

# HAZEL CREEK MONTESSORI HANDBOOK

Montessori Preschool and Daycare  
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# PARENT HANDBOOK

# **HAZEL CREEK MONTESSORI**

## **Preschool and Daycare**

### **Unique to Hazel Creek**

Situated on Bainbridge Island, Hazel Creek encompasses 10 acres of forest and farmland with a meandering stream, bordering designated wetlands and trails leading to “The Grand Forest.”

First built in 1990 by Ollie and Janice Pedersen and their children, Hazel Creek has been carefully developed into one of the most beautiful Pre-school settings in the Northwest. Program facilities include a large barn, playing fields, covered sport court, playground areas, children’s greenhouse and terraced gardens, nature trails and a variety of farm animals grazing over a beautiful country landscape. The integration of outdoor spaces into the total atmosphere of Hazel Creek Montessori sets it apart. HCM maintains certified Montessori Trained instructors, Washington State Certified Instructors and professional specialists in the arts and sciences, professional rescuers and certified lifeguards.

The Montessori education at Hazel Creek Montessori strives to link academic studies with direct outdoor experiences in nature. Since our inception, the children have participated in weekly 3 mile hikes, daily walks, animal husbandry, horseback riding, daily chores, dining outdoors year-round, gardening, harvesting, cooking, swimming and exploring the woods in our own backyard. Our swimming program gives each child the essential benefit of knowing how to swim and be comfortable in and around bodies of water. They will feel more confident and secure in outdoor settings. Our goal is to create future stewards of the environment by providing meaningful contact with the natural world.

Nature helps to develop a child’s senses, stimulate their imagination and teaches them to take risks. Our method of combining outdoor education along with the indoor academic studies has time and again proven to be a powerful antidote to the many things that ail kids today.

Hazel Creek Montessori has created a beautiful childhood preserve on Bainbridge Island. We are committed to the natural history of our area. Our nature-educational preserve has been at the forefront of a new kind of school reform.

### **Objective**

HCM’s objective is to develop the whole child. The program offers a variety of daily activities to promote growth in the areas of academic, physical, social and emotional development. Montessori discovered that children have critical learning periods (sensitive periods) for each new level of learning. During these sensitive periods, children absorb the lessons easier and faster than they ever will again. It is imperative

that the child not be discouraged during one of these periods. The materials, (both traditional and the extensions and contemporary) and environment in a Montessori classroom are designed to promote and nourish the periods of sensitivity. These periods are what create, in the child, a love of learning and a self-confidence that is so essential to healthy development. To ensure that these objectives are met, continual observation and screening of each child's development is an on-going process.

HCM's goal is for each child's needs to be met. The following are goals that every staff member strives to give each child: The need for belonging, the need for achievement, the need for freedom, from fear, the need for love and affection, the need for freedom from guilt, the need for sharing, the need for understanding and knowledge and the need for security.

The Montessori philosophy will be integrated into our TODDLER PROGRAM along with the use of basic Montessori materials. Our PRESCHOOL/DAYCARE PROGRAM will duplicate the Hazel Creek Montessori classes with before and after school enrichment programs.

### **What is Montessori?**

The Montessori philosophy and method of educating children was developed by Maria Montessori. She believed that children learn by actively manipulating the interrelated materials. Through repetition of movement, incorporating the hand and the brain, the inherent lesson within the material becomes a part of the mind. Therefore, the intricate process of the Montessori classroom is successful because of the skillfully developed activities and materials, and a meticulous method for administering them. The foundation of Montessori learning is the practical life section of the classroom. This section is based on everyday activities that help the child develop their small muscle and hand-eye coordination. The activities develop the base for upper level learning. The other areas of a Montessori classroom are sensorial, language, math, geography and botany. (Geared accordingly for the Toddler Program).

### **How Does Montessori differ from the Standard Classroom?**

The Montessori system differs in order of sequence. The Montessori classroom is set up so the environment and work are what control the child's activity. The child and his or her interests are the next order of priority. The teacher is the facilitator of the environment. After the teacher has established the scope of readiness for each child, individual lessons will be presented. In this way, every child is meeting his or her own separate potential.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Emergency Information**

Please have all your emergency information up-to-date at all times. Even if your information is temporary, it should be given to the head teacher.

### **Communications**

Please read daily bulletins and other important information from our Parent Message Board. If you have a question concerning your child or school policy, ask the contact person responsible. If you're unhappy with an issue, talk to the person it involves, within 24 hours, not other parents or staff members; or we ask that you not participate in our program.

### **Pick-up Policy**

HCM will not release any child in our school to anyone, except the parents, without **written** permission from the parents. We will ask for positive identification from those individuals picking up your child, if needed.

Emergency pick-up is sometimes necessary. It is the responsibility of each parent to be sure that someone other than yourself can pick up your child; i.e., power outage, snow storm, late ferry boats, etc. Please have this information available to HCM at all times.

### **School Calendar**

We will print a yearly calendar with important dates and hand it out at the beginning of each school year.

### **Recycling**

We strive to be environmentally sensitive.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

Children bring their own lunch in a lunch box – no brown bags allowed. Lunches need to be well balanced. HCM will provide snacks for the children in the extended day program. We will compost all leftover food. Please wrap food in wax paper, not plastic. We will not heat up food in plastic containers due to the toxins from plastic products.

## **Clothing**

Each child is required to pack a fresh backpack and bring daily. You're required to label and include a change of clothing, boots, coats and mittens, etc. Dress your child as though we were going outside every day, regardless of weather – raincoats and hats, etc. All children are required to wear rain boots each and every day during rainy weather. Our school is situated in a country farm-like setting; expect to pick up your child with dirty or wet clothes on occasion, as we encourage them to enjoy the elements without fear of getting dirty. If this occurs early in the day, they can change themselves. Please do not ask your child to stay clean! That restricts your child's ability to explore.

## **Blankets**

For napping children – please bring a clean blanket from home and take at the end of each week to launder.

## **Hygiene and Hand Washing Policies**

Children will be assisted with and/or washing their own hands after toileting and before handling food. Adults will wash hands and clean surfaces after diapering and toileting before handling food and after attending an ill child.

## **Toys**

No outside toys from home are allowed to be brought to school.

## **Toddlers**

We encourage toddlers to be without a pacifier, bottle and blanket during the day. Please help to establish this for independence. We do not use bottles in the toddler room.

## **Hikes**

We often go on spontaneous hikes. Please arrive on time or your child may not have the ability to attend that day if their class is already on a hike when you arrive.

## **Diapers (to be begin Fall 2007)**

We use a diaper service with 100% cotton diapers. Parents will incur the cost. We want to reduce the use of disposable diapers due to the waste and toxic chemicals.

## **Medication**

Pharmacy labels, parents written permission, physician's authorization are required. Name, dates, labels and instructions should be clearly marked. We will return any unused portions.

## **Discipline Policy**

We are concerned about the safety and appropriate behavior of the students who attend the school. Therefore, we have established rules that encourage a positive environment for everyone. The rules that have been established for the students attending our school will not inhibit their natural creativity and social growth. (See PARENT MANUAL for a successful start).

## **Sick Policy**

On the advice of health experts, we will not allow children with any of the following symptoms to be or remain in care:

1. Fever of 100°F. Axillary (under arm) or higher AND who also have one or more of the following:

- 3 Diarrhea
- 3 Earache
- 3 Show signs of irritability or confusion
- 3 Sore Throat
- 3 Rash

*A fever of up to 100°F, without any of these symptoms, will not automatically result in your child being excluded from care.*

2. Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within a 24-hour period.
3. Diarrhea of 3 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period or 1 bloody stool.
4. Draining rash or sore.
5. Eye discharge or pinkeye. Children/staff can be readmitted after:
  - 3 Medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial infection or,
  - 3 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
6. Fatigue preventing the child from being a part of regular activities.
7. Children/staff with open oozing sores, which cannot be covered, will not be allowed to be at the center until:
  - 3 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment or,

- 3 sores are properly covered (e.g., bandage/clothing, staff-gloves) or,
  - 3 sores are healed.
8. Lice and scabies. Children/staff may be readmitted after treatment and if no nits are visible.

If childcare staff or the director has concerns about a child's ability to safely return to care, we reserve the right to request a note from the child's healthcare provider.

We ask that ill children, as described above in 1-8, not attend childcare for the following reasons:

- 3 They are unable to be an active part of our daily program,
- 3 They expose other children and staff to illnesses, and
- 3 They are at risk for being exposed to other diseases when their resistance is low.

### **Withdrawal**

If a concern develops, you will refer to our Parent Manual and follow the steps outlined for a successful resolution.

If we find a resolution is not possible, after allowing a 30-day trial period from the time you voiced your concern and decide to withdraw your child, then you forfeit your deposit and registration fee. If after having just paid and you choose not to follow the steps provided, you will forfeit that month's tuition along with your deposit and registration fee.

### **Tuition**

Payments are due by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Please add a \$40.00 late fee for payments past the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### **Dismissal Policy**

We will not tolerate behavior that cannot be positively directed in a child. If any child at HCM continues to display behavior such as hitting, pushing or bullying beyond a two week period, they will be asked to leave for the benefit of everyone.

If a child's behavior becomes a problem in school, we will take the following steps (e.g. hitting, pushing, resisting discipline, bullying, intimidating, frightening others):

1. Document behavior.
2. Notify the parents in a timely fashion.
3. Meet with parents.
4. Try to come up with workable solutions for both school and home.
5. Continue to assess, evaluate, and compile information and conference with his/her teachers and specialists.
6. If this is not successful, we may choose to ask for outside help by a professional at your expense.
7. Parents must contact the professional to contact the school within a one-week period.
8. If a child's behavior continues to be a disruption, after implementing the above, HCM will ask for removal of your child. Should complaints continue or new developments occur that put other children at risk, we will require immediate removal of your child and the above does not apply. (For our summer program, if after one-week we are unable to curtail unacceptable behavior, we will ask the child to be removed from our program).
9. Should you decide not to follow these guidelines, your withdrawal from our program remains appropriate.
10. The ability to renegotiate is possible if a workable situation can be found for both parties involved.

### **Naps**

HCM has a nap room for those who need a rest or nap during the day. Children 3-1/2 years and under will take naps during the day. Children 3-1/2 to 4-1/2 years old will take a nap at the request of their parents or when a teacher feels they may need a rest. Each child taking a nap will have a mat with a cover to lie on. The parents will be responsible for taking the cover home and washing it once a week.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment requires a registration fee of \$50/family (one time fee) plus a deposit of one months' tuition. We require a 30-day notification for withdrawing your child from our program (See PARENT AGREEMENT).

### **Holidays and Closures**

HCM is closed for all Federal Holidays, Christmas Eve., Christmas Day and Thanksgiving Weekend. (All children enrolled for our half-day programs follow the Public School Schedule – refer to calendar.) We close if Public Schools close due to weather. If the Public Schools start late – we will start on time. We do not make up days due to weather even if the public school does. Listen to your radio stations for closure information. We will post two (2) additional days of closure for maintenance

## **Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect**

Licensed childcare providers and their staff are required by Washington State law to report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect (RCW 26.44.030(1)). In doing so, they will have civil immunity under the law for good faith reporting. Failure to report can result in a gross misdemeanor charge.

## **90-Day Trial Period**

Hazel Creek Montessori has a 90-day trial period for every student enrolled. For the harmonious interaction between staff, parents and administration, HCM retains the right as a private school to ask for the immediate withdrawal of your child due to philosophical differences.

## **Additional Parent Information**

Hazel Creek Activities include:

- Circle time
- Montessori work time
- Recess
- Snack
- Lunch
- Naps
- Horseback riding
- Swimming
- Spanish
- Art
- Music

You are required to sign in and out.

We conduct our business according to DSHS non-discrimination plan.

We will help toilet train your toddler with your permission.

HCM celebrates all religious holidays that pertain to our students.