

Any information to be shared with the teachers will be written down on note paper and provided directly to the teaching staff at arrival so that we can fulfill the request. This will provide a peaceful flow of communication from family to school and to also allow for a calm and relaxing arrival time in the mornings and afternoons without the need of conversations with many parents at one time. Children require our constant attention.

Forms are available at the entrance area but you are not required to utilize this exact form/paper for communication needs. Any paper will work. Info needed on form: child's full name, date, information you are communicating to the teaching staff. Please DO NOT place a note in your child's backpack or lunch box since teachers do not go through the children's belongings each day.

FREEDOM & WORK CHOICES

Montessori children are free to move about, working alone or with others at will, and choice their work lessons independently. They may select any activity and work with it as long as they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or damage anything, and so long as they put it back where it belongs when they are finished.

The Montessori teacher's role is that of a facilitator and guide. She is usually not the center of attention and will not normally spend much time working with the whole class at one time. Her role centers on the preparation and organization of appropriate learning materials to meet the needs and interests of each child. Teachers work hard to ensure that all children are working in many different areas of the room. The philosophy of the Montessori methodology is designed to allow the child to pursue their own desires.

"And so the child said...'no, mama, it is not that we do as we like, but we like what we do'".
(The Absorbent Mind 1949, p. 221)

Repetition plays an important role in the child's process of learning. It is through repetition of an activity that the child learns to perfect their skills and build self-esteem and confidence. That is why, in the Montessori environment, the child is able to repeat activities as much as they desire. Each time a child repeats an activity, they are gaining confidence in his/her abilities in the classroom.

Do not be discouraged if your child does not relate many specifics about his school experience. Usually the child has been working with many different activities throughout the day and specific recall can be difficult at this age. Another thing to keep in mind is that we are concerned with the child's *process* rather than *product* so that much of what a child has accomplished is being internalized. They are not product oriented - looking to make an end product, as adults are. You will notice that your child may bring home very few papers and other "product" evidence of his schoolwork (worksheets, crafts, etc.). Please be patient as your child gradually reveals his newly acquired skills and interests.

INDEPENDENCE

One of the founding principles of the Montessori philosophy is to build a strong base of Independence. "The most favorable time for a child to learn is when she wants to do it herself." In order for children to learn how to help out and do for themselves, be sure to allow enough time. This is very challenging in our rushed world, since it obviously takes young children much longer to do many things.

Children should carry their own items into the school each day (lunch, papers, extra clothes, etc.) and they should be provided with the freedom to remove their own personal belongings, without the help of a parent. Children will sometimes want their parent to help them with their coat or shoes. A quick departure works best so that the teaching staff can be free to work with the child on their developing skills. Other children are also encouraged to assist their friends as this promotes a healthy classroom environment. If a parent enters the classroom and is eager to "help" their child get prepared for entering into the classroom then the child is not experiencing the Montessori environment as it was intended.

PROPER CLOTHING

Children should always wear comfortable clothing in which they can work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Children should only wear items that are easy for them to remove and easy for them to put on. This also applies to shoes. Shoes should be worn that allow for casual athletic activity; without buckles, straps, or difficult zippers and/or laces. Also, baggy sleeves or sleeves that are too long, jeans with zippers and buttons, bracelets, dangling jewelry that distracts, or headbands that won't stay on are discouraged.

Are you setting your child up for success each day before entering the classroom? A shoe with laces worn by a child that doesn't know how to tie his shoe leaves that child at the mercy of another person to dress him. A child that is wearing a pant buckle that they do not know how to open or close is at the mercy of another person to assist her in going to the bathroom. Young children enjoy their own independence; please help them to be independent in every possible way.

Please label slippers, shoes, jackets, gloves, hats and sweaters. A pair of slippers can be purchased for your child and left at the school for them to wear each day. Please label them with your child's name. This is a personal choice on the part of the child. Extra Clothes: All clothing should be labeled and brought in a zip-lock bag with the child's name on the bag. Be sure to change the clothing for each season.

SKIRTS AND DRESSES

Girls are required to wear thin shorts or similar garment over their underwear. Children often spend large amounts of time on the floor (doing works at a rug, yoga, sitting in Community Meeting, participating in Movement time) and cannot be expected to remember to sit properly in a dress and keep their dress down at all times. An extra garment that goes over their underwear allows them the freedom to move without being constantly reminded about the exposure of their undergarments.

BATHROOM INDEPENDENCE

The Montessori method emphasizes independence and being toilet trained is an important step towards independence. If a child has an accident or needs to be reminded to go to the bathroom, we are happy to offer support, however your child should be toilet trained when they enter the preschool classroom. According to Pennsylvania state ratio guidelines (10 "toilet trained" children per 1 teacher) we are not permitted to have children wearing diapers/pull-ups in the preschool room.

When a child requires detailed assistance in the bathroom then only one teacher is left to supervise the large number of children that remain working in the classroom and this compromises the safety of all children and teachers. This is the most significant reason why bathroom independence is required.

The teaching staff in the preschool room adhere to a "no-touch" policy when in the bathroom with a child (unless a child requires significant assistance after an accident). Children should be provided with appropriate lessons in the home on how to care for themselves in the bathroom before school begins. Bathroom independence is linked to the child's self-esteem; therefore, it is important that parents and caregivers work with their preschooler on how to properly wipe themselves after using the toilet. Wet wipes are often a great tool to use when teaching how to wipe properly; wiping from front to back.

Clothing should always be easy for the child to remove independently. Overalls, tights for girls, tight snaps, etc., can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can make trips to the bathroom a problem for your child. Young children enjoy their own independence; please help them to be independent in every possible way.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor playtime will occur as often as we can and is dependent upon the outdoor temperature, weather conditions, and condition of the outdoor play surface (grass). Often times the grass can quickly turn to mud and we work hard to approach the grassy area with care in order to preserve the long-term thickness of the grass. Please DO NOT send your child in clothing that cannot get messy. Proper outdoor clothing will need to be worn each day if we decide to venture outdoors (hats, gloves, coat, socks, sun hat, light jacket). If your child is recovering from an illness and is not able to go outdoors then please do not send them to school. We do not have adequate staff available to care for 1 child indoors while all other children are outdoors.

SUN PROTECTION

Children will often spend time outdoors, especially on nice days. However, our time in the sun is very limited. Children generally do not require sunscreen. Please apply sunscreen before school if you feel your child requires sunscreen. Teaching staff are not able to apply sunscreen to the children. The staff needs to have their full attention on the classroom as a whole when preparing the children for outdoor time. Hats can be provided as sun protection and offer a safer alternative to sunscreen chemicals.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Montessori Celebration of Life: This is a very special way for your child to celebrate their birthday at KM. Please provide the following items: 1. a celebration of life narrative, 2. one photo from each year of life (will be returned at the end of the party). Idea: Donate your child's favorite book to their classroom in honor of their birthday. Be sure to document your child's name and D.O.B. on the inside for the class to see and enjoy for many years. The child walks around the sun one time for each year of life. Your written narrative is read by the teacher as the child walks to describe a few things of importance that happened during that year of life (see example). Please provide your child's written Celebration of Life narrative 1 week before your child's birthday.

Narrative Example- *Birth: Dean was born in Allentown, PA, on December 1, 2004. He was a happy healthy baby. First year: When Dean was one year old he stood up and walked to his mom. For his birthday, his cousins came to share his car birthday cake. Second year: When Dean was 2 he went on vacation to C...* It continues for each year. A few short sentences about each year are adequate. Summer Birthdays can be celebrated during the last week of school.

Important Notes:

No cakes, cupcakes, or cookies are brought to school for birthdays; or sent home for each child
No special gift bags should be sent home for the children from the birthday child. This should be done outside of school as KMS cannot be responsible for distributing items to each child

Having a Party? It is very important for us as a Montessori school to promote community friendships and an enjoyable learning experience in a wholesome environment. Therefore, we ask that if there will be a birthday celebration, please make sure that all children in the classroom are invited. If you are coordinating and all-girl party or an all-boy party we ask that you include all the girls in the class, or all the boys in the class. Any corresponding invitations and announcements should be placed into each child's cubby via the parent.

PERSONAL TOYS FROM HOME

As a rule we ask parents to discourage children from bringing in personal items to school except for those days assigned to the show and tell friend. Due to a number of reasons: Each child will have a special day assigned to them, when they can share an item of interest with their friends. Children get very distressed if their personal items get lost or broken in the course of a day. It is too distracting for the children to be able to concentrate on the classroom activities of the day if they have a special item from home that they feel compelled to hold or keep an eye on. Teachers cannot monitor and manage multiple special items from home and carry on their classroom objectives at the same time.

SHOW AND TELL

Children will be asked to bring a personal (educational) item from home for Show and Tell. This is a wonderful opportunity for your child as they look forward to their special day. We ask parents to approach this day thoughtfully; and limited to one item. A schedule will be provided to each family noting the Show and Tell day.

We encourage children to bring materials that are related to our curriculum, check your Montessori Minute for ideas. Children gain experience with social skills when presenting to a large group. Show n' Tell Suggestions: special educational item from home, photos of a recent trip, musical instrument, favorite book, or personal collections. Please discourage your child from bringing toys or objects that can easily break. Please avoid action figures such as batman, power rangers, etc. If a child does not have an item to share on their special day, we will encourage them to show a recent "work" they created with the Montessori materials.

CHILD PHOTOS AT SCHOOL

The teachers will often take photos of the children working on a material or during a special event at the school. Please express your personal desires regarding photos of your child on the enrollment form (last page). In addition, a local photographer will be scheduled to take professional photos on Picture Day. This is optional and you are not required to purchase any photos. KMS does not benefit financially from your purchases.

KMS values the privacy of children and families and requests that all parents of KM do the same. Please note that any photos that you personally take while attending a KM school event should not be shared on social media (i.e. Facebook, YouTube, etc.) or on the internet without prior parental permission of those photographed. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and we appreciate your help in maintaining a safe and private experience for all KMS families.

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FOR YOUR CHILD

Often children will consume foods that are high in fat, carbohydrates and sugar. You can actually turn on your child's brain with healthy food choices before and during their school day. Foods such as bread, pastry, cereal, and cookies give children an energy boost with its high carbohydrates content, but will often leave them feeling tired and seeking more carbs to provide another boost of energy and the cycle continues. Choose foods such as protein, eggs, fruit, veggies, beans, yogurt and cheese to provide the lasting energy they need to get through the school day.

Breakfast- Your child's learning at school is directly affected by the nutritional quality of their meals. Please provide your child with a nutritious breakfast each morning before school. A high-protein breakfast is essential. Read the labels of the foods you buy, and avoid sugar, corn syrup, artificial sweeteners or coloring, artificial flavoring, and other additives. Most nutritionists believe that these substances interfere with the child's ability to learn and ability to have acceptable behavior. Set your child up for success as each new day begins.

DAILY SNACK

Children learn through experience, and snack time at preschool can provide an excellent opportunity to develop positive attitudes toward healthy foods. Your child will be asked to bring a NUTRITIOUS snack for their class. The school provides snacks in September and our classroom snack calendar begins in October. Because we use a rotating snack calendar, your name may or may not appear every month. Sugary foods always have an effect on the energy level of the classroom and therefore a schedule will be developed noting exactly what food items are needed for the classroom snack.

All packaging should remain unopened before bringing into school. There is always a supply of snack foods on hand at school to fill in when needed. We have several children enrolled with severe nut allergies and children who are vegetarians. Prepackaged items are REQUIRED because the ingredients are clearly listed. We are not able to serve a food item to the classroom that was cooked at home, or was brought to school in a package that was opened. Fresh water is available throughout the day (fruit juice is not served at KMS).

PLEASE NOTE: Children choose snack during the course of the session at their leisure and are asked to approach it as “a work”. We encourage the children to eat snack “if their belly is telling them to eat”. This is a social time for them and they will often choose to have snack with a special friend. At times, children will say “no one wants to eat with me”, when in fact, their friends may have already chosen snack earlier in the session. We encourage the children to eat with many different friends throughout the week and avoid choosing the same friends each day.

Please don't be distressed if they do not choose to have snack at all and mention to you that they did not eat. If they are hungry they will participate in having a snack. Hunger pains may come on once movement class begins and work time is over for the day. We are not able to provide snack once work time has concluded. Snack is available to children for 2 hours during work time in the snack area.

LUNCH BUNCH

Full-day children in the Preschool Room gather as a group and eat lunch from 11:30 am – 12:00. Children from the AM and PM classes are welcome to pack a lunch and join their friends for a small fee.

LUNCH

Children are required to bring their own lunch if they are attending our lunch period from 11:30-12:00. *Be sure the child's name is labeled visibly on the lunch box/bag.* Independence is always encouraged at KMS. Please send things that are easy for your child to open and close and handle on their own. Provide silverware for your child to use. Save money, reduce landfill waste and skip the juice box in your child's lunch. Fresh cold water is always provided at the school. Provide an empty plastic cup in their lunch bag. It's also a great pouring activity for them as well. Note: We do not allow children to share their lunches for safety reasons.

Due to time constraints and overall safety of the children we are not able to heat food for children; sandwiches and fresh fruit and snacks are needed. Both staff members need to be present at the lunch tables with the children and not in the office area preparing and heating lunches for children.

PA State Law: All lunch bags need to be placed in the fridge if they contain a potentially hazardous food. Ice packs are not suitable refrigeration.

Potentially hazardous food—A food that consists in whole or in part of milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish or other ingredients capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms.

BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE POLICY

Freedom to make their own choices in a Montessori classroom will naturally assist in the positive direction and discipline of the child. No child will be bribed in order to promote positive discipline as this is disrespecting to the child.

The following methods are used if a discipline situation should arise:

1. Teacher assisting the child in the prevention of unacceptable behavior with redirecting of activities. 2. Explanation and problem solving with teacher and child together with possible redirection to another activity, another area of the room, to a designated table to work at, or to choose a different friend to work with. 3. Shadowing the teacher if issue is unresolved (child will accompany the teacher and be her shadow for a designated period of time-usually 1 – 4 minutes). 4. Still unresolved: Possible removal of privileges; such as circle or gym time for example. Involving the child in the discipline process is important, as well as teaching the child to recognize when they are ready to return to the activity/classmate. General KMS rules:

- No child may hurt others
- No child may disturb the work of another friend or teacher working with others
- No child may abuse the materials/environment

HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY

Children are expected to be well enough to participate in ALL school activities. Do not send your child in if they are ill. Because colds, flu, and other childhood illnesses spread from child to child with alarming speed, please do not send your child to school if he has a fever, nausea, or any other symptoms of illness.

Please do not medicate your child in order to send them to school. If your child is too uncomfortable to come to school without medication (such as Tylenol, or cough syrup) – then they are too uncomfortable to be in class learning and working peacefully. Medications often mask the symptoms and interfere with your child's self-

regulatory abilities- making it very difficult to provide adult guidance based on their cues. When the medicine wears off the child's discomfort is multiplied, which can be frustrating to a young child.

Additionally, your child will not benefit from his/her time in the classroom if they are not well since the teachers are not in a position to nurse an ill child. Sick children expose our teachers to illness resulting in missed work time and possible loss of wages. This negatively affects the quality of care we can provide in their absence. In order to protect children and staff, we have set up some guidelines regarding illnesses.

Children may NOT come to school if he/she has:

- Severe cold, Sore throat, Cough- sneezing, nose drainage
 - Temperature- of 99.6 degrees or higher.
 - Conjunctivitis- an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink-eye". The eye is generally red with some burning and yellowish discharge. Conjunctivitis is extremely contagious.
 - Bronchitis or croup- This can begin with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful, but it gradually becomes productive.
 - Rash- that you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed by a physician. Impetigo- red pimples on the skin, which eventually become small vesicle surrounded by a reddened area with blisters.
 - Vomiting- child is able to return once 24 hours have passed since the last vomiting episode.
- Diarrhea- watery or greenish bowel movements that look different and are much more frequent than normal.
- Head lice- children who have head lice will be dismissed and re-admitted once they have received treatment for their condition by a physician. A signed note by a nurse or physician is required before they can return to school.
 - Any- unusual paleness, tiredness, irritability, or lack of interest due to illness.

If a child develops symptoms while in attendance at school, they will be separated from the children and the parents will be asked to pick up the child. It is very important that the parent or authorized adult be prompt as this helps lessen the stress and anxiety of being ill at school while among friends. We must be able to reach you via the telephone at any time during the school day.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER A FEVER?

Your child must be free of fever on their own; without the aid of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. We recommend your child is fully recuperated & well rested prior to returning.

The "24 hour Rule" also applies to: diarrhea, vomiting, and use of a new medication for illness .

MEDICATION

Except under extraordinary situations, we prefer NOT to administer medication at school. Please do not send in any medication with your child, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs.

Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that doses are due during hours when the child is at home. When children are so ill as to require frequent medication, they probably shouldn't be in school.

Situations may arise when your child's physician recommends medication be given during school hours, please speak with the head teacher about this. If a child is prescribed an antibiotic due to an illness, they may not be brought to school until he/she has been on the medication for at least 24 hours to ensure any adverse reactions or vomiting due to the use of medication.

NOTIFICATION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASE TO KMS

Parents are asked to let us know if their child is exposed to, or is diagnosed with a contagious disease such as chicken pox, pink eye, roseola, strep throat, head lice, diarrhea, etc. An exposure report will be sent home to all students so that families are aware of possible exposure. Name of ill child will not be provided.

EMERGENCY CARE

If a child becomes injured at school, parents will be notified. Any type of typical *minor* childhood injury (bumped knee, small cut) will not be reported to the parents during the school day, but parents will be notified at pick-up. Staff are trained in first aid and CPR. In the event of any medical situation that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor right away. Please remember to keep your emergency information form up-to-date. We must be able to reach you at any time during the school day.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrollment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care. Your child will be taken to the emergency room via ambulance. Naturally, we will continue our efforts to contact you and/or your family via the phone.

EMERGENCY PLAN

The following information is to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending KMS. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

Immediate evacuation: children are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may then proceed indoors at a neighbor's.

In-place sheltering: Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

Evacuation: Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility at County Line Collision Center; which is located next to the main school building at 3733 Wm Penn Hwy, Murrysville, PA.

If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door. If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.

Modified Operation: May include cancellation/postponement of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions with water or electric) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to your local radio/television stations for announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above. We ask that you not call KMS during the emergency. This will help keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. We realize that emergency circumstances may require changes to your plans, but I urge you to not attempt to make different arrangements if at all possible. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures, contact the director.

FIRE DRILLS

As a licensed child care provider through the state of PA, we are required to conduct a fire drill with the children, as a practice in how to get out safely, where our meeting place will be, and how to exit quickly. Our intent is to educate the children on the safety of these drills, not as a means of outdoor playtime or to create fear of a fire. Your child may talk about an occasional fire drill.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

Staff who observe children at school with unexplained marks on their body, or hear children describe sexual conduct or make sexual comments inappropriate for their age, must investigate the cause by talking to the child and the child's parents. If child abuse is suspected, the school will contact the appropriate organization and to report the abuse. We are required and mandated by law as teachers to report suspected abuse.

FIELD TRIPS

Several times throughout the school year we will organize a field trip for the children and families. The field trip is an important aspect of the learning environment as the children experience many wonderful things when they explore the community with school friends. Parents are required to accompany their child during the entire event. We welcome ideas for field trips.

CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

When a school party is planned for a particular day, children who do not normally attend classes during that session are invited to join the rest of the class for the celebration. These children will arrive when the party begins and all (half-day) children will depart at the same time, when the party ends.

Any parent is welcome to attend, however we are not able to have siblings in the classroom. Help with planning and organizing is always appreciated. Sign-up sheets for food wish list items will be posted in the classroom weeks prior to the event.

PARENT NIGHT

There will be various events throughout the year aimed at increasing your understanding of the Montessori philosophy and our school. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. These sessions will be held in the evenings. Parent & Child Open House events are designed for families to spend direct one-on-one time with their child in the classroom.

We also have several parent education books/DVD/materials available for parents to borrow. Please sign out which item you would like to utilize so that we are able to track its location. We do ask that you try to limit the use of a particular item to about 2 weeks so that all parents have the opportunity to view the items.

FAMILY CONFERENCES/QUESTIONS

Student evaluation forms are completed every year. We will also be scheduling parent conferences to discuss your child's Montessori experience. It is very important for teachers and parents to establish and maintain close communication. Please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's progress throughout the school year. We ask, however, that you understand that the teacher's responsibility during school hours is to the children. They are our main priority.

Morning arrival, in particular, is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each student and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the day. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum. If you must speak with a teacher in the morning, please make arrangements to meet. Otherwise you can correspond via a note and the teachers will get back to you via a phone call during rest time, etc. Meetings can easily be arranged with the teachers. E-mail is also a great way to communicate about questions you may have, this allows us to help maintain a peaceful learning environment during drop-off/pick-up. E-mail: keystonemontessori@gmail.com

PARENT PRESENTATION

Sharing an aspect of your family's culture with the class is a great way to contribute (story about your family culture, cultural book/items to show, cultural foods to taste, etc.) We encourage you to get involved in your child's education while they're young. Start early. They will always remember *"the time my mom/dad came to school and she had us all....."*

HOMEWORK

Some parents often request homework for their preschooler. A holistic approach to education recognizes that children need time for other activities (play, socializing, exercise, hobbies, dance class, karate, etc.) in order to thrive at developmentally appropriate levels.

All the same, children may receive some homework at times. Children who need extra practice within a particular area may be provided with tools/ideas for practicing at home. Some children may be provided with homework when a teacher observes he/she is right on the brink of mastering an advanced work. Some children may be progressing at an appropriate rate within the context of the classroom in relation to their work choices; and therefore no "homework" is required. Homework from KMS is solely up to the discretion of the teachers and can differ from month to month, and child to child, based on each child's progression of learning in the classroom.

Many activities and meaningful lessons given in the home by parents can constitute as homework. Parents can encourage "spontaneous homework" where a child is inspired by a topic they are learning about in school and they find a book at home or at the library related to that topic. See themes in our *Montessori Minute* newsletter.

WAYS TO HELP YOUR MONTESSORI CHILD AT HOME

Use actual names and describe items in the environment using the proper name (i.e. say toilet, instead of potty). Talk to them as a person, not a baby. Provide new proper/words and language.

Provide choices for your child every chance you can. (i.e. let them choose their drink, their outfit, which book to read, which book to read first, which shoe to put on first, etc. etc.). Decision making ability is very important for all of us, start your child off right and help them make decisions in their life on their own.

Encourage your child to be as independent as possible. We all get into habits of doing even little things for our children, have them do it for themselves, you'll boost their brainpower. (Dressing, pouring a drink, setting the table, brushing teeth, putting on socks & shoes, etc. etc.) Teach them how to do and build their skills/brain.

Make sure your child gets sufficient sleep. Make both going to bed and getting up a calm and pleasant ritual each day and night. Provide foods that limit sugar, preservatives, high fructose corn syrup and additives.

Try to avoid television before school. Many children feel the effects of watching TV before school and will often lack strong body control and peacefulness once arriving at school. Also limit TV after school, as this will encourage your child's creativity. Turn off the TV during meal times and talk as a family.

Provide a soft rug or mat for your child to use in the home as they have been doing at school. It provides comfort & order to the child in the home.

Try to avoid providing rewards for a job well done. Children need to feel the power of encouragement within themselves and should not always be searching for others around them to give them that reinforcement. When you "over-praise" your child you encourage them to always seek for your approval.

Read to your child. Daily is best! Allow them to see you reading books, etc.

Teach your child how to swim – **start now**.

Apologize to your child when you've made a mistake. We are often very impatient with our children. Enjoy life together and respect your child for their interests and who they are becoming.

Teach grace and courtesy in the home. Model it every day.

If you are unhappy with a particular person or situation in life/home/family/school/work, try to avoid letting your child know or hear of your dissatisfaction. Children often take those feelings and allow it to become a part of their thinking as well.

OUR WALL MURAL

Artist and owner of Stir Your Imagination LLC Melissa DeBiase donated our beautiful tree mural in the preschool classroom to the school. A second tree was added to the toddler classroom as well. Questions regarding her services and talented artwork for your own home or business can be directed to: www.StirYourImagination.net, (724) 327-6327.

FUNDRAISING

Generally, KMS limits its fundraising to two main companies. 1. Scholastic Book Fairs- KMS accumulates points that allow each classroom to purchase books for their room. 2. Montessori Services- KMS is provided with a voucher for 10% of the total sales from KMS parents. Many new and exciting materials and books are purchased from the generosity of our Montessori Parents. Details will be sent home periodically.

DONATIONS (optional)

A Montessori School utilizes many different types of materials and items on a daily/weekly basis. Check with teachers if you have any items that you are getting ready to toss out. You'd be amazed at what we can do with various items in a Montessori classroom. Please consider donating a few items listed below throughout the school year. Label donated item with your child's name so that we can recognize your child for their kindness during circle time.

Such items as: A few unwanted children's clothing (used as extra clothing in the school), extra snacks, Kleenex, trays, baskets, any kind of art supplies, magic erasers, unwanted paper bags from grocery stores, recycled paper from office/work, unique stones, old buttons, Musical CD's, real birds nest, item found in nature that would be of interest, items from travels, new or used children's books, old puzzle pieces for tracing or stamping, posters of educational items (*birds, musical instruments, presidents, etc*). See teacher for additional suggestions or to provide items to the classroom on loan.

If your family is interested in making a monetary donation to the school in the form of a tax-deductible donation please speak with owner for more information. Funds will be used toward the purchase of additional Montessori materials.

PLEASE NOTE: Parent Handbook Signature Page (Statement of Understanding) is provided to each family at the start of the school year. It is completed on an annual basis; and required to complete your child's file

Keystone Montessori Parent Handbook

Jr. Montessori and Mini Montessori Classrooms

Keystone Montessori, LLC is an independent, non-denominational private school program located in Murrysville PA that was developed in 2008 to help fulfil the potential of every child enrolled through the profound educational insights and educational materials of Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). Keystone Montessori, LLC is registered and licensed as a childcare facility through the State of Pennsylvania. Daily program is posted on main bulletin board in classroom. Generally, there is individual work time, individual or group snack time, large muscle movement time, and circle time (Community Meeting).

Montessori educators "follow the child", adjusting their strategies and timelines to "fit" the development of each child, as all children learn at their own individual pace. All in a calm, supportive and relaxing environment where the children "choose" their work and build their skills at their own pace. *A personalized education.*

Maria Montessori (August 31, 1870 – May 6, 1952) was an Italian physician, educator, philosopher, humanitarian and devout Catholic; she is best known for her philosophy and the Montessori method of education of children from birth to adolescence. Her educational method is in use today in a number of public as well as private schools throughout the world. She died in the Netherlands in 1952, after a lifetime devoted to the study of child development. For over 40 years she traveled all over the world: including India, US, London, lecturing, writing and establishing training programs. In later years, 'Educate for Peace' became a guiding principle. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Montessori.)

Areas of the Classroom: Math, Language, Geography, Science, Sensorial, Art, and Practical Life.

CALENDAR: KMS calendar is located online at www.keystonemontessoriprogram.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWSLETTERS

A newsletter (distributed monthly) will alert you to important classroom information. We strongly urge you to read your newsletter to stay on top of any recent changes and upcoming events, etc.

PHASE-IN

At the beginning of the school year, an orientation-style schedule will be used to acquaint students attending school for the new school year. The length of time at school will increase daily, so that by the end of the phase-in, all children will be ready to attend regular hours. This gives the children the opportunity to adjust to the routine and to the rules of their classroom in a calm, peaceful and secure manner.

For many little ones, this is their first experience into an educational environment, and their first time with an adult who is not a family member or family friend. Making this a smooth and peaceful transition for your child and addressing their developmental and emotional needs is our top priority. Your positive and encouraging approach to the classroom will let your child know that you trust their new teachers and they will be safe in their new school.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT

Parent, teacher, child, and school relationships are very important in a child's life. An alliance based on mutual respect and support will enhance all individuals' understanding, knowledge, and insight and offer a loving learning environment. How to give support to your school:

- Parents, grandparents and caregivers are welcome to be a part of the classroom environment. Sharing your unique home life with the children fosters a world view that is highly valued.
- Part of the Montessori education is helping the family infuse Montessori concepts into the home. We look forward to sharing ideas on how to expand your child's experience outside of the classroom.
- Please attend the school's open house and special events and invite the special people in your child's life to join you.
- The Head Teacher is always available to discuss your child, and one formal conference will be scheduled during the school year so you can share in your child's explorations.

SUGGESTED READINGS FOR MONTESSORI PARENTS

By Dr. Maria Montessori: The Absorbent Mind, The Secret of Childhood, The Discovery of the Child.

By Angeline Stoll Lillard: Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius.

By Paula Polk Lillard: Montessori From the Start. Montessori Today.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & SNOW DELAYS

If severe weather conditions make travel hazardous school may be postponed, closed early, or canceled. The safety of the children, parents, and staff on the roads is of utmost importance to KMS. We will follow the local Franklin Regional School District cancellation schedule. Watch for Franklin Regional updates on your T.V.

If Franklin Regional is delayed 2 hours, all KMS classes begin at exactly 10:30 am and conclude at 12:00 pm.

When Franklin Regional School is closed due to inclement weather, Keystone Montessori will also be closed for the day due to unsafe conditions on the roads. (Please note: Franklin Area Schools are not in our district).

Many local news stations will e-mail you when a school closing has been added to their list. Sign up through their websites. The school is not able to compile an e-mail list for notifying parents due to the efficiency and effectiveness that the news stations have in notifying subscribers with each and every change and update all through the event/storm (including in the middle of the night.) Staff will not be able to keep abreast of all the changes and updates at the same rate that the news stations are able to do so. Sign up to receive updates on Franklin Regional School District via Internet news stations.

Snow make up days will be scheduled on an as needed basis and is dependent upon the total (full day) closings that have occurred. Information will be sent home if a make-up day is warranted.

ENTRANCE AREA: In times of inclement weather the teachers may not be able to clear the side entrance way to your classroom. When we are not able to provide a safe and clear walkway, a sign will be posted that will direct you to the main preschool entrance for that day. If there are no signs posted then you are free to use the side entrance.

HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS

Fees are not reduced during months that have holiday breaks. Our rates include allowances for all holidays and teacher in-services. Teacher in-service dates enhance the overall program when staff are able to make changes and updates to the classroom materials, to the curriculum, to discuss each student's progress and to attend conferences to advance their skills.

Make up days and reduced tuition rates are not able to be given for family vacations. No fee adjustments will be made for the absences, as the child's space is reserved while he or she is absent. When a child is going to be absent, parents need to notify the teacher.

TUITION POLICY & PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Keystone Montessori is operated entirely from tuition payments as its principle source of income and has no additional outside funding. Therefore, it is essential that tuition payments are submitted in a timely fashion in order for the school to operate efficiently. Tuition Payment Schedule is provided with your registration packet, as well as located online at www.keystonemontessoriprogram.com.

A locked tuition box is located on the wall in the entrance area of both classrooms. Questions regarding tuition, payments and tax documents can be directed to the secretary: **KMStuition@gmail.com**

See your individual monthly payment amount– *depends upon your individual schedule*. Please track your payments, no additional billing will be sent out prior to your tuition due date. Tuition payments are paid toward the entire month, regardless if your child misses due to illness or vacation.

ADDITIONAL FEES

Late payment fees: \$15 will be applied to your account if your payment is more than 10 days late. A late fee of \$10 will then be applied to the student account for each week that the tuition continues to be overdue. Students are not able to attend classes when an overdue payment exceeds 30+ days (until payment is received). The school relies on tuition payments being on time in order to pay salaries, pay our lease obligations & purchase consumables.

An (NSF) non-sufficient fund check fee: of \$20 will be charged by KMS if a check is returned.

ARRIVING TO SCHOOL ON TIME

Arriving on time teaches your child responsibility and provides for a smooth peaceful transition from home & parent, to teacher & classroom. Morning arrival, in particular, is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each student and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the morning. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum for the fulfillment of the entire educational experience; and for each child already in attendance. Children who are late miss a very important part of their school day.

If you have arrived before the arrival time and/or start of departure time, we ask that you wait in your vehicle or in the fenced in area until the correct time so that staff are able to prepare the classroom or fulfill the routine for the day. Again, minimal disruptions during this sensitive time in their learning benefits the classroom and every child engaged. The teacher will open the gray door to welcome children and the teachers will escort the children into the classroom from there. Establishing that the classroom is the child's environment is important to helping them build a foundation of expectation for future classroom endeavors, such as creating community and independence. Dismissal: The assistant teacher will recognize your presence, and your child will be 'dismissed' with the goodbye song. At that time, we welcome you into the classroom as the children conclude their song to cheerfully greet your child. If there was anything special about your child's day (concerns, great achievement, bathroom accident, etc.) the teacher will give you information. Please feel free to contact the teacher via phone or email if follow-up is desired or requested.

Promptness at departure time is also very important to a young child. Many children often become upset when they continue to remain at school once their friends have all left. The staff at KMS must adhere to a strict time schedule in order to ensure that every child and classroom receives the maximum benefit of their teacher's work. We appreciate your respect of this requirement.

Late Pick-up Fees: Will be charged if your child is not picked up from school after their designated departure time. Fees will be assessed at \$3 for every minute that the child remains at the school. A "late pick up form" will be provided to the parent when their child remains at the school after our departure times. A copy of the form will also be provided to the KMS Fiscal Department to be applied to the family account.

If you need to pick up your child early, please let us know that at arrival via a written note or prior to class via email. You will need to enter through the preschool room since the side door will be locked. If you arrive between those times, you will need to use the access code for the main preschool entrance. Please be sure to arrive on time to your child's session. We ask that the main entrance be used at a minimum since it tends to disrupt the preschool class already in session.

SECURITY SYSTEM

Our school is equipped with a security system on the main door. Information regarding your access to the school will be provided on an individual basis. Please do not share any information regarding the schools security system, the access codes or parent/child information. Safety of the children is a top priority at KM.

PARKING SPACES FOR KMS

Please use designated parking spaces that are located in the front of the school building and to the right side of the school building near the outdoor play area. Do not use any open spaces that are located near the County Line Collision garage, which is located adjacent to the school.

Parking is tight in our school complex due to the operation of several other businesses. When entering and exiting the facility please be cautious of other vehicles and pedestrians. We are not responsible for damage to vehicles in the parking lot.

ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

Please read the following procedure very carefully; review it with other people who may help transport your children to and from school (grandparents, spouses, nanny, and neighbors).

Do not allow your children to enter the school building or exit the school building unattended. When walking from the building to the car or vice versa, make sure that your child is physically with you and not walking or running in the parking lot alone. Should you pause to converse or visit with staff or parents have your child remain physically with you. Together, we can ensure the safety of all children. Enter the parking lot slowly & carefully, watching for other children and parents entering the building.

Please make sure that all adults authorized to pick up your child are included on your emergency contact form in order to provide a smooth and peaceful departure for your child (neighbors, grandparents, nanny, friends). Please inform them that we will verify their driver's license with the information/name on the Emergency Contact Form if we do not recognize them personally. Teachers and parents rely on pick-up and drop-off times to run smoothly. We all need to do our part to ensure the safety of the children.

OUTDOOR SAFETY POLICY

In order to address the safety of children in the outdoor play area we ask parents and families to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Each individual child will be dismissed from the gate, by the teacher, once the caregiver is close by
- Only teachers are permitted to open the gate latch and release each child from the outdoor play area
- Children are not permitted to climb the fence, or open the gate latch

FIRST WEEKS OF SCHOOL & SEPARATION

These suggestions are offered to help you in preparing your child for his/her first week at school. When children begin the Montessori experience, it is a big step in their young lives, and they need the interest and emotional support of the family.

The first few weeks of school may be difficult for some children. Many children at this age enjoy their experience and find comfort in a relaxed and consistent routine. When you arrive at school, give your child a friendly good-bye and leave your child in the care of the teacher. Make it a warm and brief good-bye. Then exit and refrain from returning, even if tearful cries beseech you.

The teacher will comfort a disappointed child and their success is dependent upon no interruptions. If your child discovers that you will return when he cries, a habit may begin that will grow more difficult in time. It works best for the child if the parents do not linger. Your child will sense your confidence in the teacher, and his fear should be dispelled. Any comments regarding your desires of this process can be discussed on the enrollment form and directly with the teachers.

It is completely normal for a child to cry and take time adjusting to school: On the first few days of school, please don't linger too long in the class or react with alarm if your child is hesitant about the separation. It is very important to reassure him about where you will be during the day. Some children may be sad for a little while during the first few days, but kind words and reassurance almost always alleviate their fears. The teachers are wonderful in helping children through these situations. The Separation anxiety form will be utilized when working with a child that is experiencing anxiety. The teachers may request that a particular child have a reduced schedule for a few extra days in order help ease their anxiety.

It can be helpful for both parent and child to begin preparing the child for the transition they will soon experience by reading books and sharing in family rituals. "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn and "The Night Before Preschool" by Natasha Wing are helpful ways to prepare your child. Please do not hesitate to contact the lead teacher prior to the first day if you have any specific concerns.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A student may be withdrawn from the school at any time. At that point no additional tuition is due, and no tuition will be refunded. However, if tuition has been paid in full for the school year, or in advance for the upcoming quarter, then fees will be prorated and refunded at the discretion of the school.

If you decide to withdraw your child, for any reason, please give the school a 30 day notice. If a 30 day notice is not able to be given, tuition for that month is still due. The 30-day notice provides us ample time to fill the newly vacant spot. The school does not receive any additional outside funding and tuition money provides the main and only source of income. Thank you for your cooperation.

SCHOOL TRIAL PERIOD

Occasionally the teachers and the parents may find that our program is not meeting the needs of your child. Some children may demonstrate that they might not be developmentally ready to be in school. They may show lack of interest in the Montessori materials or be overly concerned about parental separation. Some may even act fearful or aggressive towards other children. In this situation, we will ask for a 2 – 3 week trial period. If

he or she does not become more relaxed and comfortable, we will ask you to withdraw your child. Your unused tuition will be refunded.

Other children enrolled: We want your child's educational experience to be pleasant, relaxing and fulfilling for them. Additionally, it is our goal to make sure that the other children are receiving the best education and experience that they can be provided with as well. A child that is repeatedly disruptive for several weeks or even months will adversely affect the overall flow and atmosphere of the peaceful learning environment.

NOTE FOR THE TEACHERS (Communication)

Any information to be shared with the teachers will be written down on note paper and provided directly to the teaching staff at arrival so that we can fulfill the request. This will provide a peaceful flow of communication from family to school and to also allow for a calm and relaxing arrival time in the mornings and afternoons without the need of conversations with many parents at one time. Children require our constant attention.

Forms are available at the entrance area but you are not required to utilize this exact form/paper for communication needs. Any paper will work. Info needed on form: child's full name, date, information you are communicating to the teaching staff. Please DO NOT place a note in your child's backpack since teachers do not go through the children's belongings each day. If you would like additional follow-up in the form of an email or phone call, please indicate that desire.

FREEDOM & WORK CHOICES

The Montessori teacher's role is that of a facilitator and guide. She is usually not the center of attention and will not normally spend much time working with the whole class at one time. Her role centers on the preparation and organization of appropriate learning materials to meet the needs and interests of each child. Teachers work hard to ensure that all children are working in many different areas of the room. The philosophy of the Montessori methodology is designed to allow the child to pursue their own desires.

Repetition plays an important role in the child's process of learning. It is through repetition of an activity that the child learns to perfect their skills and build self-esteem and confidence. That is why, in the Montessori environment, the child is able to repeat activities as much as they desire. Each time a child repeats an activity, they are gaining confidence in his/her abilities in the classroom.

Do not be discouraged if your child does not relate many specifics about his school experience. Usually the child has been working with many different activities throughout the day and specific recall can be difficult at this age. Another thing to keep in mind is that we are concerned with the child's *process* rather than *product* so that much of what a child has accomplished is being internalized. They are not product oriented - looking to make an end product, as adults are. You will notice that your child may bring home very few papers and other "product" evidence of his schoolwork (worksheets, crafts, etc.). Please be patient as your child gradually reveals his newly acquired skills and interests.

INDEPENDENCE

One of the founding principles of the Montessori philosophy is to build a strong base of Independence. "The most favorable time for a child to learn is when she wants to do it herself." In order for children to learn how to help out and do for themselves, be sure to allow enough time. This is very challenging in our rushed world, since it obviously takes young children much longer to do many things. In the Montessori classroom, your child will be introduced to and assisted with exploring these opportunities. Children in this class do not require that anything be brought from home. However, we understand that often children see their school age siblings carrying backpacks and lunches to school. If this aids in the transition from home to classroom, then we ask that the items be able to be carried and managed by the children.

Children should be provided with the freedom to remove their own personal belongings, without the help of a parent. Children will sometimes want their parent to help them with their coat or shoes. A quick departure works best so that the teaching staff can be free to work with the child on their developing skills. Other children are also encouraged to assist their friends as this promotes a healthy classroom environment. If a parent enters the classroom and is eager to "help" their child get prepared for entering into the classroom then the child is not experiencing the Montessori environment as it was intended.

Initially, we will introduce the classroom to basic self-care, such as removing shoes and placing them at the entrance, removing and hanging up coats, and managing cold weather extras like hats and gloves. A Montessori classroom is a working classroom, so we ask for your assistance in ensuring that children have items that are easily removed and easily put on (Velcro, slip on, simple large zippers and buttons.) Additionally, please consider that the children will be learning to wash their hands, pour from a pitcher, serve snack and the like. Embellishments that snag or long sleeves that must be pushed up by a teacher deter the child from achieving the independence approach.

PROPER CLOTHING

Children should always wear comfortable clothing in which they can work and play without fear of getting dirty or messy. Children should only wear items that are easy for them to remove and easy for them to put on. This also applies to shoes. Shoes should be worn that allow for casual athletic activity; without buckles, straps, or difficult zippers and/or laces. Also, baggy sleeves or sleeves that are too long, jeans with zippers and buttons, bracelets, dangling jewelry that distracts, or headbands that won't stay on are discouraged.

Are you setting your child up for success each day before entering the classroom? It is important for children to wear comfortable clothing. Montessori students are children at work! Clothing should be easy for the child to remove independently, and in that spirit we suggest elastic waistbands, underwear and pants one size too large to aid in pulling on and off for bathroom independence. Overalls, tights, button and zipper pants, and pants with tight snaps can be difficult for young children to remove by themselves and can make bathroom independence more challenging than necessary. Shoes and outerwear that is easy for children to manipulate is important. Young children enjoy their own independence; please help them to be independent in every possible way.

Please label slippers, shoes, jackets, gloves, hats and sweaters. A pair of slippers can be purchased for your child and left at the school for them to wear each day. Please label them with your child's name. This is a personal choice on the part of the child. Extra Clothes: All clothing should be labeled and brought in a zip-lock bag with the child's name on the bag. Be sure to change the clothing for each season.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor playtime will occur as often as we can and is dependent upon the outdoor temperature, weather conditions, and condition of the outdoor play surface (grass). Often times the grass can quickly turn to mud and we work hard to approach the grassy area with care in order to preserve the long-term thickness of the grass. Please DO NOT send your child in clothing that cannot get messy. Proper outdoor clothing will need to be worn each day if we decide to venture outdoors (hats, gloves, coat, socks, sun hat, light jacket). If your child is recovering from an illness and is not able to go outdoors then please do not send them to school. We do not have adequate staff available to care for 1 child indoors while all other children are outdoors.

SUN PROTECTION

Children will often spend time outdoors, especially on nice days. However, our time in the sun is very limited. Children generally do not require sunscreen. Please apply sunscreen before school if you feel your child requires sunscreen. Teaching staff are not able to apply sunscreen to the children. Teachers are required to have their full attention on the classroom as a whole when preparing the children for outdoor time. Hats can be provided as sun protection and offer a safer alternative to sunscreen chemicals.

CHILD PHOTOS AT SCHOOL

The teachers will often take photos of the children working on a material or during a special event at the school. Please express your personal desires regarding photos of your child on the enrollment form (last page). In addition, a local photographer will be scheduled to take professional photos on Picture Day. This is optional and you are not required to purchase any photos. KMS does not benefit financially from your purchases.

KMS values the privacy of children and families and requests that all parents of KM do the same. Please note that any photos that you personally take while attending a KM school event should not be shared on social media (i.e. Facebook, YouTube, etc.) or on the internet without prior parental permission of those photographed. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and we appreciate your help in maintaining a safe and private experience for all KMS families.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

No cakes, cupcakes, or cookies are brought to school for birthdays; or sent home for each child. No special gift bags should be sent home for the children from the birthday child. This should be done outside of school as KMS cannot be responsible for distributing items to each child.

Having a Party? It is very important for us as a Montessori school to promote community friendships and an enjoyable learning experience in a wholesome environment. Therefore, we ask that if there will be a birthday celebration, please make sure that all children in the classroom are invited. If you are coordinating an all-girl party or an all-boy party we ask that you include all the girls in the class, or all the boys in the class. Any corresponding invitations and announcements should be placed into each child's cubby via the parent.

PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

Parents are strongly discouraged from allowing children to bring personal items to school. The classroom has been thoughtfully prepared to welcome children and allow them to explore the classroom works. The presence of a personal item can inhibit this process, and restrict a child from enjoying the discoveries that can be made during their classroom time.

Logistically, it is impossible for the teachers to monitor the placement of personal items that may be dropped or inadvertently hidden from view, resulting in a search of the item. Children can become fixated on another classmate's personal item resulting in a conflict of possessions or worse, breaking or destroying the item beyond repair.

We suggest creating a place of comfort for your child's cherished item, a special place in their room or a contract with the parents that they will 'care' for the item until the school day is over. At pick-up, it can be a great way to celebrate that your child completed another day in the classroom.

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FOR YOUR CHILD

If you are not already doing so, KMS strongly encourages you and your family to discover the benefits of including healthy food options into your lifestyle. Cultural norms and false advertising often mask foods that are high in fat, preservatives and sugar. The staff at KMS is committed to ensuring the highest benefit to every child, and providing them with valuable nutrition and lessons on healthy food choices is no exception.

Proper food choices assist with brainpower, attention, and cooperativeness of your child. Pairing proteins with whole grain carbohydrates, with the addition of fruits and vegetables, create a wellness regime that will stay with your child for a lifetime. Recently, the federal government has eliminated the food pyramid model and replaced it with a plate model to demonstrate the nutrition needed for today's child. Please visit choosemyplate.gov to learn more about these changes and enjoy the many features that guide today's parents to healthy lifestyle choices.

Fresh cold water is always provided at the school, and also provides the children with a great pouring activity. Please be assured that your child will receive appropriate hydration and nutrition during their time in school.

DAILY SNACK

Children learn through experience, and snack time can provide an excellent opportunity to develop positive attitudes toward healthy foods. Your child will be asked to bring a NUTRITIOUS snack for their class. The school provides snacks in September and our classroom snack calendar begins in October. Because we use a rotating snack calendar, your name may or may not appear every month. Sugary foods always have an effect on the energy level of the classroom and therefore a schedule will be developed noting exactly what food items are needed for the classroom snack.

All packaging should remain unopened before bringing into school. There is always a supply of snack foods on hand at school to fill in when needed. We have several children enrolled with severe nut allergies and children who are vegetarians. Prepackaged items are REQUIRED because the ingredients are clearly listed. We are not able to serve a food item to the classroom that was cooked at home, or was brought to school in a package that was opened. Fresh water is available throughout the day (fruit juice is not served at KMS).

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Freedom to make their own choices in a Montessori classroom will naturally assist in the positive direction and expected behavior of your child. This natural learning environment provides wonderful opportunities for

children to discover their inner discipline as teachers model peace and community. Initially, teachers will employ soft tactics like redirection and re-introduction to other works. As they grow to understand their environment, will guide in modeling desired behaviors – sharing, turn taking, waiting, using words for expressions. To assist with a child fully understanding their community, we may ask the child to sit with the teacher and observe the classroom at work to encourage their understanding of their role in the community environment. No child will be bribed or rewarded in order to promote positive discipline, as in Montessori philosophy this action disrespects the child; and “time-out” is not used in the classroom.

HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY

Children are expected to be well enough to participate in ALL school activities. Do not send your child in if they are ill. Because colds, flu, and other childhood illnesses spread from child to child with alarming speed, please do not send your child to school if he has a fever, nausea, or any other symptoms of illness.

Please do not medicate your child in order to send them to school. If your child is too uncomfortable to come to school without medication (such as Tylenol, or cough syrup) – then they are too uncomfortable to be in class learning and working peacefully. Medications often mask the symptoms and interfere with your child's self-regulatory abilities- making it very difficult to provide adult guidance based on their cues. When the medicine wears off the child's discomfort is multiplied, which can be frustrating to a young child.

Additionally, your child will not benefit from his/her time in the classroom if they are not well since the teachers are not in a position to nurse an ill child. Sick children expose our teachers to illness resulting in missed work time and possible loss of wages. This negatively affects the quality of care we can provide in their absence. In order to protect children and staff, we have set up some guidelines regarding illnesses.

Children may NOT come to school if he/she has:

- Severe cold, Sore throat, Cough- sneezing, nose drainage
- Temperature- of 99.6 degrees or higher.
- Conjunctivitis- an eye infection commonly referred to as “pink-eye”. The eye is generally red with some burning and yellowish discharge. Conjunctivitis is extremely contagious.
- Bronchitis or croup- This can begin with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful, but it gradually becomes productive.
- Rash- that you cannot identify or that have not been diagnosed by a physician. Impetigo- red pimples on the skin, which eventually become small vesicle surrounded by a reddened area with blisters.
- Vomiting- child is able to return once 24 hours have passed since the last vomiting episode.
- Diarrhea- watery or greenish bowel movements that look different and are much more frequent than normal.
- Head lice- children who have head lice will be dismissed and re-admitted once they have received treatment for their condition by a physician. A signed note by a nurse or physician is required before they can return to school.
- Any- unusual paleness, tiredness, irritability, or lack of interest due to illness.

If a child develops symptoms while in attendance at school, they will be separated from the children and the parents will be asked to pick up the child. It is very important that the parent or authorized adult be prompt as this helps lessen the stress and anxiety of being ill at school while among friends. We must be able to reach you via the telephone at any time during the school day.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER A FEVER?

Your child must be free of fever on their own; without the aid of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. We recommend your child is fully recuperated & well rested prior to returning.

The “24 hour Rule” also applies to: diarrhea, vomiting, and use of a new medication for illness.

MEDICATION

Except under extraordinary situations, we prefer NOT to administer medication at school. Please do not send in any medication with your child, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs.

Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that doses are due during hours when the child is at home. When children are so ill as to require frequent medication, they probably shouldn't be in school.

Situations may arise when your child's physician recommends medication be given during school hours, please

speak with the head teacher about this. If a child is prescribed an antibiotic due to an illness, they may not be brought to school until he/she has been on the medication for at least 24 hours to ensure any adverse reactions or vomiting due to the use of medication.

NOTIFICATION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASE TO KMS

Parents are asked to let us know if their child is exposed to, or is diagnosed with a contagious disease such as chicken pox, pink eye, roseola, strep throat, head lice, diarrhea, etc. An exposure report will be sent home to all students so that families are aware of possible exposure. Name of ill child will not be provided.

EMERGENCY CARE

If a child becomes injured at school, parents will be notified. Any type of typical *minor* childhood injury (bumped knee, small cut) will not be reported to the parents during the school day, but parents will be notified at pick-up. Staff are trained in first aid and CPR. In the event of any medical situation that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor right away. Please remember to keep your emergency information form up-to-date. We must be able to reach you at any time during the school day.

If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrollment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care. Your child will be taken to the emergency room via ambulance. Naturally, we will continue our efforts to contact you and/or your family via the phone.

EMERGENCY PLAN

The following information is to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending KMS. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

Immediate evacuation: children are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may then proceed indoors at a neighbor's.

In-place sheltering: Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.

Evacuation: Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility at County Line Collision Center; which is located next to the main school building at 3733 Wm Penn Hwy, Murrysville, PA. If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door. If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.

Modified Operation: May include cancellation/postponement of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions with water or electric) that make it unsafe for children, but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

Please listen to your local radio/television stations for announcements relating any of the emergency actions listed above. We ask that you not call KMS during the emergency. This will help keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information. We realize that emergency circumstances may require changes to your plans, but I urge you to not attempt to make different arrangements if at all possible. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures, contact the director.

FIRE DRILLS

As a licensed child care provider through the state of PA, we are required to conduct a fire drill with the children, as a practice in how to get out safely, where our meeting place will be, and how to exit quickly. Our intent is to educate the children on the safety of these drills, not as a means of outdoor playtime or to create fear of a fire. Your child may talk about an occasional fire drill.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

Staff who observe children at school with unexplained marks on their body, or hear children describe sexual conduct or make sexual comments inappropriate for their age, must investigate the cause by talking to the child and the child's parents. If child abuse is suspected, the school will contact the appropriate organization and to report the abuse. We are required and mandated by law as teachers to report suspected abuse.

FIELD TRIPS

Several times throughout the school year we will organize a field trip for the children and families. The field trip is an important aspect of the learning environment as the children experience many wonderful things when they explore the community with school friends. Parents are required to accompany their child during the entire event. We welcome ideas for field trips.

PARENT NIGHT

There will be various events throughout the year aimed at increasing your understanding of the Montessori philosophy and our school. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend. These sessions will be held in the evenings. Parent & Child Open House events are designed for families to spend direct one-on-one time with their child in the classroom.

We also have several parent education books/DVD/materials available for parents to borrow. Please sign out which item you would like to utilize so that we are able to track its location. We do ask that you try to limit the use of a particular item to about 2 weeks so that all parents have the opportunity to view the items.

FAMILY CONFERENCES/QUESTIONS

Student evaluation forms are completed every year. We will also be scheduling parent conferences to discuss your child's Montessori experience. It is very important for teachers and parents to establish and maintain close communication. Please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's progress throughout the school year. We ask, however, that you understand that the teacher's responsibility during school hours is to the children. They are our main priority.

Morning arrival, in particular, is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each student and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the day. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum. If you must speak with a teacher in the morning, please make arrangements to meet. Otherwise you can correspond via a note and the teachers will get back to you via a phone call during rest time, etc. Meetings can easily be arranged with the teachers. E-mail is also a great way to communicate about questions you may have, this allows us to help maintain a peaceful learning environment during drop-off/pick-up.

MONTESSORI AT HOME

Reinforcing Montessori concepts into your home life help to build a foundation of learning that will stay with your child for a lifetime. Suggestions include

- Always use appropriate language. Speak to a child as you would speak to a highly respected adult. When your language skills exceed their understanding, take advantage of that moment to discuss the word and its usage.
- Provide choices for your child every chance you can. At 2 years old, begin by allowing a choice between two things: What shirt would you like to wear? Do you walk down the hall first, or should I? Would you like scrambled eggs or oatmeal for breakfast? Should we walk fast or slow to the car? The more often you offer simple choices, the more opportunities you'll find and the more fun you'll have!
- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible. Set plastic dishes, bowls, utensils and open cups (not sippies) where your child can easily access them, like a low shelf or a drawer. Have a small pitcher ½ full of water in the refrigerator so your child can easily access it and practice pouring skills. After all, it's only water. And when it's spilled, have your child get a rag and clean up the water.
- Make sure your child gets sufficient sleep. According to the AAP, children between 1-3 years old need 12-14 hours of sleep. If your child wakes at 7:30 to allow for sufficient time to be assisted with getting dressed, preparing breakfast, brushing their teeth and getting their shoes and coat on for school, then travelling to school to arrive at 8:55 am, your child should be in bed no later than 7:30 pm to accommodate a 12 hour sleep schedule. Of course, every child is different, and every family has schedules that do not accommodate this strict course. Our goal at KMS is to educate families on what we feel is a priority to the child. This time line is merely an example of how to accommodate a child's need for sleep at this age.
- Children should not watch television before school. Our experience shows that children who arrive to school after having passively been attended to by television lack strong body control and peacefulness once arriving at school as they have an expectation of being "entertained."
- Teach your child that the reward for a job well done is that they achieved a goal. Try to avoid providing physical rewards such as toys or gifts. Children who are encouraged and achieve find it unnecessary to seek outside reinforcement and take pride in themselves for their accomplishments.

- Read to your child every day. Take advantage of the library for book borrowing and reading programs that are offered.
- Limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes a day. Screen time includes television, iPads, phone games, and computer games – even educational ones. Playing simple board games with your child, engaging in easy crafts, making homemade play dough, and just pouring water ignite a child's basic skill set. These simple exposures allow you to start seeing your children's passions and talents.
- Listen to any kind of music or auditory experience. This includes books on CD that you can play in your car, soundtracks, global music, classical, or the many popular artists who have children's music. Again, your local library has a wealth of options.
- Teach your child how to swim. The Red Cross offers classes during the summer, but please sign up early as these classes fill quickly.
- Model compassion. When you've made a mistake, apologize to your child and teach them to accept your apology with forgiveness.
- If you had expectations for who your child would be, please remove them now. Allow your child to blossom, free of any expectations from you on who they should or could be – embrace who they are and enjoy them for who they are now.
- Model grace and courtesy. At every opportunity use manners like please and thank you. Teach your children to hold doors open for those who need extra assistance or give your child the opportunity to allow another child to go first. These 'small acts' go a long way to teaching children that they are a part of a community, and life is not about their individual needs.
- Engage your child in simple household chores. Fill a spray bottle with a mixture of vinegar and water for your child to use to spray and clean counters. Have your child assist you with laundry. Use painters tape to make a square in your kitchen, and have your child sweep crumbs into the square. Allow your child to assist with taking dishes out of the dishwasher and putting them in their appropriate place. Have your child make and clear dishes after dinner.
- When there is an adult conflict (work or personal), please keep your discussions away from your child. Children often misinterpret adult scenarios and express them in ways that are not representative of their personality.

OUR WALL MURAL

Artist and owner of Stir Your Imagination LLC Melissa DeBiase donated our beautiful tree mural in the preschool classroom to the school. A second tree was added to the toddler classroom as well. Questions regarding her services and talented artwork can be directed to: www.StirYourImagination.net, (724) 327-6327.

FUNDRAISING

Generally, KMS limits its fundraising to two main companies. 1. Scholastic Book Fairs- KMS accumulates points that allow each classroom to purchase books for their room. 2. Montessori Services- KMS is provided with a voucher for 10% of the total sales from KMS parents. Many new and exciting materials and books are purchased from the generosity of our Montessori Parents. Details will be sent home periodically.

DONATIONS (optional)

A Montessori School utilizes many different types of materials on a daily/weekly basis. Check with the teachers if you have any items that you are getting ready to toss out. Please consider donating a few items such as Kleenex or hand soap or napkins. Label donated item with your child's name so that we can recognize your child for their kindness.

PLEASE NOTE: Parent Handbook Signature Page (Statement of Understanding) is provided to each family at the start of the school year. It is completed on an annual basis; and required to complete your child's file.

Thank you for your support of Keystone Montessori School