



Grace  
*Montessori*

**Parent Handbook**



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4799 Fountain Square Drive, Kalamazoo MI 49009 • (269) 808 - 7002  
[www.gracemontessori.weebly.com](http://www.gracemontessori.weebly.com)

## Welcome!

Dear Parents,

I am dedicated to providing a warm, safe and nurturing environment where your child can continue to develop a sense of wonder and excitement for exploring, discovering, learning and appreciating the world in which God made. Every child has unique and special interests, needs and talents, and the early years are an important time of discovery and growth for all. I am excited to begin our partnership with you and am eager to start helping your child grow individually, academically and socially during the time spent with this program.

Communication is key to a successful partnership. This booklet was compiled to provide important program information and guidelines that you can reference throughout the school year. As always, you may contact me via phone, email or text anytime.

Thank you for placing your child in my care and I look forward to partnering with you to guide your child's growth and development.

Sincerely,

Debbie Long  
Owner, MACTE Certified Teacher

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## GRACE MONTESSORI SCHOOL DIRECTORY

### Owner & Teacher

Debbie Long ..... (269) 808 - 7002  
(info@kzoograce.org)

## MISSION

Grace Montessori strives to help each child grow spiritually, mentally, physically and socially through the dedication of staff who love the Lord and desire to serve Him through the educational process.

## PHILOSOPHY

Grace Montessori also exists as an extension of the home and the body of Christ to fulfill God's commands that state, *"Train up a child in the way he should go and he will never depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). The school's foundation rests upon acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the Bible as the Word of God—the final authority in truth and practice. I rely on parents to help through prayer, cooperation, and active involvement in the life of the school.



## GOALS OF A MONTESSORI EDUCATION

- Assist the child in his/her mental and physical ability to work appropriately in the environment (normalization).
- Allow children to have freedom coupled with responsibility, which then leads to self-respect, security, and creativity, which in turn leads to collaboration and cooperation.
- Create in the child the sense of independence, self-discipline, concentration motivation and sensitivity to things around him.
- Educate the whole child, with activities and lessons designed to promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, physical coordination, as well as cognitive preparation.
- Develop a positive attitude towards school and learning.
- Develop a healthy sense of self-confidence.
- Help the child develop the kindness, courtesy, and self-discipline that will allow him/her to become a full member of society.
- Encourage the child's inherent love of learning.

### ***Working in Partnership with the Family***

I believe that teachers and parents need to work hand in hand for the good of the children. I place a high value on partnership and have found that when *all* the people who share a common interest in a child meet as a team to share information and make decisions, the greater the benefit to the child. Positive change occurs when everyone cooperates.



## WHY MONTESSORI?

### ***A Developmental Point of View – Following The Child’s Lead***

The curriculum and learning activities are set up to enhance seven developmental areas: physical, social-emotional, cognitive, spiritual, language and musical. The child progresses at his own pace according to his needs, interests and abilities. I will not hurry or push a child in his or her development. Instead, I support the child in his or her own unique development.

### ***Montessori – A Method of Implementing Our Philosophy***

I choose to use the Montessori Method because I believe it is the best curriculum for implementing “a developmental point of view” and supporting a child’s developing brain. Montessori education is concerned with the learning and development of the WHOLE CHILD.

Dr. Maria Montessori’s philosophy of child development is based on her observations of children. Dr. Montessori observed that “...*education is not something the teacher does...it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to, but in virtue of, experiences in which the child acts on the environment.*”

### ***The Montessori Classroom***

From this philosophy, Dr. Maria Montessori developed educational materials which young children could use as they explored and experienced their environment. These self-teaching, sequential materials are the foundation of the Montessori method. The young child, through interacting with the materials and equipment, has many opportunities to problem-solve (the basis for all later learning) and to reinforce concepts already acquired.

The child comes to Grace Montessori with an absorbent mind, a natural and spontaneous urge to learn about God’s world. The **prepared environment** of a classroom and the materials in it are designed and specifically arranged to meet the needs of the developing child’s **sensitive periods** to learning. The **teacher acts as a catalyst** and is the link between the child and the environment.

### ***A Child’s “Jobs”***

In a Montessori classroom, a child’s learning activities are often referred to as “jobs” because Dr. Maria Montessori viewed a child’s learning through activity and play as his or her own “work.”

## ADMISSION AND PAYMENT POLICIES

### **Registration Process**

Parents must complete enrollment forms. All forms must be filled out properly BEFORE the first day of school. Children may be admitted to the Montessori preschool in one of two ways:

#### **1. Pre-Registration**

- Applications are accepted from continuing Grace Montessori families beginning November of current school year.
- Open enrollment begins January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

#### **2. Open Enrollment Throughout the Year**

New children are accepted throughout the year as openings occur and space is available.

There is a \$100 non-refundable registration fee that is applied toward your tuition payment for everyone who enrolls in our preschool program. Your child will be enrolled according to the date that you signed and completed the registration form and fees are received. If your first choice class is already filled, your child will be put in your second choice class and on the waiting list for your first choice. No person shall be denied admission to, excluded from, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity of Grace Montessori on the grounds of race, color or national origin.

Classes include children of mixed ages of 3 through 5 years. Space allowing, children who turn 3 after September 1st of the starting school year (and are comfortably potty trained) may apply once they have reached their 3rd birthday at which point the child may begin participating in the classroom. Late enrollments are accepted on a space available basis.

### **Payment Options**

- Payment in Full due August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 2 Payments – August 15<sup>th</sup> & January 15<sup>th</sup>
- 9 Monthly Payments – due August 15<sup>th</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>

### **Early Care**

Statements will be sent home at the end of each month and will be due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month.



***Withdrawal Policy***

If a parent wants to withdraw their child from Grace Montessori, they are required to provide two weeks written notice and are financially obligated for month in which the dated notice is submitted.

In the event that parents do not provide two weeks written notice, they will be required to pay Grace Montessori the regular program fees for the remainder of the year regardless of attendance.

Both parties within our Parent Contract, found in the registration packet, agree upon this policy.

***School Initiated Withdrawal***

Grace Montessori is dedicated to maintaining a safe, harmonious environment for the optimum development of all enrolled children. I reserve the right to withdraw a child without notice if the child's participation in the program creates a direct threat to the safety of the child, other children or the staff of Grace Montessori.

The school operates on the tuition and fees paid for services. If a family's account is significantly past due (30 days), the child will be withdrawn from the program until the account is brought to current status. If, during the time of withdrawal, there is a waiting list, Grace Montessori reserves the right to replace the vacant spot with another child from the waiting list. Written notification of intent to withdraw a child shall be made at least seven days prior to withdrawal.

## DISCIPLINE

### ***Positive Discipline Guidelines***

Grace Montessori is committed to providing a supportive learning environment where young children can grow to their fullest potential. I am committed to respecting the uniqueness of each child and following each child's own developmental chronology. These values are reflected in the discipline policies and procedures.

I believe "discipline" is another aspect of teaching and learning, not punishment. Discipline encompasses all those actions taken by the teacher to encourage the development of social and behavioral competence in children. I will be consistent with guidelines suggested by Co-Authors of "Teaching with Love and Logic" Jim Fay & David Funk. The Love and Logic process includes sharing control and decision-making, using empathy with consequences, and enhancing the self-concept of children. Parents who would like more information about the resource "Teaching with Love and Logic" or the parent resource "Parenting with Love and Logic" may contact the teacher.

I follow these guidelines for teaching children to behave in responsible ways:

- Set realistic expectations for young children's behavior.
- Create an environment that enhances the possibility that children will behave in appropriate ways.
- Focus on positive communication techniques to gain children's cooperation.
- Give children alternatives to turn destructive situations into constructive ones.
- Use natural and logical consequences to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Teach preschool children to use problem-solving skills and strategies to resolve conflicts.

## HEALTH CARE PLAN

### ***Information Regarding Illness or Injuries***

The school is committed to providing a safe and healthy place for each child. Germs travel quickly among young children. Please check your children for signs of illness before bringing them to school. If your child is feeling ill, he/she must be kept at home until the infection period is over and is feeling well again. If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be isolated in comfort with supervision, and you will be called to pick up your child as soon as possible. **Your child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.** If your child will not be in school, please telephone prior to 8:30 a.m. or send an email/text letting the teacher know the circumstances of your child's illness. Contagious diseases must also be reported. The County Health Department regulations require preschools to file a weekly report.

A child should remain at home on any school day that he/she has:

- **Fever** - A temperature of 100° orally, 99° under arm, 101° by ear. Child's temperature must be normal for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Diarrhea** - Child must be free of symptoms for a full 24 hours.
- **Vomiting** - Child must be without symptoms for 24 hours.
- **Severe upper respiratory illness** - including congestion, constant uncontrolled nasal discharge, mucus in the eyes, colored mucus in the nose, severe uncontrolled productive cough (raising phlegm).
- **Skin infections or rashes that are suspicious of being contagious** - including ringworm, impetigo, measles, chicken pox, herpes, etc.
- **Communicable diseases** – including measles, tuberculosis, whooping cough, etc. reportable to the Department of Public Health.
- **Any lesion, wound, or skin rash with bleeding or oozing of clear fluid or pus** - A child may return when: a health care provider signs a note stating that the condition is not contagious, *and* the area can be covered by a bandage without any drainage through the bandage.
- **Head Lice, Scabies or other infestations**
- **Conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)**
- **Mouth sores with drooling**

### ***Communicable Diseases***

Please notify one of the teachers immediately if your child has a communicable disease so that the incubation dates can be verified and the parents of other children in our facility can be informed of the exposure.

### ***Medication***

Prescription medication - If medicine is a "prescribed" medication from a doctor, it must be in the prescription bottle and labeled with the child's name, the time to be administered, and the dosage amount.

**Over the counter medication** - If medication is an over the counter medication, then clear directions must be printed on the label appropriate to the age of the child. The medication will be kept out of reach of children.

**Written permission from parent/guardian** - A written note from the parent must accompany both of the above giving permission to administer the medication. This note must be written and dated daily for the entire time the medicine is to be given.

### ***First Aid***

Staff is trained in basic first aid and will administer minor treatment as needed. Parents are notified of any injury. Parents will be notified immediately if the injury requires more than a simple first aid procedure. Simple first aid procedures for treatment of minor injuries consist of washing the injury with soap and water.

### ***Universal Precautions***

The staff at Grace Montessori use universal precautions when dealing with infectious material. This means all staff will use non-latex gloves when performing any duties that involve bodily fluids. Also, any clean up materials will be disposed of properly to insure safety for all. If you have any questions regarding these precautions, please contact the teacher. I do request that all parents train their child to be careful not to touch someone else's bodily fluids. If an emergency were to occur, I require those parents who choose to help to also use universal precautions. I thank you in advance for your understanding and support in this area.

I thoroughly clean and disinfect tables and equipment to prevent germs from spreading. Everyone must wash their hands before eating and after using the restrooms. The children will learn to wash their hands with soap, rinse thoroughly, dry their hands with a paper towel and turn off the faucet with a towel in hand. Please help me train your child in the proper way to wash hands by practicing this procedure at home. Remember, hand washing is the #1 guard against infection.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### ***Emergency Plan***

Grace Montessori is prepared for emergency situations. I have adequate first aid supplies. I am trained in CPR and first aid. Every staff member has an assigned job in the event of an emergency. Children will be instructed on emergency procedures in case of a fire or a tornado while at school, and will participate in regular fire drills and learn other rules of safety. Fire and tornado evacuation procedures are posted in child occupied areas. In case of a community-wide disaster, children will remain at school under the supervision of the staff until called for by the parent or designated adult.

### ***Serious Accidents***

In the event that a child is seriously injured or becomes seriously ill while in attendance at the preschool, the teacher will remain with the injured child. Emergency first aid will be administered as necessary. Family health policies are primary and will be contacted first.

The teacher will reassure the child and keep him calm and quiet until the emergency medical personnel take over the child's care. If the teacher has to accompany the child to the hospital, a designated emergency care adult will remain in charge of the remaining children until the teacher can return or parents arrive to take their children home.

Once the proper emergency medical personnel have been contacted, the parents of the sick or injured child will be immediately notified. If conditions do not warrant immediate notification of emergency personnel, the parents will be contacted immediately and notified of the situation.

### ***Crisis Management Plan***

How I manage and communicate during a crisis will ensure the safety of each child in our preschool. A plan of action has been developed to provide for the safety of the children in the event of a crisis. The plans will be followed by the teacher upon notification of a crisis situation by the local authorities. The Crisis Management Plan will be reviewed by the staff on an annual basis as a part of the pre-service training before the opening of school.



## VOLUNTEER POLICY

Grace Montessori takes great care to ensure all adults involved in the classroom have met the required State of Michigan safety checks. ALL volunteers are required to submit the Request for Central Registry Clearance form included in the Registration Packet **before their first day** in the classroom. This process takes 2 weeks so please plan ahead.

Mail to: *Marti Chingo*  
*Kalamazoo Family Independence Agency*  
*322 Stockbridge*  
*Kalamazoo MI 49001*

### **Who May Volunteer**

- Parents/Guardians of currently enrolled students
- Relatives of currently enrolled students if parent/guardian gives permission
- Parents of Grace Montessori graduates
- Professionals from the local community who provide a needed service for an enrolled child.

## EMERGENCY CARE PERSON

The State of Michigan requires another adult be named as the Emergency Care person (18 years and older) who will supervise the children during an emergency. This person will be announced at Parent Information Night each Fall. In the event the Emergency Care person changes during the school year, parents will be notified as soon as possible. Grace Montessori reserves the right to include the Emergency Care person in classroom activities to establish a classroom presence during non-emergency class times. This ensures a smoother transition and provides some familiarity with the Emergency Care person so the children will be more apt to respond favorably in an emergency.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Biblical Fundamentals, music, movement and Montessori method are integrated throughout the classroom.

### Typical Day

When the children arrive at school, they are greeted with words of welcome and are directed to the area where they hang up their coat and backpack. The children will then gather with their friends for a short group time, which may include introduction to new materials, singing, grace and courtesy lessons, storytelling, etc. After group time the children will begin work time. It is at this time, the children will be able to choose work from the materials on the shelves and in the room, or be invited to do lessons with the teacher. These lessons are designed to introduce new work or reinforce previous lessons. This allows the teachers to individualize the child's path through the room, and continue to present new materials as each child is ready. The children work individually, with a friend, or in a small group. The important thing is to set up the children for success. The length of time spent on individual work depends a great deal on the children. After work-time, the children will clean their room and return to group time. There will be music, stories, or special activities. Then children spend time in the classroom to develop their gross motor skills (jumping, tossing, rolling, balancing, etc.). Dismissal is accompanied by a handshake, a hug or parting words.



### Daily Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 AM • Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Bible	8:30 AM • Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Bible	8:30 AM • Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Bible	8:30 AM • Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Bible	Schedule subject to change due to special celebrations, field trips and extra activities.
9:00 AM • Work/Lesson Time	9:00 AM • Work/Lesson Time	9:00 AM • Work/Lesson Time	9:00 AM • Work/Lesson Time	
10:15 AM • Clean Up	10:45 AM • Clean Up	10:45 AM • Clean Up	10:45 AM • Clean Up	
10:30 AM • Music	• Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Prayer	• Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Prayer	• Gathering Time • Songs/Movement • Weather • Prayer	
11:00 AM • Outdoor Time	11:00 AM • Prayer	11:00 AM • Prayer	11:00 AM • Prayer	
11:30 AM • Pick-up (1/2 Day)	• Outdoor Time	• Outdoor Time	• Outdoor Time	
11:30 AM-12:30PM Lunch/Rest	11:30 AM • Pick-up (1/2 Day)	11:30 AM • Pick-up (1/2 Day)	11:30 AM • Pick-up (1/2 Day)	
12:30 PM • Work/Lesson Time	11:30 AM-12:30PM Lunch/Rest	11:30 AM-12:30PM Lunch/Rest	11:30 AM-12:30PM Lunch/Rest	
2:30 PM • Clean Up • Outdoor Time	12:30 PM • Work/Lesson Time	12:30 PM • Work/Lesson Time	12:30 PM • Music	
3:00 PM • Pick-up	2:30 PM • Clean Up • Outdoor Time	2:30 PM • Clean Up • Outdoor Time	1:30 PM • Work/Lesson Time	
	3:00 PM • Pick-up	3:00 PM • Pick-up	2:30 PM • Clean Up • Outdoor Time	
			3:00 PM Pick-up	

## CLASSROOM AREAS

### ***Work time - A Time of Individual Choice***

During this time, the children are self-directed and are able to choose freely from activities in the prepared environment. Children experience an enriched environment offering a range of activities that satisfy both the youngest child's interest in concrete manipulative materials and the older child's increasing understanding of abstract concepts. The classroom contains multiple interrelated areas, which are the foundation of the Montessori environment.

### **Practical Life**

The objects that are used for practical life have no scientific purpose. They are the objects used where a child lives and which he sees employed in his own home, but they are especially made to his size. Although the Practical Life Exercises may seem simple and commonplace, they are actually a very important part of the Montessori method. These exercises make the child more independent and a useful member of his community; e.g. cleaning up after his/her snack, putting on his/her jacket, wiping the spills, etc. Activities such as sweeping, pouring, sponging, washing, food preparation, etc., are designed to develop the child's sense of order, focus, concentration, sequential memory and eye for detail. These are fundamental disciplines for further academic learning. Lessons in grace and courtesy are presented to develop social skills and strengthen virtue.

### **Sensorial**

The senses play an important role in the child's development at this early age. The sensorial exercises are designed to develop an awareness and refinement of the senses: visual, tactile, auditory, and olfactory senses. Sensory education helps the child acquire details and accurate knowledge leading toward a reasoning mind. It is a basis for future cognitive learning.

### **Language**

Language development is an integral part of each learning area as well as a special area in and of itself. The classroom exposes the children to many materials and activities that will enable them to develop and refine their vision, hearing, and speech as a preparation for more formal learning of language. To develop readiness, the child prepares his hand for writing with equipment such as the metal insets. Through guidance in the way letters look, sound, and feel, the child moves into the simple stages of phonetic reading. Next, the child is introduced to more complex sounds, expanding his reading ability. This approach gives children a total reading experience that enables them to do more than identify words; it leads them to understand the ideas and feelings.

### **Mathematics**

Children are born with a mathematical mind and encounter mathematical concepts every day. Math activities offer the child materials that help them develop from the concrete to

the abstract. Materials such as number rods, spindle boxes, colored and golden beads are used to teach counting and the concept of zero. Golden bead material introduces the child to units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. Math is used in all areas of the child's life, for example, determining the number of lunch place settings or rhythm sticks. Children in a Montessori classroom can expand their understanding of mathematics to a practically limitless degree.

### **Culture**

Cultural subjects include art, music, history, geography, science and nature with Biblical studies applied to each. These are taught in conjunction with other interests in order to give the child an appreciation of how the arts, sciences and humanities affect everyday life.

### **Exercise**

Montessori is unique in that children are constantly using large muscles to carry works throughout the classroom. Large muscles are also used to manipulate many of the lesson components. Children also use large muscles as they participate in group games and during music & movement class.

### **Bible**

The teacher will present bible stories in a joyful way for young children to worship God modeled after the Montessori method. A unique storytelling format and multisensory materials invite children to experience the wonder and mystery of God. The teacher presents biblical stories using wooden figures and other materials to create an environment that cultivates the imagination and invites children to fall in love with God.

### **Music and Movement -- *ABC Music & Me* (created by Kindermusik)**

Children will hear, learn, observe, and wonder. The teacher introduces songs, finger plays, and movement activities. Simple age appropriate instruments (sand blocks, triangles, drums, etc.) are incorporated to encourage the development of a steady beat which is a skill needed for pre-reading. Music is a wonderful way for children to be exposed to and practice using language. Positive experiences with music teach children to "tune-in" and encourage them to discriminate, focus and use their attention to stay on task. A child's entire brain is engaged when listening to music and participating in music and movement activities. Monthly materials will be given to children to be used with family members to encourage the partnership of learning with the home.

*"The essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality."* Dr. Maria Montessori

## CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

### Ages

Classes include children of mixed ages of 3 through 5 years. Space allowing, children who turn 3 after September 1st of the starting school year (and comfortably potty trained) may apply once they have reached their 3rd birthday at which point the child may begin participating in the classroom. Late enrollments are accepted on a space available basis. A minimum of 3 registered children required to run a session.

DAYS	AGE	TIME	TUITION
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	3 Years	8:30 - 11:30am	\$1,955
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	3 Years	12:30 - 3:00pm	\$1,755
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	3 & 4 Years	8:30 - 11:30am	\$2,410
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	3, 4, & 5 Years	8:30 - 11:30am	\$2,790
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	4 & 5 Years	8:30am - 3:00pm	\$3,545
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	4 & 5 Years	8:30am - 3:00pm	\$4,730
<input type="checkbox"/> Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	3, 4, & 5 Years	8:30am - 3:00pm	\$5,915
The following will be invoiced monthly. At least 24 hour notice is preferred.			
Before Care <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> F	3, 4, & 5 Years	8:00 - 8:30am	\$5/day
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch Bunch <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> T <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> Th <input type="checkbox"/> F	3, 4, & 5 Years	11:30am - 12pm	\$5/day
A \$100 non-refundable deposit will hold your child's place and will be deducted from the tuition.			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pay in Full - due August 15th.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Payments - due August 15th and January 15th.			
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Payments - due August 15th and each successive month through April 15th.			

### Arrival and Departure

The procedure for drop-off and pick-up involves parking on the street and walking up the driveway to enter through the front door. This ensures the safety of children in the driveway. Ensure child has removed outerwear and bring downstairs to classroom. At pick-up time, our child will be waiting for you inside the front door or in the back yard. Please call or text the teacher before 8:30 am if your child is not coming to school. Leave a message on voicemail if no one answers.

### Sign-In and Sign-Out

Michigan Child Care Licensing requires that each child's attendance time is documented. The Montessori Compass software I use has a feature to track in/out times. A warm greeting from the teacher and a big hug from you will be a nice beginning to your child's day. Brief and loving good-byes are the best.



***Emergency Forms***

Current emergency forms providing accurate, up-to-date information are required by law. Please inform the teacher of any changes in emergency information. New emergency forms are required each new school year.

***Release of Children***

Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or to persons whose names are listed on the Emergency Form. Therefore, in order to provide for emergency situations that prevent you from picking up your child, be certain to include those individuals whom you would authorize in such events. Parents/guardians should advise the teacher in advance, in writing, if a person who is not listed on the original form is to pick up the child. Identification will be requested of these authorized persons picking up children. Children will not be released without written authorization.

***New Students***

It is my policy to meet with each family prior to enrollment to ensure that the program matches the expectations you have for your child. Please email to schedule a visit. A registration packet will be provided at your visit. Early registration begins in November for current students. Open enrollment begins January 1st of each year. Priority is given to siblings of currently enrolled students and students transferring from other Montessori schools.

***Returning Students***

All returning children should come on the scheduled first full day of school.  
The A.M. class begins promptly at 8:30 am and ends at 11:30 am.  
The P.M. class begins promptly at 12:30 pm and ends at 3:00 pm.

### ***Separation***

Part of the school experience is for parents and children to learn to separate from each other. Here are a few helpful hints for what can be an emotional time for both parent and child. Let your child know ahead of time what is going to happen when you take him/her to school. Be aware of how you are feeling about your child starting school. (Are you fearful about leaving him/her? Will it be hard for you to separate from your child?) Your feelings are normal, but it's important not to let your child absorb your anxiety. If you act overly worried, your child will think there is something to be afraid of. Be positive and upbeat. Have a goodbye ritual that you do every time you leave to soothe your child. Always say goodbye before you leave. Never sneak out! Your child needs to be able to trust you. If your child is crying, give him/her to a teacher, say good-bye and then leave. Lingering often makes it worse for a child by prolonging the separation anxiety.

### ***Clothing and Personal Items***

The Montessori method encourages independent self-care for the child. For this reason, our younger children should wear simple, comfortable clothing that is easy to put on and take off by the child. **Indoor slippers or indoor shoes** are recommended during inclement weather. Please remember to keep this extra pair of shoes in your child's backpack at all times.

Your child may play outside weather permitting. Appropriate outdoor clothing, including hats, mittens and **safe** shoes are important items to remember EVERY DAY.

I request that you keep a change of clothes sealed in a zip lock bag in your child's backpack. This should include a change of underwear, t-shirt, shorts or pants, and a pair of socks. **The child's' name should be clearly labeled with a permanent marker on all clothing and shoes.**

### ***Potty Trained***

A child is permitted to attend Grace Montessori if he/she is comfortably potty trained. I realize that accidents will occur occasionally, but if a consistent pattern occurs, the parent will be notified and asked to remove the child from attending school until the wetting or accidents stop. My policy regarding accidents is if four or more accidents occur in a two-week time frame, you will be asked to keep your child home until the time when he/she is completely potty-trained. Therefore, children may not wear pull-ups or diapers. With this policy in place, it ensures the child a successful experience in the classroom.

### ***Snack/Nutrition***

Snack times are great learning opportunities for the children. In conjunction with our Practical Life and Grace & Courtesy lessons we learn:

- how to wash up
- how to prepare a table
- food & drink preparation
- portion control
- proper table manners & etiquette
- how to clean up

I am also committed to modeling healthy eating habits and am respectful of those who have food sensitivities. For this reason I have established a specific snack schedule and will provide the necessary healthy snack foods. The school provides drinking water for the beverage portion of the snack.

Healthy eating habits include making decisions based on personal taste, learning the difference between food that helps our bodies to grow and "special treats", and also when our bodies are hungry vs. eating at a pre-determined time. Our snack table is open the entire class time and children are free to partake when they feel hungry. If the snack table is full, the children are encouraged to come back when there is an empty chair. I understand that everyone has different tastes. Children are encouraged to try the snack in order to develop their sense of taste; however, it is their choice to decide not to finish if it is not to their liking.

### ***Allergies***

Please note: if your child has any allergy or sensitivity it is important to let the teacher know in writing. If there are products or foods that should not be in the classroom please indicate that as well. For children with food allergies/sensitivities I ask that you provide an appropriate snack alternative in your child's backpack on the days the scheduled snack is not appropriate for him/her.

### ***Celebration of Life***

I believe a wonderful way to celebrate a child's birthday is by honoring his or her life and accomplishments. About a week before your child's birthday you will be given a basket containing a set of picture frames and a story outline. Please put one birth photo, one a 1 year, one at 2 years old, etc., in the appropriate frames. The story of your child's life will be read during the celebration. Let your child participate in selecting pictures and writing his or her life story. The Celebration of Life is a very special occasion to honor the life that God has given your child. You are welcome to join the celebration by reading your child's story, but in

the event you aren't able, the teacher will read it. In either case, I thank you in advance for your help in making your child's celebration a meaningful and memorable event.

Along with the picture frames and story, I ask that you also fill the basket with the following items:

1. A birthday treat that is something simple, individualized and easy to pass and eat, as it will be served at the birthday circle. Special days have been indicated for each child's birthday (or half birthday) - on these days we ask that your child serve a special treat to the class. Please keep it easy to pass and eat because it is served in the birthday circle. Some suggested not-too-sweet treats are fruit snacks, rice crispy treats, or Jello jigglers. Cakes and cupcakes are hard for the children to eat on the circle because they crumble easily. Let your child help decide what to bring.
2. A bouquet of fresh flowers that the children will arrange and place in the classroom.
3. A book to share with the class. This can be one of your child's books or one to be given to the school. The book will be placed in the "book corner" for the week and then either returned or donated to the school library – please indicate your preference. Make sure that your child's name is on the inside cover regardless of your intention for returning.

### ***Visiting the Classroom***

Parents are strongly encouraged to visit the school; however, I like to allow the children several weeks to feel comfortable in their new environment and therefore do not schedule observations during the first month of school. I hope that each parent will take time to observe his or her child's learning environment by scheduling an appointment during the school day. Please call or email the teacher to schedule an appointment.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ***Schedule***

Each family will receive an annual calendar listing special dates and events scheduled for the school year. In the event of unplanned changes each child will receive an updated calendar at that time. All dates will be listed in *Montessori Compass*.

### ***Child Progress***

Each enrolled family will receive a private “login” to the parent side of our online recordkeeping program *Montessori Compass*. This is where we will report each child's progress as well as plans for future lessons.

### ***Blog***

A blog is part of our web site it is the main way we will post about our discoveries and upcoming events. There may also be periodic information on topics related to parenting and understanding children's behavior.

### ***Website***

Visit [www.gracemontessori.weebly.com](http://www.gracemontessori.weebly.com) - we'd love it if you would share with friends, too.

### ***Facebook***

Grace Montessori has a Facebook page – find us and “Like” our page!

### ***Staff***

Grace Montessori is very proud of its professional and experienced staff with a certified Montessori teacher. Continuing education courses, conferences and seminars are critical to the evolving field of education. The teacher at Grace maintains a continuing education plan to increase knowledge of developmentally appropriate teaching practices so that she may better serve young children. Criminal history checks are completed on all employees.

### ***Open Lines of Communication***

Please let the teacher know if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child throughout the year. You are encourage to make the teacher aware of any events or problems that may affect your child's behavior, whether it is his/her health or just a matter of



“getting up on the wrong side of the bed.” Working together as partners will help your child experience a successful year.

### ***Photographs***

Throughout the year photos will be taken of the children in school. If you do not wish to have your child photographed, please indicate your preference on the Photo/Video Release form, and let the teacher know.

### ***School Closing***

When the Kalamazoo Public Schools are closed due to weather, Grace Montessori will not meet. School closings will be announced on our Blog, Facebook page and on WMMT Channel 3.

### ***Child Abuse and Neglect***

I hope and pray that all children attending the school are growing up in a secure and loving environment. Should a situation arise in which there is a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, the teacher is morally and legally obligated to immediately report any instance to the local Children's Protective Services Unit. Failure to report abuse or neglect is a crime that can result in legal penalties.

### ***Pesticide Management Program***

- Pesticides will not be used on the property while children are present.
- Parents will be notified in advance of pesticide application through the school communications system and a posting at the school entrance. Advance notice will include target pest or purpose, approximate location, date of application, and contact information.
- Parents may receive notification by first-class mail postmarked three days before the application if they so request.
- A pesticide application will not be performed in the classroom unless the room will be unoccupied by children for not less than four hours or longer if required by pesticide label use directions.

## **FAMILY ACTIVITIES and PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### ***New Parent Orientation***

This orientation is for all new parents. Orientation meetings for new parents are held before the school begins. For parents whose children begin during the school year, the teacher will give an orientation at the time of registration. The orientation includes information on what the school offers during the year, a review of the policies and procedures, information about our philosophy and teaching method, a classroom visit, and a time for questions.

### ***Family Events***

One or more times during the school year an event will be scheduled where all enrolled children and their families can gather for fun and fellowship. Examples of past gatherings included picnics and movie nights.

### ***Parent Participation***

Each family is asked to have a representative at the parent information meeting held prior to the beginning of classes. Families may be asked to sign-up to serve on a committee. Parents also provide transportation for their own child to and from field trips. The school will not be liable for any injuries as a result of transportation to and from field trips.

### ***Parent/Teacher Conferences***

The school schedules conferences twice a year – one in the fall and one in the spring. Your feedback and input is welcome at anytime, and you are encouraged to contact the teacher with suggestions, concerns or questions.

### ***Field Trips***

Scheduled field trips are an integral part of our program. Families will be asked to provide transportation to and from each event. Staff of Grace Montessori is unable to transport children to and from the site and are not liable for any accidents and/or injuries that occur on the way to, at or on the way from the field trip site.

## FAMILY SERVICES

### ***Grace Montessori is Committed To Supporting Families***

Parenting children is the most important job in the world. Being a parent is also one of the most difficult tasks most of us will ever face. No one prepares us for this monumental life change, and we often experience doubts and confusion without a clear road map to guide us. Many families today are isolated from the support of relatives and other parents, and they find they have no one to help them with their questions and challenges. The following services are available for your use should you need them:

### ***Health and Community Services*** ***School/Preschool Health***

The Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department Communicable Disease Consultation Program provides health information, resources, and consultation to Kalamazoo County schools, preschools and childcare centers, and the families they serve. Our program activities include health education presentations, routine school visits, training and support services for immunization reporting, communicable disease consultation and intervention, and referrals to community health resources.



**For questions about the Communicable Disease Consultation Program, please call 269-373-5239 or 269-373-5264 .**

### ***What Concerns Might You Call About?***

- *Normal childhood problems*
- *Family disruptions or changes*
- *Unexpected crisis*
- *Parenting frustrations*
- *Worrisome child behaviors*
- *Anticipated challenges*
- *Single parent concerns*
- *Family problems*
- *Developmental delays*