



Mission

Our mission is to educate the whole child;
thus we endeavor to nurture every heart
and challenge every mind through the
experience of meaningful inquiry

Vision

We as a community of leaders, seek to develop confident, independent
and caring students with clear intellectual fortitude and a proclivity to
questions and explore. We seek to be an exemplary school in the
Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Parent Handbook & Curriculum Guide

2011-12

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Section I: Maria Montessori, 1870-1952

Dr. Maria Montessori was a unique individual. In her lifetime she achieved status as a medical doctor and an anthropologist, as well as distinguishing herself internationally as a psychologist. She was also a renowned author, an effective teacher, and a lecturer in constant demand.

Dr. Montessori was a scientist with a keenly developed sense of intuition. Perhaps her most significant trait, though, was her power of observation. She sought to learn the secrets of childhood from the children themselves – the only ones who could rightfully teach her. She learned and discovered things about children which had never been perceived; things which are still misunderstood by many educators.

Montessori's work was generally ignored or denigrated by the educators of her time, yet widely acclaimed by many world leaders. For example, a Montessori school was established in the palace of the Tsar of Russia and America's Alexander Graham Bell became president of an organization to establish a Montessori school in the United States. Today, there are countless autonomous Montessori schools throughout the world and a growing number of independent school districts that boast a Montessori curriculum.

The Purpose of Montessori Education

Dr. Montessori believed that no human being can be educated by another person. He/she must do it himself or it will never be done. Dr. Montessori felt that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his own natural desire to learn.

In the Montessori classroom this objective is approached in two ways: the first one being to allow each child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced. The second being to help him perfect all his natural tools for learning, so that his ability will be at maximum in future learning situations.

How the Children Learn

The use of the materials is based on the young child's unique aptitude for learning, which Dr. Montessori identified as the "absorbent mind." In her writings she frequently compared the young mind to a sponge. It literally absorbs information from the environment.

Since the child retains this ability to learn by absorbing until he is almost seven years old, Dr. Montessori reasoned that his experience could be enriched by a classroom where he could handle materials that would demonstrate basic educational information to him. In a Montessori classroom the equipment invites the child to do activities at his own periods of interest and readiness because of the size of the materials and they are developmentally appropriate for the age ranges.

Dr. Montessori always emphasized that the hand is the chief teacher of the child. In order to learn there must be concentration, and the best way a child can concentrate is fixing his attention on some task he is performing with his hands. All the equipment in a Montessori classroom allows the child to reinforce his casual impressions by inviting him to use his hands for learning.

Sensitive Periods

Another observation of Dr. Montessori's is the importance of the sensitive periods for early learning. It is easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in his life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities that correspond to his own periods of interest.

A View of the Classroom

The classroom is designed to put the child at ease by giving him freedom in an environment prepared with attractive materials. These materials are arranged on low shelves within easy reach of the child.

The tables and chairs in the classroom are movable, permitting a flexible arrangement for many activities. The children also work on small mats on the floor where they are naturally comfortable.

The Montessori materials can be divided into three main groups: the Practical Life Exercises, which are the beginning activities for three and four year-old children; the Sensorial Materials, which can be used by all ages in the class; and the Academic Material, which await each child's moments of interest in reading, mathematics, geography and science.

The Role of the Teacher

Dr. Montessori always referred to the teacher as a "directress." She is an observer of the individual interests and needs of each child, and her daily work proceeds from her observations rather than from a prepared curriculum. She demonstrates the correct use of materials as they are individually chosen by the children. She is trained to recognize periods of readiness. Sometimes she must divert a child who chooses material that is beyond his ability; at other times she must encourage a child who is hesitant.

Behavior of the Children

There is always a busy hum of activity in a Montessori classroom because the use of the materials involves many motions – walking, carrying, pouring, speaking, and particularly the constant use of the hands. All activity, however, is guided by respect for the teacher, a respect for the work of others, and a respect for the material themselves. The classroom is a thriving community where children are treated with respect and dignity and learn to treat others the same.

Why Mixed Age Groups?

The Montessori classroom offers the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of graded materials. The child can grow as his interests lead him from one level of complexity to another. Having mixed ages permits the younger children a graded series of models for imitation, and the older ones an opportunity to reinforce their own knowledge by helping the younger ones. They learn to take responsibility for themselves and each other.

Non-Competitive Atmosphere

Because the children work individually with the materials, there is no competition in the Montessori classroom. Each child relates only to his own previous work, and his progress is not compared to the achievements of the youngsters. It is a dynamic, interactive learning environment that encourages each child to reason, cooperate, negotiate, and to understand. The goal of the Montessori preschool is the development of an autonomous individual, as well as competent in all areas of life.

Section II: Classroom Routines

We are very happy to have you and your child be a part of our classroom family. For many parents and children, entering a Montessori classroom is truly a learning adventure. We believe that respect goes both ways. In order for your child to learn respect then he or she must be shown respect. We learn to respect through our love for each other. Our goal is to encourage your child to make independent choices and to guide him/her to achieve the full extent of his/her potential. We are excited about having your child join our class and look forward to guiding his/her progress!

Cycle of Work

Every day a new lesson will be given during circle or line time. When the children are given permission to get up from the circle and begin "choosing work," their cycle of work begins and continues throughout the morning.

If your child arrives after class has started, please allow your child to come in on his/her own and put his/her own belongings away. This is the best way to preserve the working environment for the other children and to eliminate any distractions; it also encourages your child's independence.

Independence

These are basic life skills, accomplished through respect: respect for the child's ability to do things for himself and respect for his ability to learn. When adults do things for children that they can do for themselves, they take away their motivation to learn. When a child is encouraged to do it himself, he/she develops an "I can do it" attitude of independence. Please do not do anything for your child that he can do for himself. Please allow your child become independent. Let your child walk into the classroom; do not carry him. Let him open doors, wipe his nose, feed himself, dress himself, help you at home with daily chores, clean up small messes, wash or wipe his own face and more. It is never too early to address personal hygiene; after all children are capable of so much!

Many parents and schools are interested only in having children learn to read and write. These are important and will happen when the child is ready; however, learning basic life skills lays the foundation for academics!

Personal Belongings

Please label all of your child's belongings with his/her name, especially clothing.

This includes, but is not limited to: sippy cups, water bottles, Tupperware/GladWare, lunch boxes and nap mats.

- Nap mats are to be taken home weekly for laundering.
- Please send nap mats size 24" X 48".
- Suggested vendors:
 - Tina Fuller-Jones (custom made mats)
mindingyourbusiness@gmx.com or call 817-658-5925
 - Luggage.com (www.luggage.com) and search for nap mat.

Special Interest Day

We definitely encourage your child to bring a special item to encourage interest and verbal communication skills. Appropriate items are anything that comes from the natural environment (seashells, pinecones, leaves, insects, and bugs), books, photographs, etc.

Photographs and postcards from vacation are also a special treat for your child to share. As long as it holds a special interest for your child and is not a toy, then it should be appropriate. Students are not allowed to bring toys to the classroom.

Celebration of Life

All children are celebrated on his/her birthday at school by having the "CELEBRATION OF LIFE" ceremony. The ceremony is held in the morning during circle time. During the celebration in Transitional through First Grade, the child holds a globe and walks around a picture of the sun. We explain to the child that it takes the earth a year (365 days) to rotate around the sun. After a few celebrations, the children will begin to understand the concept. Please send pictures of specific milestones. You may use a poster board to display your pictures.

Even if your child's birthday falls on a weekend or school vacation day, they will be acknowledged at school.

You are welcome to bring a special snack. Children are more enthusiastic about a simple snack they have helped prepare and can serve independently more than an elaborate dessert bought or made for them; some ideas are: banana bread, Jell-O, assorted fruits, muffins, and cheese and cracker tray. We would prefer to not have cupcakes with icing or cake. Thank you for not sending party favors. We would like to not have birthday parties at school.

We look forward to their special day! If you would like to come and join us for your child's birthday celebration, please check with your child's teacher to verify the time of day.

Section III: Montessori Classroom Ground Rules

- Watch other children work: Any child may watch another child's work as long as he doesn't disturb the child who is working.
- Work cycle: Each child will put his own work back on the shelf where he found it before getting other materials out.
- Any child may continue any learning activity as long as he uses it with respect and with a purpose.
- The children clean up their own spills.
- Walking around the work rugs: Children should never step on a rug that is being used as a workspace. They will always walk around the rug or work mat.
- Sitting around the circle: Children sit cross-legged, with legs and hands tucked in, listening.
- Chair procedure: Children push their chairs in at the table each time they get up.
- Carrying procedures: Children always use two hands when carrying trays, rugs, mats, and chairs.
- One piece of material is carried at a time; children keep hands free of pencils, napkins, papers, etc. when carrying materials to a workspace.
- Quiet voices and quiet steps: Children always talk quietly in the classroom and walk with quiet steps that cannot be heard.
- Children are not forced to join group activities unless the activities are required. (Fire drill, etc.).

Section IV: Special Offerings

A variety of on-site field trips visit CDSA on a regular basis. Programs such as High Touch-High Tech (an age-appropriate science program), and visits from Mr. Bob of the Arlington Public Library are just a couple of examples.

Toddlers (16 mos – approximately 2.4 yrs):

- Three times per week: Physical Education provided by Stretch-n-Grow
- Once a week: Music

Transitional (approximately 2.4 yrs – 3.0 yrs):

- Three times per week: Physical Education provided by Stretch-n-Grow.
- Music once a week
- Spanish once a week
- 3 year old students participate in High Touch-High Tech Science

Primary:

- Twice a week: Physical Education provided by Stretch-n-Grow.
- Music once a week
- Spanish once a week

Preschool Activities Outside the Classroom

- *Gardening* – Students have the opportunity to garden in areas located in and around the school as well as maintain plants and flowers located in classrooms.

Kindergarten and First Grade:

- Twice a week: Physical Education provided by Stretch-n-Grow.
- Music once a week
- Spanish once a week
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A typical day in Kindergarten and First Grade begins with circle time where the class updates the calendar and discusses the days of the week and the weather. The morning work cycle then begins as the students engage in individual and small group Montessori lessons (math, language arts, cultural, sensorial and practical life) based on their needs and choices.

These students have an additional work cycle and lesson presentation with lead classroom teachers in the afternoon. It usually begins with sharing a few chapters from a chapter book and/or activities from the Junior Great Books series. A whole group lesson is presented (using hands on materials) which relates to math, language arts, science and/or social studies concepts. The students again engage in individual and small group Montessori lessons. The Montessori curriculum and materials provide opportunities for the students to move at their own pace, to explore and discover concepts such as:

MATH:

- Linear Counting
- Decimal System
- Memorization of Operations
- Beginning Geometry
- Measurement
- Clock Skills
- Counting Money
- Simple Fractions
- Problem Solving Strategies
- Exploring Data

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Spelling Patterns
- High Frequency Sight Words Practice
- Reading and Comprehension
- Journal Writing and Response Writing

- Grammar
- Handwriting Practice

SCIENCE:

- Observing
- Classifying
- Measuring
- Exploring
- Scientific Method
- Predicting
- Interpreting Data
- Problem Solving
- Tools for Exploration

SOCIAL STUDIES/GEOGRAPHY:

- Land Forms
- Map Skills
- Cultural Holidays and Customs

Kindergarten will include a presentation in the above-referenced areas. First grade will include a continuation of the advanced development in the above-referenced areas.

First Grade Goals:

- Build upon skills and concepts previously introduced.
- Provide personalized instruction in all core academic areas.
- Present Cultural Subjects, Botany, Zoology, Physical Science, Geography, History, Language Arts, Writing, Mathematics and Geometry as totally integrated curriculum.
- Enrich the curriculum through Art, Music, Spanish, Physical Education, Computer Lab, Science and Conflict Resolution.
- Equip students with tools for successful learning, including the technique of research for writing.

a. Montessori Toddler Classroom

The toddler environment is designed to be an extension of the home, the child's primary environment. The classrooms are specially designed and carefully prepared in order to allow the young child to grow, develop, and gain independence in a safe, secure atmosphere. The focus in this classroom is the uniqueness of the child.

For the child in the toddler classroom, play and work are one. The child is an explorer of the senses, unconsciously absorbing every aspect of the environment, language, and culture. Work in the toddler community is individually and developmentally appropriate, providing variety, novelty, and challenge. Inside the classroom, our children are introduced to the world around them through the constant use of all five senses.

At any given moment a toddler may be seen working with colorful puzzles and balls that emphasize learning the primary colors, spending time with sandpaper letter materials that help the children learn the advantages of touch, or a child may be seen working with the materials that can sharpen auditory discrimination skills.

Directed group experiences including songs, nursery rhymes, finger play, snacks, outdoor play, and movement activities are woven into the toddler day. A typical day for a toddler will include the five following focus areas:

1. **The Language Area** for Toddlers offers opportunities for exploration and expansion of the child's use of sounds and letters to form words. On any given day, a child can be found matching numbers and letters, learning sounds using patterning and rhyming. A child will often experiment throughout the day with identifying letters and numbers in order to become familiar with sounds.
2. **The Montessori Math** materials in a Toddler classroom provide students with a hands-on base for understanding basic mathematical concepts. The purpose is to introduce the concepts of shapes and sizes, scope and quantity allowing for repetition. This makes it possible for a child to understand the concept made concrete in each piece of material, to name it, and to then apply it to the environment, thereby perceiving their universe with greater awareness. A child will explore mathematics in the classroom while working with, for example, the pink tower, broad stairs, and colorful number rods for the purpose of developing good counting, separating, and comparing skills. A child will touch the rods, move the items, and count the material while enumerating them. In addition, a child will use cylinder blocks, which provide the first stage of experiences in visual discrimination of size.
3. **The Practical Life** activities in the Toddler classroom provide a sane and wholesome range of activities which allow the children to develop control and coordination of movement, awareness of their environment, responsibility, an independent work habits to function in the world. In our toddler classroom, a child is introduced to how to take care of himself as well as the environment around him. For the Montessori toddler, a day dusting and polishing the table, wiping the floor with a sponge, or cleaning and brushing plastic vegetables is a day in meaningful and purposeful work.
4. **The Sensorial Area** in a toddler classroom allows the young toddler to encounter materials that allow them to sort things by size, shape, color, touch, sound, temperature and by weight. They will use materials which will grade from dark to light, and from large to small. A child will explore the richness of the senses by working with colorful geometric solids and shapes, and knob less cylinders and cylinder blocks that progress in height and diameter from small to big, thin to thick, tall to thin, and from short to long with the diameter remaining constant. The goal here is to develop in the toddler good listening and muscle control skills.
5. **The Cultural Studies Area** in a toddler classroom includes art, music, and movement, and is integrated into the toddler child's day. The exploration of culture in combination with a guided look at the natural world provides many

opportunities for enriching the young mind. A child will experience finger painting, loco motor movement, singing, and dancing.

b. Montessori Transitional Classroom

A typical day in the Transitional classroom is a natural extension of the Toddler classroom. Here, students are given further opportunity to grow, develop, and gain independence in a safe, secure atmosphere. The focus in this classroom is giving the child more independence and choices. Through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell the transitional child learns to clarify, classify, and understand their world. At any given moment, transitional classroom students can be seen exploring every aspect of the environment, language, and culture.

Work in the transitional community is individually and developmentally appropriate, providing variety, novelty, and challenge. Inside the classroom, our children are introduced to the world around them through the constant use of all five senses. Students in this classroom have opportunity to be engaged in directed group experiences including songs, nursery rhymes, finger play, snacks, outdoor play, reading and loco motor activities throughout the day. A transitional student's day is centered on five focus areas.

The Language Area for transitional students offers opportunities for exploration and expansion of the child's spoken and written language. The child is involved in prewriting and counting exercises. On any given day, a child can be found tracing numbers and letters in sand and learning phonetic words using patterning and rhyming. A child in a Transitional classroom will often experiment throughout the day with sandpaper letters and numbers in order to become familiar with sounds from a concrete to abstract form. Language lessons continue all day in all activities.

The Montessori Math materials for transitional students provide students with a sensorial base for storing mathematical concepts so that when the time comes to deal exclusively in abstract terms, the understanding is already there. Before the children begin to work with the math materials, they are well prepared. The exercises of practical life have given them the opportunity to develop logical and sequential thought patterns. Students will explore mathematics in the classroom. Concrete materials are used such as sandpaper number (tracing numbers is a preparation for writing), counting with the spindle box 0-9. These activities help develop skills necessary for developing counting, sequencing and comparing skills. Additionally, the students will use cylinder blocks which provide the first stage of experiences in visual discrimination of sizes.

The Practical Life activities in a transitional classroom give purpose and sequence to movement and assist the child in gaining the confidence and ability to function in the world while developing social skills and personal, independent care of self and the environment. A focus on concentration and sense of order is encouraged. In our Montessori classroom, a child is introduced to how to take care of himself as well as the environment around him. For the Montessori transitional classroom student there is something special about tasks like—washing dishes, watering plants, and polishing in the classroom. These are exciting to the child because they allow him to imitate adults. A child also explores working with dressing frames of zipping, buttoning, string beading, bow tying, lacing and fastening clothing. Each wood-framed piece of

clothing isolates this skill by repeating the motion over and over, thus developing attributes of character, which forms the basis for all learning.

The Sensorial Area allows the young explorer to encounter materials that assist in classifying, matching, and grading sensory experiences while developing a sensory perception. A child will explore the richness of the senses in this area by working with colorful shapes, knob less cylinders, peg boards, a pink tower, brown stairs, geometric shapes, sound games, and constructive triangles while developing auditory and muscle memory skills.

The Cultural Studies Area for the transitional student includes art, music, and loco motor movement, and is integrated into the child's day. The exploration of culture in combination with a guided look at the natural world provides many opportunities for enriching the young mind. A child will experience finger painting, singing, and dancing. Other cultural studies activities including geography, history, science and study of the United States map and continents are ways of taking a virtual journey around the world and appreciating the community in which the child lives and the global world as a whole.

YEAR AT A GLANCE TODDLER & TRANSITIONAL CLASSES

AUGUST Our peaceful class—care of the class, rules and routines

SEPTEMBER

Geography: 3 necessary elements for life: air, land, and water; World map
History: Families
Science: My body; parts of the body & care of the body
Art: Apple month/colors
Music: Continents, Continent song & Texas song
Kindness: RESPECT

OCTOBER

Geography: International, United Nations, Australia
History: Columbus Day/Grandparent's Day
Science: Life cycle of pumpkin; magnetic/non-magnetic; senses: sight
Art: Leaf rubbing, leaf collecting; plants; my family; communities
Music: Seasonal, finger plays
Kindness: LOVE

NOVEMBER

Geography: North America
History: Native Americans, Pilgrims, Mayflower...
Science: Changes of Nature, Seasons; senses: touch
Art: Thanksgiving, Grandparents Day art
Music: Songs of the season
Kindness: THANKFULNESS AND SHARING

DECEMBER

Geography: Antarctica, Flags of the Countries
History: Winter Holidays of the different cultures
Science: Solids, liquids and gases; healthy food; senses: hearing & smelling
Art: Crafts related to holidays around the world
Music: Holiday songs
Kindness: FRIENDSHIP

JANUARY

Geography: Africa
History: Dr. Martin Luther King
Science: Living, non-living; animals of the wild; oral care; senses: taste
Art: Snowman, snowflakes
Music: Winter songs
Kindness: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FEBRUARY

Geography: Asia
History: Chinese New Year, Presidents of USA
Science: Vertebrates, non-vertebrates; transportation
Art: Valentine art, Mardi Gras
Music: Loving, friendship songs
Kindness: EMPATHY

MARCH

Geography: Europe
History: Ireland/St. Patrick's Day/Dinosaurs
Science: Sink or float; time; life cycle of butterfly & ladybug
Art: color mixing, castles, crowns...dinosaurs
Music: Irish songs
Kindness: SELF CONTROL

APRIL

Geography: South America
History: People of South America
Science: Solar system, recycling; ocean life/sea animals
Art: Art appreciation, crafts, Spring art
Music: Songs of Spring
Kindness: THOUGHTFULNESS

MAY

Geography: Mexico
History: Cinco de Mayo/Texas history
Science: Gardening, seed planting, germinating, plant Bluebonnets; insects
Art: Mother's Day art craft, May Day basket, flowers
Music: Fun songs/Texas/Mother's Day songs
Kindness: TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER

C. Montessori Primary Classroom

“Help me to do it myself.”

A typical day in the Primary classroom is recognition of the child as the builder of humanity. Here, students are given significant opportunity to grow, develop, and gain independence in a safe, secure atmosphere. The focus in this classroom is giving the child freedom, independence, and choices. Throughout any given day, primary classroom students can be seen exploring and discovering the untold reaches of every aspect of the environment, language, and culture. Students in the primary classroom community are engaged in work that is individually and developmentally appropriate, providing variety, novelty, and challenge. Inside the classroom, our children are introduced to the world around them through the constant use of all five senses.

Children in this classroom have the opportunity to be engaged in directed group experiences including songs, reading, snacks, outdoor play, reading and loco motor activities throughout the day.

Primary classrooms are generally quiet, harmonious environments where concentration and involvement can deepen and grow. The activities are centered around six focus areas.

Older primary students that have developmentally outgrown naps and are ready to work with focus and independence have an opportunity to participate in the afternoon work cycle. A student's readiness for this work cycle will be determined by their primary lead teacher.

The Practical Life activities give purpose and sequence to movement and assist the child in gaining the confidence and ability to function in the world. In our Montessori classroom, a primary child is introduced to how to take care of himself as well as the environment around him. For the Montessori preschooler there is something special about tasks—washing dishes, pouring water, and polishing shoes—in the classroom. These are exciting to the child because they allow him to imitate adults. A child also explores working with dressing frames of zipping, buttoning, and fastening clothing. Each wood-framed piece of clothing isolates this skill by repeating the motion over and over, thus helping the child become independent in dressing himself.

In this area of learning a child will also use water, with which most children naturally like to play. Carrying water in a pitcher and pouring it into a basin helps a child to perfect his coordination. As he becomes more coordinated in an activity such as scrubbing a table top, he gradually lengthens his span of concentration. He also learns to pay attention to details and learns good work habits.

The Sensorial Area allows the young explorer to encounter materials that assist in refining, classifying, matching, and grading sensory experiences. A child will explore the richness of the senses in this area by working with colorful geometric solids and shapes, knobbed cylinders, peg boards, a pink tower, sound games, and constructive triangles while developing auditory and muscle memory skills.

The Montessori Math materials provide students with a base for understanding mathematical concepts using the senses. The purpose is to introduce the concepts of quantity and symbol. A child will progress from the concrete to the abstract, from the simple to the complex, from the quantity to the symbol. A child will explore mathematics in the classroom while working with colorful number rods and spindle boxes for the purpose of developing good counting, separating, and comparing skills. A child will touch the rods, move the items, and count the material while enumerating them, thereby not only seeing the symbol for 1, 10, 100 or 1000, but holding each of the corresponding quantities in his hand.

The Language Area offers opportunities for exploration and expansion of the child's spoken and written language. The child learns to write not by writing, but by performing a number of purposefully structured activities, which prepare him both indirectly and directly for handwriting. On any given day, a primary child can be found tracing numbers and letters in sand, learning phonetic words using patterning and rhyming, and reading simple phonetic word books. A child will often experiment throughout the day with sandpaper letters and numbers in order to become familiar with sounds.

The Cultural Studies Area includes art, music, and movement, and is integrated into the primary child's day. The exploration of culture in combination with a guided look at the natural world provides many opportunities for enriching the young mind. A child will experience finger painting, loco motor movement, singing, and dancing. Other cultural studies activities including geography, history, and study of the United States map and continents are ways of taking a virtual journey around the world and appreciating the community in which the child lives and the global world as a whole. Students work with specially designed maps and begin to learn the names of the world's continents and countries. This is augmented through a variety of cultural celebrations and activities that include the celebration of International Day, songs and games from various cultures and traditions as well as learning to prepare and recognize various foods from around the world.

The Science/Botany Area for the primary child includes a limitless wealth of exposure to the world around them. The children are exposed to a mass of information to whet their interest in the very appealing decor provided by nature. The child is given names and the opportunity for sensorial exploration, which acquires meaning by becoming organized through the Montessori botany materials. These provide basic leaf shapes, parts of the leaves, parts of the plant, parts of the flowers, and so help to classify and refine the child's perception, enriching the purely sensorial experience thereby creating the foundation for scientific knowledge to be acquired in the years to come.

Some of the materials used include a botany cabinet, which introduces the child to concepts in botanical classification while the child learns the names and shapes of leaves by tracing their borders and matching them to those in the natural environment. Children will also use botany cards to learn about the whole plant and subsequently identify each of the parts by highlighting them in color.

A YEAR AT A GLANCE ~ PRIMARY-1ST GRADE
(From A Bird's Eye View, A Guide for the Montessori Classroom)

AUGUST:

- Our Peaceful Classroom – Care of the classroom
- Living/Non Living things
- The Universe and Our Solar System

SEPTEMBER:

- Plants/Animals
- My Body – Parts of the body, control of the body, care of the body
- My Feelings and Senses
- Our Planet Earth – The four elements (air, water, earth, fire)

OCTOBER:

- Introduction to the Continents
- Human Needs
- My Family, My Community
- **AUSTRALIA** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

NOVEMBER:

- **NORTH AMERICA** (geography, biomes, animals, people)
- Native Americans

DECEMBER:

- **ANTARCTICA** (geography, biomes, animals, explorers)
- Celebrations

JANUARY:

- Year, Seasons, Month, Day, Hour, Minute, Second
- Our Country's Time Line, The Great Time Line
- **AFRICA** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

FEBRUARY:

- U.S. Presidents and Flag
- Fish (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- Oceans (ocean life)
- **ASIA** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

MARCH:

- Amphibians (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- Reptiles (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- Birds (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- **EUROPE** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

APRIL:

- Mammals (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- Plants
- Ecology, Food web, Conservation
- **SOUTH AMERICA** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

MAY:

- Insects and Spiders (characteristics, habitats, diet, defenses, life cycle)
- **MEXICO/TEXAS** (geography, biomes, animals, people)

Section V: Healthy Foods = Healthy Kids!

Morning Snack

Parents are asked to provide a *light* individual snack for consumption mid-morning. This snack is not intended to provide breakfast for your child. This is simply a “little something” to tide them over until lunchtime. Please avoid sending cookies, cakes, chips, or sodas.

Lunch: Suggestions for packing your child’s lunch and other food tips

Mondays and Fridays are referred to as “brown bag” days. This means that all students bring their lunch from home. An option for parents Tuesday through Thursday is to order lunch from the school. Tuesdays and Thursdays lunch is catered by Jason’s Deli and Wednesdays are catered by Chick-fil-A. Entrees are served with fresh fruit and juice or milk. Menus are sent home mid-month for the following month. Menu options are:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Tuesday:</p> <p>Jason’s Deli</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Jr. Jane Baked Potato2) Little Deli Plate; turkey with American cheese, apple slices3) Hot Dog4) Grilled Cheese5) Mac & Cheese <p>Bread choice:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> white <input type="checkbox"/> whole grain wheat</p> | <p>Wednesday:</p> <p>Chick-fil-A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) 6-pack chicken nuggets2) Chick-fil-A chicken sandwich3) Chick-fil-A grilled chicken sandwich | <p>Thursday:</p> <p>Jason’s Deli</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Cheese Pizza2) Chicken Quesadillas3) Little Deli Plate; ham with American cheese, apple slices4) Bowtie Pasta & Meatballs <p>Bread choice:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> white <input type="checkbox"/> whole grain wheat</p> |
|---|--|--|

To make your morning a little less hectic, let your child pack his own lunch. Many of the items mentioned can be individually wrapped and some frozen to be popped into a lunch box. Getting children involved in this sometimes increases their interest in lunchtime.

The way you pack your child's lunch box can make a difference in how much is eaten and how much is thrown away. A very important thing to remember is to not pack more than your child will eat. A healthy lunch box includes the following:

- A protein rich food
- A fruit or vegetable
- A special treat
- Drink (non-carbonated)
- Please do not send candy

For many children, the least favorite category is protein. A key to success in this area is to make it as much fun as possible.

Sandwiches of all kinds become more interesting if they are cut into different shapes. Try cutting them into bite-sized squares or circles (use the center part of a donut cutter). Also try your cookie cutters for some fun shapes.

Here are some ideas of protein foods other than sandwiches:

- Tuna salad
- Chicken or turkey (cubes or drumsticks)
- Meatloaf slices
- Cheese spread in celery sticks
- Egg salad
- Meat – pieces, slices or cubes
(You can freeze the meats and they will be thawed in time for lunch)
- Hardboiled egg

Lunchables and frozen dinners are not recommended. **Due to students with severe nut allergies, please do not send foods that contain peanut butter.**

Good drinks for your child's lunch include:

- Apple juice
- Orange juice
- Mixed fruit juice
- Milk
- Water

Other important lunch/food tips:

- Please use cold packs/icepacks to keep lunches cool. We are limited in refrigerated storage space for lunches.
- Do not pack lunch boxes in backpacks.
- Help your child make healthy choices for breakfast, and make sure that breakfast is finished before entering the classroom.

- Please send your child's lunch in easy-open containers. This promotes independence!

The following is a list of ideas for fruits and vegetables (remember to pack small quantities)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Pickles | ▪ Banana |
| ▪ Cherry tomatoes | ▪ Seedless grapes |
| ▪ Carrot sticks or coins | ▪ Olives |
| ▪ Applesauce in a container | ▪ Cubed watermelon |
| ▪ Mandarin orange slices | ▪ Cucumber slices |
| ▪ Vegetables and dip | ▪ Apples |
| ▪ Small salad in a container | ▪ Dried fruit |
| ▪ Green pepper strips | ▪ Peaches |
| ▪ Oranges | ▪ Canned fruit |
| ▪ Pineapple chunks | |

The special treat in your child's lunch is often the first thing eaten. It can be fun, good tasting, and good for them. Here are some ideas:

- Raisins
- Granola bar
- Sunflower seeds
- Popcorn in a bag
- Cheese & crackers in a package
- Pretzels
- Finger Jello (recipe follows)
- Banana muffins (recipe follows)

Cookies with some "redeeming value" include Fig Newtons, graham crackers, and oatmeal cookies.

Recipe for finger Jell-O:

(1) 3 oz. package of Jell-O, 1 package unflavored gelatin, ½ cup boiling water, 2/4 cup cold water. Dissolve both gelatins in boiling water. Add cold water. Pour into lightly oiled 8" square pan. Chill at least 2 hours. Cut into squares. (This will not start to melt for several hours)

Recipe for Banana muffins:

Mix by hand ½ cup shortening, 1 cup sugar, 2 eggs, 2 cups flour, 1 tsp. soda, pinch of salt, 1 cup mashed ripe banana. Fill paper lined muffin tins ½ full. Bake at 350° for approximately 20-25 minutes.

Section VI: Arrival and Dismissal Routines

Below are very important guidelines to help ensure a smooth flow and ultimately, ensure the safety and welfare of our children. We ask that you read them carefully and are mindful in dropping off/picking up your kids.

School Hours:

Full Days 8:15 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Half Day Toddler students dismiss at 12:00 p.m.

Half Day Transitional & Primary students: 8:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

It is very important to arrive promptly at 12:00/12:30 if your child is a half-day student!

Afternoon pick up is between 3:25-3:30 p.m. Extended day begins promptly at 3:30 p.m. You may pick your child up between 3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. without disturbing the classroom activity. Students will be brought outside by 3:25 p.m. daily if not registered for the Extended Day program.

Morning Arrival: 8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

- **Toddler and Transitional** parents are asked to utilize the entrance located on the south side of the building. There is ample parking available for easy access to the building. **Students arriving after 8:30 am are asked to enter through the front door.**
- Students in **Mrs. McCall's** class may enter through the front door of the main building.
- Parents of students in **Suite 150** are asked to park and walk their child inside the building.

Arrival BEFORE 8:00 a.m.:

If you find it necessary on some days to arrive earlier than 8:00 a.m., Morning Extended Care is available. However, if you find that you will need Morning Care throughout the school year, contact Julie Malone at (817-275-0851). Drop-ins are accepted and will be billed at the daily rate (10 cents per minute).

Arrival AFTER 8:15 a.m.:

If your child arrives after 8:15 a.m., you will need to escort them directly to their classroom. We ask that you take into consideration that the day has already begun for our students. Please do not take this time to communicate any concerns/messages to your child's teacher. Rather, establish an alternate time for you to get together. This will assist our teachers in maintaining a routine.

Afternoon Dismissal: 3:30 p.m.

All students will dismiss from the main building. Students who do not attend Extended Day *on a daily basis*, will wait with a staff member on the benches outside the front door.

Arrival AFTER 3:30 p.m.:

If you arrive after 3:30, your child will be in Extended Day. If you know that your child will need to go to Extended Day before the end of the school day, please contact the Director of Operations at the front desk and she will relay the message to the appropriate staff members. Drop-ins will receive a bill from the business office. Questions regarding Extended Day billing should be sent to the Business Manager, Alison Hunt at alison.hunt@cdsa.org or (310) 924-1389.

****Please remember to log your child(ren) out of the ProCare software system before leaving****

Changes to dismissal plans:

If you find it necessary to pick up your child early because of an appointment, or your daily dismissal plan changes, please send a note to your child's teacher indicating what changes are taking place or call the office. We encourage you to contact us as early in the day as possible.

If there is a change in the individual and they are not on the authorization form on file with the school, your child will not be released to that individual unless we have heard from you directly. We will insist that he/she provide us with a state/government issued identification card. A phone call will not suffice; however, a faxed signed document is acceptable. We will also insist that a signed note or a faxed document be provided in advance by you. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE!**

Thank you for your attention to these important safety guidelines.

Extended Day

In order to ensure appropriate coverage, children may not be dropped in without confirming a space with the front desk in advance. You may reserve a space up to 3:00 p.m. the day that care is needed, as long as space is available. The safety of all our children relies on manageable ratios (as well as ratios that comply with State of Texas standards). If your child is not picked up on a timely basis and must be taken to Extended Day, the drop-in rate fee applies.

Parents picking up their children after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$1 for every minute after 6:00 p.m.

ED Snacks

Afternoon snacks are provided daily. Morning care students are allowed to bring breakfast when they arrive before 7:45 a.m.

ED Discipline

The discipline system applies in Extended Day. Extended Day privileges may be revoked for repeated violations of school rules.

ED Emergency

The Extended Day Staff can be reached by cell phone (817/253-9994) after 4:30.

Section VII: Policies and Procedures

Animals

As part of our onsite field trip opportunities, from time to time we will have animals on campus. You will be notified in writing via our in-house publication News To Use, via email and on preschool activity flyers posted on each classroom door when animals will be brought on campus. Please notify us in writing if you have any concerns for your child when animals are present.

Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases that exclude a child from attending school are described on the attached appendix from the Texas Department of Health.

Discipline

Discipline will be consistent, appropriate to the level of child's understanding, praise and encouragement, reminding, redirecting and separated time-outs will be methods used. Corporal punishment, pinching, shaking, hitting, humiliating, rejecting, yelling at children will not be tolerated.

Emergencies

An Emergency Evaluation Plan is posted in each classroom. The evacuation route is posted by the exit door in all classrooms. We will conduct severe weather and fire drills monthly. CDSA has a detailed Emergency and Procedures Manual and a copy is available for review in the school office.

Hearing & Vision Screening

Students 4 years old by September 1st are required to have vision and hearing screenings. CDSA will schedule a hearing and vision screening test opportunity or you may submit documentation of this screening from your pediatrician. It is required to be on file within 120 days of admission to CDSA.

Illness

If a child becomes ill at school a parent will be called to pick the student up. A fever of 99.5 or above, vomiting or diarrhea will warrant a call to a parent. He/she will be sent to the school office to rest under the supervision of a staff member until a parent/authorized individual arrives.

Students need to remain free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.

Immunization Requirement

Each student's complete immunization record is required at the time of admission which includes a **signed statement from your pediatrician** indicating your child may attend a school program. Please refer to the Medical Information and Consent Form included in the CDSA application packet.

Medication

In order for medication to be dispensed at school, a parent **MUST** sign the Medication Authorization Form at the front desk. We are not allowed to dispense medication (prescribed or over-the-counter) without this form being signed.

Prescription medication must be clearly labeled in its original container and accompanied by a script signed and dated by the doctor clearly stating dispensing instructions.

Over-the-counter medication being requested to be given must be accompanied by written instructions.

Parental Notifications

CDSA will notify parents of changes in policy in writing whenever a new policy is implemented or if a current policy is changed. This information will also be available in the parent/student handbook or amended parent orientation booklets. Each enrolled family will receive a copy of the parent/student handbook. **It is required to return the acknowledgement form indicating your receipt and understanding of the parent/student handbook.**

PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization)

There are a variety of ways parents can volunteer at our school. A partnership between school administrators, teachers and parents is vital to the success of each student and the school. All parents are members of the PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization). Listed below are volunteer opportunities available at the school. Sign up forms are available at the front desk.

- Lead Fundraiser Coordinator(s)
 - Coordinate with CDSA Administration on meaningful and effective fundraisers to augment the operating budget specifically to enhance teacher's professional development opportunities and student program needs. One of our goals is to work to maximize the fundraising opportunities while minimizing the number of events. Heading up "Box Tops for Education" and online programs that support activities/purchases everyone makes but also includes a school fundraising component. There are some very effective ones available.
- Provide an **APPLE** (**A**ppreciative – **P**arents – **P**raise – **L**audable – **E**ducators) Gift
 - Each month, a staff member is saluted at our staff meetings. Part of the salute includes a gift and some gift examples include movie tickets, restaurant gift cards and department store gift cards. The teachers have a wish list on the school website for additional ideas.

- Teacher Luncheon Volunteers
 - Work with the school administration in coordinating lunch for the teachers. As a special treat, lunch is provided for staff four times a year. In the past, luncheons have been prepared by parents or boxed lunches brought in by local vendors (Jason's Deli, La Madeleine, Black Eyed Pea, Panera Bread). The specific dates for these luncheons are Friday, 09/16; Friday, 11/11; Friday, 02/10; Wednesday, 05/30.
- Breakfast with Buddies, Wednesday, 09/08 (Primary-1st Grade) or Thursday, 09/09 (Toddler & Transitional)
 - Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare for event in your child's classroom. Pastries- muffins- juice coffee is usually served for parents and students to meet and mingle.
- Fall Festival Coordinator(s), Sunday, October 30th
 - Work with fellow PTO Fall Festival volunteers to organize activities (games, crafts, booths) for the event. This event is attended by many of our families and provides a relaxed, fun setting for them to get to know one another.
- Fall Festival set-up and take down crew, Sunday, October 30th
 - Work with the Fall Festival Coordinators to help set-up and take down various activities.
- Winter Class Party Volunteer(s), Tuesday, December 20th
 - Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.
- Gala Volunteer(s), Saturday, April 14th
 - Work with PTO Gala Chairs, Amy Seiders and Keirschen Maize Tucker, and CDSA Administration with this event. This is the largest fundraiser of the year.
- Spring Class Party Volunteer(s), Thursday, April 5th
 - Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.
- Field Day Volunteer(s), Friday, May 25th (Last day of school)
 - Work with Stretch-N-Grow PE staff and CDSA Administration for this event.
- End of the Year Party Volunteer(s), Wednesday, May 23rd
 - Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.

Safety

The entry code to the front door will be changed periodically. We ask that you not share the code with your children or allow them to punch the code in and open the door.

In addition to daily visits from our maintenance team, our Facilities Manager is on campus 2-3 times per week.

Transportation

Preschool students are not transported to field trips off campus. Kindergarten and First Grade students may attend off-site field trips. Parents will be advised of a scheduled trip in advance and a permission slip will be required of each student. Students who do not have a signed permission slip will not be allowed to join the trip.

Uniforms

Students in the Primary – 1st grade classes are required to wear the school uniform Monday through Thursday; Friday is a free dress day. Students in the Toddler and Transitional classes are not required to wear uniforms.

Our uniform supplier is online retailer Land's End. Follow these easy steps to view uniform options for our school:

- Go to landsend.com/school
- Click on "Find your school's dress code" to look up CDSA and enter our online store. Our preferred school number is 900067786

We also have gently used uniforms available for resale.

Uniform requirements will be enforced and we ask that you kindly abide by the options we are providing. You are not required to purchase uniforms through Land's End but students are required to be in proper uniform each school day.

Girls Primary/Kindergarten Clothes:

Plaid V-Front Jumper
Plaid/Navy/Khaki Box Pleat Skirt
Plaid/Navy/Khaki Skort
Plaid/Navy/Khaki Shorts
*Khaki Slacks (*Must be twill fabric)
Middy Blouse
Peter Pan Collar Blouse
(Long or Short Sleeve)
Stretch Blouse(3/4-Sleeve)
White Polo Shirt (Long or Short Sleeve)
Burgundy Polo Shirt
White Turtleneck
Burgundy CDSA Sweatshirt
Burgundy Cardigan Sweater
Burgundy Polar Fleece Jacket
Accessories:
Shoes: Shoes that coordinate with uniforms
and are safe for outdoor play. Flip-flops are
not allowed
White Socks or Tights
Navy or Plaid Hair Accessories

Boys Primary /Kindergarten Clothes:

*Khaki Slacks (*Must be twill fabric)
*Khaki Shorts
White Oxford Shirt (Long or Short Sleeve)
White Polo Shirt (Long or Short Sleeve)
Burgundy Polo Shirt
White Turtleneck
Burgundy CDSA Sweatshirt
Burgundy Cardigan Sweater
Burgundy Polar Fleece Jacket
Accessories:
Black or White socks
Belt

Visitation

Visitation of classrooms can be done at any time during regular hours of operation. For a scheduled observation, please contact the office for an appointment.

A copy of the Texas Department of Minimum Standards and most recent licensing inspection report can be viewed.

The Texas Department of Licensing address is: 1501 Circle Drive #310, Fort Worth, Texas 76119. The TDPRS website is www.tdprs.state.tx.us

Weather Related Closing

In the event that inclement weather forces the closing of school or a delayed opening, the following television stations will broadcast the announcement at regular intervals:

KTVT Channel 11

KXAS Channel 5

WFAA Channel 8

Please listen to the stations to secure information regarding the closing or delayed opening of school. Decisions regarding open, closing or delaying school will be made by 6:30 a.m. Additionally, school closings will be posted on our school website by 6:30 a.m.

If you have any questions or concerns about the policies and procedures, please feel free to contact Joyce Hunt, Head of School or Julie Malone, Director of Operations at 817-275-0851.

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

2011-12 CDSA Parent Teacher Organization Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet

Child's Name: _____ Teacher: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Please indicate which of the following events/activities you are interested in leading/volunteering for:

Lead Fundraiser Coordinator(s)

Coordinate with CDSA Administration on meaningful and effective fundraisers to augment the operating budget specifically to enhance teacher's professional development opportunities and student program needs. One of our goals is to work to maximize the fundraising opportunities while minimizing the number of events. Heading up "Box Tops for Education" and online programs that support activities/purchases everyone makes but also includes a school fundraising component. There are some very effective ones available.

Provide an APPLE (Appreciative – Parents – Praise – Laudable – Educators) Gift

Each month, a staff member is saluted at our staff meetings. Part of the salute includes a gift and some examples include movie tickets, restaurant gift cards and department store gift cards. The teachers have a wish list on the school website for additional ideas. The staff meets twice monthly and the APPLE salute is typically gifted during the 3rd week of the month at that meeting.

Teacher Luncheon Volunteers

Work with the school administration in coordinating lunch for the teachers. Lunch is provided for staff four times a year as a special treat. In the past, luncheons have been prepared by parents or boxed lunches brought in by local vendors (Jason's Deli, La Madeleine, Black Eyed Pea, Panera Bread). Luncheon dates are: Friday, September 16th; Friday, November 11th; Friday, February 10th and Wednesday (End of year) May 30th.

Breakfast with Buddies, Wednesday, 09/07 (Primary-1st Grade) or Thursday, 09/08 (Toddler & Transitional)

Work with your child's teacher to prepare for event in your child's classroom. Pastries- muffins- juice coffee is usually served for parents and students to meet and mingle. Additionally, taking an active role in partnering with CDSA administration to welcome new families throughout the year.

Fall Festival Coordinator(s), Sunday, mid-Oct (Date to be determined....most likely Oct 23rd)

Work with fellow PTO Fall Festival volunteers to organize activities (games, crafts, booths) for the event. This event is attended by many of our families and provides a relaxed, fun setting for them to get to know one another. It is led by Julie Malone.

Winter Class Party Volunteer(s), Tuesday, December 20th

Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.

Spring Class Party Volunteer(s), Thursday, April 5th

Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.

Gala Volunteer(s), event is Saturday, April 14th

Work with PTO Gala Chairs, Amy Seiders and Kierschen Maize-Tucker and CDSA Administration with this event. This is the largest fundraiser of the year.

End of the Year Party Volunteer(s), Wednesday, May 23rd

Work with your child's teacher and Classroom Lead Coordinator to prepare a party in your child's classroom.

Field Day Volunteer(s), Friday, May 25th (Last day of school)

Work with PE teacher and CDSA Administration for this event.



Handbook Acknowledgement Form 2011 - 12

I, _____ (Parent or Guardian), hereby confirm that I have personally read the Country Day School of Arlington *2011-12 Parent/Student Handbook*. With this signature, I acknowledge my understanding and acceptance of the policies set forth in this publication.

Student Name(s):

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

**PLEASE RETURN TO THE FRONT DESK BY MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 12TH**