



"The education of a very small child, therefore does not aim at preparing him for school but for life".

- Maria Montessori

Welcome

Welcome

Welcome! Casa Montessori is an intimately sized, one classroom preschool located in the Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn. We serve young children, ages 2.6-5, and their families through the implementation of quality early childhood practices and a true passion for early education. It is our hope that in providing young children with a strong educational foundation and a true enthusiasm for learning that Casa Montessori children will continuously pose questions, confront curiosities and become eager lifelong learners. We combine the approaches of Montessori, Reggio Emilia and current, sound early childhood practices to ensure a learning experience that is intentional, meaningful and most of all joyful!

Casa Montessori is Located in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn:
119 Union Street
Brooklyn, NY 11231

Program

Mission

It is our mission to create a Montessori inspired space for children to begin their learning journey through life. Throughout the day, the children will have opportunities to interact with teachers and peers in both English and Spanish. In this intimately sized class, teachers will follow the children's natural curiosity, encouraging their instinctive desire to learn with inspiring classroom materials and a flexible curriculum. We will lay the foundation for each academic area in an age-appropriate manner that honors each child's unique learning style. Most importantly, we will create a positive atmosphere in which the children will flourish socially, emotionally and academically. In scaffolding the interests of the children from a Montessorian perspective, accompanied by the philosophies of the Reggio Emilia Approach, Casa Montessori children will build confidence and independence in their own learning.

The Montessori Approach

The Montessori approach supports children in making sense of their world through purposeful and intentional activities, or “work”. The Montessori philosophy is deeply rooted in helping children to build confidence and develop a sense of independence and self-motivation within the classroom as well as in their lives outside of school. The approach is successful because it draws its principles from the natural development of the child. The inherent flexibility allows the method to adapt to the needs of the individual, regardless of the level of ability, learning style, or social development. Montessori children grow to be autonomous, kind, responsible members of a community eager to problem solve, self-motivate and learn with joyful spirit.

The Classroom Environment

The Montessori classroom provides a carefully prepared environment where children learn through a natural process of exploration. Work is provided for them based on their own interests and curiosities. The children's inherent love of learning is encouraged by giving them opportunities to engage in meaningful activities while being supported by the teacher. Through their work, the children develop concentration, motivation, persistence and independence. Within this framework of order, the children progress at their own pace and rhythm, according to their individual capabilities, during the crucial years of development. That is why Montessori believed the environment plays a crucial role in the development of the young child. In a prepared environment, children learn through a natural process of exploration. They work at their own pace and are guided by their own interests. This allows them to satisfy their natural curiosity and begin to build a sense of confidence in their ability to discover what the world is about. Each material is developmentally appropriate, attractive, and incorporates the child's need for movement, concentration, order and independence. Also, inherent in this environment is the development of each child's reflective thinking. The teacher supports the children's choices and instills love and care for the environment and each other.

The Directors

Dana Szarf was born and raised in Caracas Venezuela. She currently lives in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn with her husband and two daughters, Briana and Siena. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Universidad Metropolitana, Venezuela, and a Masters degree in Early Childhood Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Dana received her Montessori training from the Center for Montessori Training located in New Rochelle, New York. She has worked as a Montessori teacher for over 17 years in various schools throughout the New York City area. After the birth of her oldest daughter, Dana held Montessori Playgroups for toddlers in different locations in Brooklyn. She now directs at Casa Montessori in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn. Dana hopes that in providing children with inspiring classroom materials and lessons, and a nurturing safe environment that the students at Casa Montessori will develop a true sense of wonder and joyful curiosity.

Meryl Keenan Bash was born and raised in New Rochelle, New York. She currently resides in her hometown and lives with her husband, Kirill, her two sons, Paxton and Holden, and cat, Stitch. She attended the University of Vermont Early Childhood Program as an undergraduate student and has completed a Masters in Literacy Education at Hunter College in New York City. Meryl holds a New York State teaching license in Early Childhood Education (Birth-grade 2). Additionally, Meryl spent several years teaching in

various private and public schools throughout New York City and Brooklyn. Meryl now co-directs at Casa Montessori. Meryl's pedagogy is founded in the philosophies of Reggio Emilia, a teaching method developed in Reggio Emilia Italy. Meryl combines her knowledge of the Montessori method and the Reggio Emilia perspective to provide children with invaluable learning opportunities.

The Classroom Teachers

Blanca Quintanilla was born and raised in Guatemala City. She currently lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn with her husband. Blanca has a degree in Marketing and Advertising from IECA, Universidad Mariano Galvez in Guatemala City. She attended Brooklyn College Bilingual Early Childhood Education program as an undergraduate. Blanca received her Montessori certification from the Center for Montessori Teacher Education located in New Rochelle, New York. She has worked in a Montessori environment for over 17 years! Initially she worked as an assistant teacher and later as a classroom co-teacher at Rivendell School in Brooklyn where her daughter, who is now entering her second year of college, was a Montessori student. Blanca has accumulated valuable experience working in an inclusion environment and recognizes the importance of strong social and emotional curriculum in a school setting. Blanca has great respect for each child's individuality and has always been a strong advocate for enriching the classroom curriculum. She promotes wonder, creativity and imagination in order to guide, challenge and nurture each child's interest. She is delighted to be part of the Casa Montessori family and thrilled to be entering the fifth full year at Casa Montessori!

Ursula Gutierrez was born and raised in Queens, New York. She has her Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Queens College. Being inspired by her own daughter, she is now attending Concordia University pursuing a Master's in Early Childhood Special Education and receiving her Montessori training at West Side Montessori School. Ursula has worked with children for the past nine years and has worked in various schools including a Reggio inspired school as a lead teacher. She hopes to provide children with a solid foundation for learning and support the children in discovering themselves and the world around them. She is not only eager to be part of the Casa Montessori family, but also wants to inspire the children and is dedicated to giving them a wonderful school year.

Jessica Cantor was born and raised in Kensington, Brooklyn. Her family originated from Mexico, and she is proudly the first generation to be able to continue higher education. Jessica graduated from Borough of Manhattan Community College with an associate degree in Early Childhood Education (birth through grade 3). She is currently attending Brooklyn College pursuing her bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education and Art Education. Her career journey started at Washington Market School, a Montessori school in Tribeca, NYC. At the Washington Market School, Jessica conducted child case studies, analyzing the five domains of development. In doing this internship, she was able to gain experience in working with children on a one-on-one basis. This allowed her to create strong and trustworthy relationships with the children. Additionally, Jessica has worked at the Bank Street Preschool on the Upper West Side in Manhattan. Here, Jessica had the opportunity to lead the class, which helped to build her initiative and confidence with preschool groups. The wisdom and pedagogy of the teachers at Bank Street Preschool deeply impacted and inspired Jessica to further her work with young children. Jessica has

now worked as an assistant teacher at Casa Montessori since September 2015 and is thrilled to be returning for her third year! Being at Casa, Jessica has learned so much from her co-teachers and the children, allowing her to flourish as an educator. Jessica is honored to be part of the Casa Montessori community and looks forward to another year filled with joy and learning!

Our Day

Children arrive at school at 9:00AM. Is it very important that children and families arrive on time so every child has ample time to be greeted by a teacher and successfully un-pack her belongings. After saying, "See You Later" to parents or caregivers the children engage in Open Work Time. It is during this time that we believe children "learn to learn". That is to say, during work periods children take interest in an activity (Called a "Work" in the Montessori Classroom) and therefore make a commitment to learn about something. Through this engagement with carefully deigned Work, children discover the joy of learning and exploration. It is also during this time that teachers carefully observe the children, their interests and their various styles of learning. These observations are used to modify small group interactions and lessons during work periods.

After the initial work period, children are called together for Morning Meeting. During this circle time, children and teachers sing together, greet one another through song and games, talk about the calendar and have discussions about the "happenings" in the lives of the children. Finally we commence with a Lesson of the Day. Lessons vary from day to day. One lesson can simply demonstrate pouring water for oneself while another might introduce simple addition using concrete objects. Lessons can be from any area of the classroom.

At Casa Montessori we value the inherent need for children to move and engage in large motor activities daily. When the weather permits, children and teachers will likely take a trip to Mother Cabrini Playground. During days of inclement weather, children engage in various movement games, circle exercise, building with large Hollow Blocks and Yoga activities in our space! We recognize this time as a venue for social interaction, dramatic play and most of all joyful learning through movement and music!

After returning from the large motor activity, the children are invited back into the work cycle. It is also during this second work time that children will often be invited into small-group, theme-based work. Theme-based inquiries are inspired by the interests of the children. Inquiries can include studies of the neighborhood, investigations on fabric and where it comes from, a focus on recycling and using recycled materials for artwork and that's just naming a few!

Before lunchtime, children are once again invited into a Meeting to sing and prepare for mealtime. Additionally, at this time children are introduced to a new Spanish vocabulary word through a game called, "La foto misteriosa". At the beginning of the week, one picture is placed in a frame (covered with a sheet of black construction paper), every day a small part of the picture is uncovered by tearing away at the black paper. Children are

asked to guess what the picture might be based on these small exposures! On Friday, the picture is revealed and a new Spanish vocabulary word is learned.

Lunchtime is not only a time for children to eat at school. Children are invited to eat together, with the teachers, to learn socialization skills appropriate for mealtimes and strategies for eating and serving oneself independently. Children are supported in unpacking their own lunch as well as cleaning up and sorting their lunch after they are finished eating.

After lunch, ½ day children will collect their belongings and gather for the final meeting of the day. During this time children and teachers engage in reading stories and playing games together. During this time, extended day children will prepare for a short Rest and Relaxation period.

Dismissal for ½ day children, begins promptly at 12:20PM and ends at 12:30PM. It is essential that children are picked up on-time as our very young learners become easily distressed when parents and caregivers arrive late.

During Rest Time, children are asked to “relax their bodies” on their own mat. Soft, comforting music is played and the lights are comfortably dimmed. Children will NOT be required to take a nap if they are simply not tired enough to sleep. Children that are not sleeping are offered books to read quietly or a journal to draw in. Rest Time is 20 minutes in duration.

After Rest Time, children are again welcomed back into the work cycle. Small group projects and lessons are given at this time based on each child’s interest and developmental needs.

Before dismissal, children are once again asked to collect their belongings and gather at the meeting area. During this time, stories are shared, games are played and final thoughts are shared before the end of the day.

Dismissal for extended day children begins promptly at 1:50PM and ends at 2:00PM. Again, it is essential that children are picked up on-time as our very young learners become easily distressed when parents and caregivers arrive late.

Spanish

Casa Montessori implements a bilingual approach in the classroom. Spanish is used on a daily basis throughout the day. Songs, vocabulary and simple conversation in Spanish are all ways Casa teachers make use of the Spanish Language during the day.

Sample Day at a Glance

(Times are Approximate & Vary Based on Music and Movement Schedules)

9:00-10:00	Arrival and Work Period One
10:05-10:25	Morning Meeting

10:30-11:00	Movement or Playground
11:05-11:30	Work Period Two
11:35-11:40	Lunch Transition
11:45-12:10	Lunch
12:10-12:20	Large Motor Activity
12:20-12:30	Dismissal for ½ Day Children
12:40-1:00	Rest and Relaxation
1:00-1:45	Final Work Period
1:45-2:00	Goodbye Meeting
1:50-2:00	Dismissal

School Calendar 2017-2018

August/September	Thursday-Friday	31-1	Home Visits
	Monday	4	Labor Day (School Closed)
	Friday	8	Classroom Visit Day (For NEW Students Only)
	Monday	11	First Day of School for Returning Students (12:30PM Dismissal) Phase-In Day One for New Students (3 & 5 Day Program)
	Tuesday	12	Extended Day Begins (Returning Students) Phase-In Day Two for New Students (3 & 5 Day Program)
	Wednesday	13	Phase-In Day Three for New Students (3 & 5 Day Program)
	Thursday	14	Phase-In Day One for New Students (2 Day Program)
	Friday	15	Phase-In Day Two for New Students (2 Day Program) New Parent Welcome Breakfast (8:00AM-8:45AM NEW PARENTS ONLY)
	Thursday-Friday	21-22	Rosh Hashanah (School Closed)
	Saturday	30	School Picnic 10:30AM Location TBD
October	Monday	9	Columbus Day (School Closed)

November	Friday	10	Parent-Teacher Conference Day (School Closed for Children)
	Wednesday	22	All Children Dismiss at 12:30PM
	Thursday-Friday	23-24	Thanksgiving (School Closed)
December	Thursday	7	Parent Night (TBD)
	Wed-Tuesday	20-2	School Closed for Winter Vacation
January	Wednesday	3	School Reopens
	Monday	15	Martin Luther King Jr. (School Closed)
February	Monday-Friday	19-23	School Closed for Mid-Winter Vacation
	Monday	26	School Closed for Teacher Development
	Tuesday	27	School Re-Opens
March/ April	Friday-Friday	30-6	School Closed for Spring Break
April	Monday	9	School Re-Opens
	Monday	16	Parent-Teacher Conference Day (School Closed for Children)
May	Friday	11	Grandparents/Special Visitor Day
	Friday	18	STREB Field Trip
	Monday	28	Memorial Day (School Closed)
June	Friday	8	Last Day of School ☺
June	Monday	11	First Day of Casa Mini Camp

Weather Emergency Closures

If the public schools close for inclement weather, so do we. Log on to 311.com if you are unsure about school closures.

The Work-Descriptions of the Areas of Our Classroom

The early work of Montessori is aimed at helping the children develop, within themselves, the skills they will need to succeed in living a healthy, balanced life. An aesthetically pleasing environment of carefully selected natural and beautiful materials calls the child to work, concentration and joy in their own learning experiences. These materials are generally categorized into five basic groups organized by shelf in the classroom: **Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language, and Science/Culture**. Casa Montessori combines these basic categories with a Reggio Emilia Approach in which the child is viewed as competent and the leader of her own learning. Other areas of study include: **Art, Unit Block Study, Dramatic Play**, Visual Activities, Movement/Yoga and the Library Area.

Practical Life: The work done in the practical life area lays the foundation for the rest of the work that is to be done in the classroom. It is through the practical life activities that

the child begins to develop his/her concentration, coordination, sense of order, and independence. These four elements are central to the child's future success in and outside of the classroom. Through working with the practical life materials, the child becomes ready to receive the lessons given in the rest of the other curriculum areas. The child, through the works of practical life, begins to acquire higher levels of ability in doing everyday tasks, which leads to a sense of responsibility and positive self-esteem. In the practical life area the child learns how to care for one's self, one's environment, and the community. It is here that the children begin to develop a mastery of movement so that they can be successful in coordinating their bodies and in manipulating the physical world around them. The lessons in Practical life also have a meditative quality about them. Ordinary actions are broken into their elements and given such attention and concentration that the children become immersed in that one action. We do not do the activity to get it done, but simply to do it.

Sensorial: The term sensorial is derived from the word sense or senses. It is in this area that the child becomes the "sensorial explorer" learning how to classify the things in the world around her. The sensorial materials are designed to help aid the child in the discovery of her surroundings. These activities continue and enhance the work done in practical life to help develop independence, order, concentration and coordination. The work, in many ways, prepares the child for math and language learning. They are specifically, however, intended to help the child explore the senses while he/she is particularly attuned to make this exploration.

The materials help the child recognize and identify different attributes such as long and short, rough and smooth. They also help attune the child's senses and intellectual awareness to the subtle differences between attributes – the fine difference between various shades of red for example. The child also works with contrast and with opposites like hard and soft. The child first comes to know and explore these attributes in a concrete way and over time moves to a more abstract understanding of them.

Math: The Montessori child approaches the math area much like the other areas of inquiry-simple to complex and concrete to abstract. In interacting with the attractive work presented in the math area, children work with concrete quantities and then match abstract symbols. Each child is introduced to the diverse operations of mathematics in a simple, tangible and enjoyable manner. In working with these concrete materials, a strong mathematical foundation is constructed, paving the way for later, more complex mathematical undertakings.

Language: In the language area, children explore language concepts in pre-reading and pre-writing, matching, phonemic awareness (hearing the sounds of language) vocabulary, story telling, sequencing, writing, initial sound recognition and, when they are ready...letter recognition and letter/sound correspondence. The Montessori method has many activities designed to help the child progress naturally towards the development of skills necessary for reading and writing. The child learns to control wrist movements and perfect the pincer grip necessary for writing. Children in the Montessori environment are introduced to the different parts of speech and language by participating in enjoyable games with the teacher and other children in the classroom.

Art: Casa Montessori children are introduced to a variety of authentic art materials through which they make meaning of the world that surrounds them. Through formal art lessons and ample time to experiment freely with materials, children are exposed to working with a large variety of color, texture, size and shape. Materials are presented for children to use during open work periods and are designed to scaffold the success of the child in this area.

Unit Blocks: When children engage in block play they are not simply “playing”, they are doing much more. As children explore the many units of blocks, a natural progression takes place from creating simple structures to using blocks as a representational system for creating the world around them. Just as letter symbols connect directly to language, blocks become a symbol for recreating and making meaning of the environment that children navigate on a daily basis. Through block play children engage in complex conversations and language building, mathematical negotiations and scientific concepts such as balance and multifaceted designing.

Dramatic Play: Dramatic play allows children to fit the reality of the world into their own interests and knowledge. In this area, children share common experiences, build social relationships and learn to negotiate through meaningful and purposeful play.

Key Principles of Casa Montessori

- **The Whole Child Approach:** It is the belief of Casa Montessori that all children learn in their own way through joyful learning, peaceful work-time and activities that promote physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.
- **Respect, Independence and the Inner Guide of the Child:** According to Maria Montessori, each child has an inner-guide. It is this inner-guide that leads them to the work in the classroom that they most need at that moment to further their own development. Maria Montessori writes, “The guide exists within them from the first moment. To care for, and keep awake, the guide within every child is a matter of the first importance”. For this reason we set up a rich environment full of stimulating activities, “work”, that respect the interests of the child, and allow the child to choose the work he/she is most interested in.
- **The Prepared Environment:** The classroom environment is set-up with great care and intention. Each work placed on the shelf is designed to scaffold the learning of young children in a variety of areas. The environment is child-accessible and intended to make the child feel valued and respected.
- **The Materials:** We strive to place materials on the shelf that are aesthetically beautiful, natural and inherently appealing to children. The classic Montessori materials lead children towards successful experiences in that each material is in a way, self-correcting.

● **The Teacher:** We view the teacher as a careful observer of children. The learning style of each particular child is respected and it is our job to nurture learning through modeling and the presentation of a stimulating learning environment.

● **Freedom within Clear Limits:** The children in our classroom are given the opportunity to explore materials at their own pace with guidance and support from the teacher. Clear boundaries and expectations are set for the children in order to nurture life-long-learners who problem solve and ask questions.

● **The Reggio Perspective:** The daily curriculum is supplemented with “threads” or themes throughout the year. These threads are inspired by the interests of the children and optimized by the teacher. Theme-Based inquiry helps to build group dynamics and discussions in the classroom.

Phase-In Process

Home Visits

In September, every new child entering our program will be visited by us! The purpose of the Home Visit is to give us a short opportunity to interact with your children in a relaxed, familiar environment in the comfort of their own home! This special visit is one the children remember for the duration of the school year and this is the basis for building the home-school connection. Your specific date and time of the Home Visit will be indicated in your Welcome Packet distributed by mail during the summer.

Classroom Visit Day

This short visit to the classroom helps to introduce the child into the classroom slowly, with the comfort of having a parent or caregiver with him for the duration of the visit. During classroom visit day, children are encouraged to explore their cubby space, take a glance at classroom materials, engage in Work with teachers and families, have a small snack and visit the restroom! Your specific date and time of the Classroom Visit will be indicated in your Welcome Packet distributed by mail during the summer.

The First Week Of School

After participating in both the Home Visit and Classroom Visit Day, it is likely your child will feel more comfortable entering the classroom on the first day of school. If your child appears anxious, please know this is very typical and we will all work together to make the progression of entering school as comfortable as possible for both parent and child. It is essential that the parents are actively involved in the phase-in process as this procedure helps to build trust between child, teacher and parent. Remember, we want to be completely honest with the children-so please do not tell your child you will be “right” back after you have left for the morning. During phase-in, let your child know that you are in fact leaving, but will be close by where a teacher can call you. We recognize that the phase-in process varies greatly from family to family. Please know that we are committed to working with all families on an individual basis in order to make separation as relaxed as possible for children and parents alike. Children are “eased” into the classroom over a four day period while parents or caregivers are asked to stay for less time each morning and the duration of

the school day is lengthened over the four day period. Specific phase-in schedules for all programs are included in your Welcome Packet distributed in July.

Parent Communication

We are extremely committed to communicating openly and frequently with the parents in our learning community. There are several formal and informal ways that we encourage you to use in order to build open, frequent communication with us:

Pick Up and Drop Off

Short conversations at pick-up and drop-off are encouraged and appropriate. However, please be cognizant of your child's presence as children frequently become curious or anxious when they feel adults are commenting on their actions or behaviors. Additionally, pick-up and drop-off times are often quite busy. We apologize in advance if we are unable to speak with you at length during these times. If a longer conversation is required please email us and we can communicate through email or schedule a phone conversation! We are here to help and support you!

Blog and Emails

At Casa Montessori you will be able to hear and see all about the classroom happenings on our school blog! Our blog is password protected and is for currently enrolled families only. The blog will include detailed descriptions of the happenings in the classroom, photos of your children hard-at-work, songs from the classroom, descriptions of the lessons from each day, prompting questions to ask your child and important dates and reminders. It is very important that you periodically check our website for important reminders about upcoming school events and procedures. However, we also know you will look forward to reading the classroom news and sharing the photos with your children each time they are sent to you!

Welcome Breakfast and Parent Workshops

Casa Montessori hosts a Welcome Breakfast (for new families) at the start of the year and two parent workshops annually. These are times for us to get together in an adult learning community to discuss school procedures and exciting topics about the Montessori and Reggio Emilia philosophies. These discussions will help you to better understand your child's learning journey and life experiences within the school setting. We strongly encourage all parents to attend these evenings and join us for light snacks and interesting conversation. Event dates are indicated on the School Calendar.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held in the Fall and then again in the Spring and are non-attendance days for the children. It is the expectation of Casa Montessori that at least one parent attends both Parent-Teacher Conferences. These meetings give us an opportunity to discuss your child's development at length and describe to you the work and interests of your child at school. We look forward to setting aside this time to speak with you and please know that additional meetings can be scheduled if the need arises. Again, we are here to support you.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any and all questions or concerns you might have throughout the school year.

Email

For ALL administrative matters or personal matters that you wish to discuss with Dana or Meryl ONLY please email Dana and Meryl at: casamontessorinyc@gmail.com

For ALL classroom matters (including but not limited to, questions about your child's experience at school, a change in scheduling, different pick-up plans, late arrivals or curriculum questions) please email the whole team at: casaclassroomteachers@gmail.com

Admissions

Tuition

Casa Montessori currently offers, a half a day program from 9:00AM to 12:30PM as well as an extended day program from 9:00AM to 2:00PM (Mondays through Thursdays and 12:30PM dismissal on Fridays), with the choice of enrolling your child two (Thursday and Friday), three (Monday to Wednesday) or five days a week. Please indicate your preference on the application form. Preference will be honored based on availability.

Tuition is paid in five installments; the first payment or deposit is due upon acceptance to the school and guarantees a spot in our program. This deposit is applied to the full annual tuition. The following four remaining payments are due trough out the year. (See payment schedule below)

Casa Montessori Payment Schedule 2017-2018

Program	Tuition	Deposit	April	June	September	November
2 days	\$8460	2000	1615	1615	1615	1615
3 days	\$11292	2000	2323	2323	2323	2323
5 days	\$16412	2000	3603	3603	3603	3603
5days/EXT	\$18380	2000	4095	4095	4095	4095

The Student will not be permitted to attend the School if any portion of the Tuition Total is overdue by more than ninety (90) days.

Fees

A \$75 non-refundable application is required in order to apply to our program. Casa Montessori will try to accommodate your request on a first-come first served basis and upon availability.

Returning children and siblings of alumni will be given priority of admission to our program. Please note that if your child is returning to CM the following school year, a non-refundable deposit of \$2000 will be due in January of 2018.

The Parent shall pay a \$50.00 late charge to the School for each month that any portion of the Tuition Total that is due to the School remains unpaid. The School may charge a \$75.00 fee for a returned check.

Withdrawal

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from CM he must provide the School with a written notice of termination before July 1, 2017. Upon providing the written notice of termination, the Parent forfeits the Deposit and payments of the Tuition Total that were due prior to the date on which the written notice of termination was provided to the School. The School shall keep the Deposit and all payments of the Tuition Total that were due under the Payment Plan. On and after July 1, 2017, the Tuition Total becomes fully payable by the Parent to the School according to the Payment Plan.

Termination

Casa Montessori may, in its sole discretion, suspend and/or terminate a Contract if the School determines that the suspension and/or termination of the Contract and the enrollment of the Student in the Program is in the best interest of the Student and the School. No refunds or deductions are provided for absences due to illness, vacations, school holidays, early withdrawal or termination.

General School Information

Your Child's Caregiver

In many families it is the caregiver that sees the teachers most frequently or a few times per week. It is helpful when the teachers are introduced to the caregiver at the very beginning of school or at the home visit, if possible. We value caregivers as having a crucial role in the lives of our youngest learners and encourage you to share any pertinent information about school with them.

Holiday and Birthday Policy

Casa Montessori is a non-sectarian preschool and thus does not celebrate religiously affiliated holidays in the classroom. We of course welcome any discussions in the classroom that may interest the children and these discussions often lead to talks about holidays. We encourage children to share their ideas about various holidays celebrated in their families and welcome any books into the classroom related to the beliefs of your family. Throughout the year we host celebrations related to the work of the children and community building within the Casa Montessori Family!

Birthdays are generally very special and significant for young children. At Casa Montessori we value this special day and would like to invite you to come into the classroom to celebrate with your child. Please know that celebrating your child's birthday in the classroom is optional and you do not need to feel obligated to schedule a birthday celebration if you prefer to honor your child's birthday outside of school. If you would like to attend, please let us know at least two weeks before your child's birthday and we can schedule a morning that works for you. We ask that no more than three guests attend the

birthday celebration, as more adults/siblings tend to overwhelm the children. Please bring with you:

-One photo for each year of your child's life (newborn, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years...no need for a current picture when we have the real thing).

-One book, selected by your child, to donate to the classroom library. This birthday ritual instills a feeling of great pride in the child as he offers a storybook to be shared with his classmates. Feel free to assist your child in writing his name, or a dedication, in the cover of the book.

-You will also have the opportunity to read the book to the class while the children snack on whatever delicious treat you decide to bring in to share with us. Please no cupcakes, cookies, candy or party favors. Some popular item suggestions are muffins, banana bread or granola bars!

Provisions from Home

On the first day of school, please bring the following items:

- A backpack or small bag (that can fit a 9X12 folder)
- A lunch box/bag (please visit lunchboxes.com)
- Two full changes of clothing (appropriate for the season) in Ziploc Bags labeled with your child's name
- One large package of flushable baby wipes
- ONE "Separation Object" if necessary

Lunch and Snack

Lunch

We ask that you provide your child with a lunch each day. Eating lunch in school is empowering for young children and gives them a sense of independence and accomplishment. We ask that you send lunch in a small lunchbox/lunch bag and label it with your child's name (Lunchboxes ideally should fit inside your child's backpack). We strongly recommend visiting www.easylunchboxes.com. These compartmentalized food containers help the children to grow their independence during mealtime at school. They are easy to open and offer the children a manageable way to serve themselves lunch instead of fussing with Ziploc bags and tough-to-open Tupperware's. The Coolers offered on the website (that hold the containers) are quite large and do not typically fit in a child-sized backpack. However the containers fit comfortably into any smaller lunchbox you might have. Lunches should reflect the values of Casa Montessori in that healthy foods should be provided for your child (please no candy, cookies etc). We are, of course, here to help your child with his/her lunch but try to pack a lunch that is accessible to the child so he/she can feel independent when unpacking his/her lunchbox.

Leader of the Day and Snack

Each day, one child will be designated "Leader of the Day". This will prove to be an exciting time for your child as he builds greater independence and confidence through this responsibility. On your child's Leader Day, he will have opportunities to lead the line, shake the Maraca (we use this instrument to help transition the children throughout the day), change the day on the calendar and much more! This will always be your family's turn to provide snack for the day. In September, a Leader of the Day/Snack Schedule will be distributed. This calendar will tell you when it is your day to provide snack for the classroom. This is a very exciting day for your child-try to include him/her in the process of selecting and purchasing the snack for the classroom! This schedule will be on a rotation for all families.

Toys In School

Children **may not** bring toy guns, swords, or any other toy weapons to school. We also discourage bringing expensive or deeply cherished toys, because it is possible they may get lost or broken. Transitional objects, which help a child adjust to the school environment, are welcome. Teachers will let your child know when it is time to put a home toy away if he/she no longer needs it as an emotional support.

Outside Time

Outdoor play and physical activity are vital components of the Casa Montessori curriculum. Weather permitting, we try to take children out to Mother Cabrini Playground on a daily basis. At the playground, children have the opportunity to use the park equipment as well as run around and play games together! Quiet activities, like exploration of nature elements, are also offered during playground time. During winter months, when we stay inside, we will alternate between movement and yoga activities accompanied with music.

Toilet Training

Children should be toilet trained before entering Casa Montessori and should be wearing underwear when they begin the year. We understand toilet training is a process and will work with you to support your child in the accomplishment of this very important milestone.

Arrivals and Departures

Casa Montessori is open from 9:00AM to 12:30PM for ½ day children and 9:00AM to 2:00PM for extended day students.

Early Drop-off

Casa Montessori is happy to offer an early drop-off service that starts at 8:30 am. The fee is \$8 per day. We ask that you e-mail Dana and Meryl at least one day in advance to let us know your child will be coming early.

In general, the early drop-off service is available from Monday to Thursday. Fridays are usually saved for teacher meetings.

Every few months you will receive an invoice with the fee you owe for using the early-drop off service.

Drop-off

The drop off period is between 9:00AM and 9:15AM. We expect children to arrive no later than 9:15AM. The structure and continuity of the children's work cycle are disrupted by late arrivals. We prefer that parents say a quick good bye at the door before children enter the classroom. This philosophy goes along with our goal of supporting children's independence. Your child will quickly learn to put her belongings in the appropriate places, to undress independently and then to start her day on her own.

Pick-Up

The pick up period is between 12:20PM and 12:30PM (for ½ day students) and 1:50PM and 2:00PM (for extended day students). It is very important for the well-being of your child that you arrive on time. If you expect to be late, please notify us so we can prepare your child for the delay. At pick up time, always wait until a teacher approaches the door to release your child, as the children are often engaged in a game or a story at the end of the day.

Children will only be released to their parents or to those designated in writing. Make sure to tell a teacher if there is an unexpected change in the person who will be picking up your child so the pick up form can be updated.

Clothing

Please send your children in sturdy play clothes that do not need special attention and are ok to get "dirty". We expect children to have fun and get messy while they are at school. Also, when possible choose clothing that will allow for their independence in dressing and undressing themselves. We all know how easily children's clothing can get lost, especially during winter months. Please LABEL EVERYTHING to avoid lost items.

Field Trips

Parents are asked to sign a field trip permission and release form. We will notify you in advance if there are any field trips planned outside of the classroom surroundings.

Casa Montessori will follow the following guidelines for each field trip:

- Emergency Contact Forms, Medical Release Forms and a First Aid-Kit are taken on each trip.
- Field Trips that require extensive travel will have one adult for every 2-4 children.
- Casa Montessori might request parents to be chaperones for a trip.
- Each adult has specific children assigned to him or her for the duration of the trip.

Photo Consent

At Casa Montessori, we are very proud of the work that our children do. We will often take photographs to document events and the children's work. We will often use these images for the classroom newsletter, the website and other media sources. When we make use of photographs, we will never associate a child's name with a photo. Please make sure to sign our photo release form distributed to you in your Welcome Packet.

Extended Day Drop In

We will now be offering a drop-in program for extended day. You may extend your child's program until 2pm on any given day (excluding Fridays) for a \$25 fee. Please notify the school at least one day in advance if you will be using this service. We will bill you periodically for Drop-In Extended Day. Cash is preferred.

Health and Safety

Policy on Discipline

We believe discipline is intended to support the child in learning the necessary tools to become independent, respectful members of the classroom community. Guiding the child toward behaviors that encourage healthy socialization is never a punishment. It is our belief that if teachers model appropriate, peaceful, kind and effective communication at all times, children will begin to understand the techniques necessary to engage in meaningful interactions with peers and adults. Teachers will intervene whenever a conflict arises that may require extra scaffolding. At these times, the teacher will kneel or sit at child level and offer support in identifying the problem and encourage children to "use words" to explain how they are feeling. It is our goal to have children become self-disciplined rather than "adult-monitored" and in applying these techniques we strive for all children to meet this goal. If a child continues to have ongoing behavioral struggles, teachers will work together with parents to problem-solve with the interests of the child in mind. At Casa Montessori we believe that all children learn best in an environment that presents freedom within clear limits. In setting comprehensible, appropriate expectations for our youngest learners we instill in them feelings of confidence and self-control.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent please call or email the school to let us know. If your child has a fever or contagious illness, please keep him at home for the duration of the school day.

Illness

If your child becomes ill at school we will call and ask you to pick him up as soon as possible. Below please find the indicators that would cause us to notify you of your child's health:

- *A fever of 100 degrees or more
- *Pink Eye
- *Coughing excessively
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *Head Lice
- *Symptoms of chicken pox or any other contagious disease

An ill child will be isolated from his peers and made as comfortable as possible until the arrival of a parent or caregiver.

Please let a teacher know if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease. **Your child must be “symptom-free” and “fever-free” for 24 hours before returning to school.** In some cases we may ask you to bring a doctors note. We will not be able to administer medication during school hours.

Health Forms

All children attending Casa Montessori are required to have the necessary immunizations mandated by the New York State health law. You must provide the school with the supplied health forms attached in your Welcome Packet.

Child Abuse Policy

Physical and emotional punishment is prohibited at Casa Montessori. All Casa Montessori staff is obligated by law to report any suspicion of child abuse to the authorities.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Casa Montessori Preschool welcomes children of all ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, or marital status in any aspects of our operations, policies and procedures including, but not limited to enrollment, hiring, termination, educational policies or any other administrative part of our preschool program.

