



## Parent Handbook

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# ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

## WELCOME

Welcome to Grace Montessori! We are glad your family has chosen Grace Montessori to care for your child. We hope parents and children will feel welcome here at all times.

Grace Montessori Academy, in partnership with parents and community, is committed to providing an affordable, quality Montessori program for students of diverse abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds in Elizabeth City, NC. We embrace the philosophy and educational approach expressed by Dr. Maria Montessori while always keeping ourselves open to new ideas to broaden and enhance our programs. The staff views each child as an individual with a unique background, personality, maturity, and intellect. We encourage a whole family approach at Grace by providing opportunities for parents and staff to work together, share, and to learn from one another

This handbook has been written to describe our program, goals, policies and the practical details that go into making each day as happy and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for a reference, as it will answer many questions. Feel free to talk to your child's teacher or director at any time. Once again,

**WELCOME!**

## PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Grace Montessori Academy nurtures a child's love of learning and sense of personal and social responsibility, using a child-centered Montessori philosophy and curriculum. At Grace Montessori, we believe that children can become highly functioning adults if given an environment that encourages all children to become creative, independent, responsible, self-directed and able to make decisions for themselves. At Grace Montessori we strive to "build" children that are physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually strong. In order to achieve this:

**We believe** that children need a clean, healthy, safe and stimulating environment.

**We believe** that children will learn cognitive, language, physical and social skills through hands on activities in a classroom environment prepared for their development.. We believe that developmentally appropriate activities need to be planned according to the stages of development that children go through. We want the children to feel confident and secure enough to explore and grow in a stimulating educational and social environment.

**We believe** that children are all individuals and their uniqueness will be an asset to the group. Each child will have the opportunity to participate in group and individual activities throughout the day. We believe that this will allow them to develop socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually.

**We believe** that all children have the right to feel good about themselves and it is the responsibility of all teachers to nurture the child's self-esteem.

**We believe** everyone is entitled to feelings, "good and bad". It is important for people to understand these rather than deny them.

**We believe** that creativity, self-expression and curiosity are expressions of individuality and should be encouraged to develop in all people.

**We believe** each child and family are due the respect for personal privacy demanded by professional ethics.

**We believe** that parents are vital in developing a maximum amount of continuity between home and school so as to permit greater satisfaction with the program for both parent and child.

## **AFFILIATION INFORMATION**

Grace Montessori Academy is licensed by the North Carolina Division of Child Development.

### **How to obtain information about our center:**

The North Carolina Division of Child Development makes every effort to provide information parents need to make the best possible child care choices. The Division records a variety of information on regulated facilities that you might find useful in your search, including:

- Sanitation scores
- Complaint investigations
- Visits made by Division staff
- Any administrative actions taken

The website for the Division of Child Development is <http://ncchildcare.dhhs.state.nc.us>

The school is also registered with the North Carolina Department of Nonpublic Education for our school age program.

Grace Montessori Academy is not affiliated with any specific religion; we honor the religious beliefs of all our families. We acknowledge the rich and diverse heritage of our school through classroom studies and celebrations of traditional and cultural holidays. In most classrooms the children sing a song of thanks before eating lunch. This is not intended to be religious in nature but allows the children the chance to calm themselves before enjoying the meal.

**Grace is a Non-Smoking Campus, please no smoking on our premis.**

# Montessori Philosophy and Curriculum

"A child's work," Dr. Montessori wrote, "is to create the man he will become. An adult works to perfect his environment, but a child works to perfect himself." Dr. Montessori, an engineer, physician, and an educator, developed an approach to education that would aid the child in his work. The Montessori Method, based on careful observation of and respect for the natural development of the child, has been used in schools around the world for more than 100 years.

The theory behind Montessori education is simple: Children want to learn. From birth to maturity, the child lives in what appears to be a chaotic world. He or she gradually establishes order by learning to distinguish the senses and develop their inner resources. The child who accomplished this becomes a confident, self-assured learner.

The main purpose of a Montessori school is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help the child develop an excellent foundation for creative learning. Montessori classrooms provide a prepared environment where children are free to respond to their natural drive to work and learn.

The Montessori apparatus is carefully designed to provide opportunities for the child to explore concrete examples of abstract ideas. It is self-correcting, allowing children to develop their senses and discover concepts under the guidance of a Montessori teacher. Each piece of material teaches a single concept or skill, and is introduced to the child depending upon his interests and abilities. For instance, the younger child develops eye-hand coordination through exercises such as transferring beads from one container to another with tweezers. The older child is interested in more specific learning activities, such as reinforcing multiplication facts using the multiplication board. The children are introduced to these independent learning activities in two ways: discovery and demonstration. The child can discover certain materials on his own or by observing an older child do the work. Other exercises are demonstrated by the teacher who then allows the child to work through the material on his own.

The Montessori approach recognizes that a child is more responsive to certain learning experiences at particular times or "sensitive periods." Careful observation allows the Montessori-trained teacher to recognize these sensitive periods when a child is ready for a new learning experience. The teacher can then direct the child toward materials that will satisfy his developmental needs. Through their work, the children develop concentration, motivation, persistence, and discipline. 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. The Montessori environment teaches children a positive, "I can do it" attitude that will ensure their future success in all aspects of their life.

***Education should no longer be mostly imparting knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentials. - Dr. Maria Montessori***

# Administrative Policies

## Hours of Operations

Normal hours of operation are 7:00am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Application fee (non-refundable) \$20

Supplies fee (Bambinos-Primary) \$40 Billed upon enrollment and each November 1st.

### Weekly rates:

Infants (6w-12m)	\$182/week
One's (12m-24mo)	\$182/week
Toddlers (24mo-36mo)	\$157/week
Primary (3yo-5yo)	\$156/week

Late pickup rate: **\$25.00 per 15 minutes per child (regardless of the number of children)** due in cash at time of pick-up or before child can return to the center.

Rates are charged for all normal working days regardless of whether your child was present or absent. For weeks that include holidays, your weekly rate will remain the same.

\* A week of childcare will be 5 days or 47.5 hrs/week.

## PAYMENTS

Payments are due in advance on **Friday** for the following week. Payments that are not made by 5:30 pm on Monday will be charged a late fee of \$10.00/day. If payments are not made on Monday, your child will not be accepted until payment is made in full. Other arrangements can be made if discussed with the Director in advance of the situation. Please remember that this is a business and without payments made in a timely manner, expenses for the child care can't be paid.

Also, normal tuition rates will apply if Grace has to close for emergencies, inclement weather, being in a State of Emergency, any incident considered an Act of God, center-wide illnesses and any other closings beyond our control. Grace will do what is the safest for our children, families and staff. Thank you in advance.

## DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

In the event the parent/guardian fails to pay for child care services, that party will be turned over to a collection agency. If the responsible party is turned over for collection due to non-payment of services or other contract violations, late payment fees will continue to build up at the daily rate until that balance is paid in full. The responsible party will also be held accountable for any costs related to the collection of fees, including but not limited to attorney's fees and court costs.

## **NSF CHECKS and Denied Credit Card Payments**

If a check is returned for non-sufficient funds or your credit card payment was denied, you will be required to pay a \$35.00 fee. This is the amount the bank charges for returned items, and any other fee that may incur as a result of the returned check. Child care services will be immediately stopped until full payment and all charges have been made in **cash only**. If two NSF checks/denied Credit Card payments are received from you, you will be required to pay in cash or by money-orders weekly.

## **ENROLLMENT AND TERMINATION**

Grace Montessori Academy welcomes students from ages six weeks through 7th Grade of any race, religion, color, national, or ethnic origin and does not discriminate in the administration of its educational or admissions policies. The program accepts children with special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided for the child and we have enough staff to accommodate all of the children's needs. Grace Montessori does reserve the right to deny enrollment of a child/ren if deemed appropriate. Additionally, Grace Montessori has the right to terminate enrollment at any time if deemed appropriate.

**All new children will be cared for on a two-week trial period beginning on your child's first actual day of enrollment.** This gives the child time to adjust to the program. The goal of Grace Montessori Academy is to ensure an environment that is safe, calm, and conducive to learning. While most children thrive, not all children are successful in our program. Termination from Grace Montessori Academy becomes necessary due to misbehavior, delinquent payments, etc. No notice will be required if care is terminated. Fees paid are not refundable.

After the trial period, a two week notice is required to terminate the enrollment agreement. Those families who do not give notice or leave before the two week time frame are responsible for paying the two weeks tuition.

## **ABSENCES**

Grace Montessori Academy gives your child the opportunity to participate in a Montessori environment while offering working families the advantage of an extended care program. Payment ensures placement for your child is held. A child withdrawn due to illness, vacation, or other reasons will lose his or her current and future space unless tuition payments are continued during the absence period.

Kindergarten and Elementary student may not miss more than 20 academic days during a school year.

## **THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

### **1. PRE-REGISTER YOUR CHILD**

Pre-register your child on our website [www.gracemontessoriacademy.com](http://www.gracemontessoriacademy.com) This will add your child to our waiting list. We will contact you for a tour as space becomes available.

### **2. PARENT VISIT AND OBSERVATION**

The admissions process begins with a parent visit. Parents tour the school, observe a classroom in session, and meet with the Director. This allows prospective parents and the school representative to become acquainted with each other and to share pertinent information ensuring a good match between the family and Grace Montessori.

### **3. APPLICATION**

Parents are encouraged to submit a completed application form accompanied by a \$20 nonrefundable application fee as promptly as possible after the classroom observation.

#### **4. STUDENT CLASSROOM VISIT**

Before children enroll in the Toddler through Primary program they should come in for a visit. Children will explore the classroom and meet with the Director to affirm if the Montessori Method is a good fit for your child.

#### **CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

Parents/Guardians shall fill out and turn in all enrollment forms and medical forms required by the North Carolina Division of Child Development. These forms are needed on the child's first day of attendance. The Child Health Assessment form may be completed within 14 days of attendance. An up-to-date shot record will be requested at the time of enrollment and prior to the start of services. If the Child Health Assessment and immunizations are not supplied in a timely manner, the provider will refuse services until this request is met. Emergency information on the enrollment form must be complete, leaving no blanks, and must be updated as information changes. In addition to the above, we must receive a copy of a birth certificate for children in the Elementary program. It is the parent's responsibility to keep all forms updated with all necessary telephone numbers and any new information pertinent to their child's well-being.

## **School Schedule**

### **2023-2024 Holiday & Professional Development Schedule**

Please note the following schedule:

**July 3rd & 4th** - Closed in Observance of Independence Day

**August 18th** - Closed for Professional Development

**September 1st & Sept 4th** - Closed for Professional Development and Labor Day

**October 20th** - Closed for Professional Development

**October 31st**- Close at Noon

**November 10th** - Closed for Veteran's Day

**November 22nd** - Closed for Professional Development

**November 23rd & 24th**- Closed for Thanksgiving

**December 22nd-26th** - Closed for Christmas Holiday

**December 29th** - Closing at Noon

**January 1st** - Closed

**January 15th** - Closed for Martin Luther King Day

**February 16th and Feb 19th**- Closed for Professional Development and Presidents' Day

**March 29th - April 2nd** - Center Closed for Easter Holiday and Professional Development

**May 24th** - Closed for Professional Development

**May 27th** - Closed for Memorial Day

**June 19th**- Closed for Juneteenth

**July 4th & 5th** - Closed in Observance of Independence Day

**When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the school will be closed on the following Monday with regular rates.** It is your responsibility to arrange alternative child care on these dates.



## Other Closings

In the case of weather conditions, the facility will remain open until the weather worsens. In the event that Grace falls into the area that is under a Tornado Warning, we will close immediately and you will have only one hour to pick up your child. During **extreme** weather conditions, the facility will follow the county school closings. If the county school is closed or delayed please call the center, check our FB account or read your email from Smartcare.com account before bringing your child. The center will not always follow the public schools closings and delays. It will be determined by the director according to the severity of weather and road conditions. Parents must prepare themselves to pick up children when these conditions occur. We will announce any closings on our voicemail and we will continually update our FB Page as needed.

The provider reserves the right to notify parents of vacation, training days or leave two weeks in advance. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make other arrangements for child care.

## Parent/Guardian Involvement and Communication

### INVOLVEMENT

Active parent involvement is an integral part of an effective school program. Besides the obvious benefits of shared communication and direct support of the functioning of the school, your interest in the school shows your child that it holds an important place in your lives and that you value his/her accomplishments at school. Parents are encouraged to visit, observe, and participate in all of their child's activities.

### CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Parents are always welcome to observe a class. When parents are present, children must still follow the guidelines of the facility. Appointments for observations can be made with the Director. Please notify the provider of your presence immediately upon entering the premises. If your presence in the classroom is deemed disruptive, we will ask you to observe outside the classroom through the windows located in the hallway. Also, we ask that you not take pictures of the classroom or students by camera or by camera phone. We have to respect the privacy of all of the children in the classrooms.

### DAILY COMMUNICATION

Parent-Teacher conversations: Parents and teachers need to communicate daily. Please feel free to talk to child's teacher at time of drop off or drop off a note to the office requesting a call back or a note of response.

Parents are expected to escort their child to the classroom. This is a good time to share a comment or a few words with the teacher or to arrange a later time to talk. We ask that you not linger in the classroom so that the classroom is not disrupted.

At Grace Montessori, we have an open door policy. This means that I want children, families and staff to feel that they can come to me at any time with questions or concerns. I feel that talking and listening with respect promotes a positive environment. If there are any issues or concerns please talk with the teacher first and if you are not satisfied then don't hesitate to bring it to myself or the Assistant Director.

**Grace Montessori is a Cell-Phone Free School.** Please leave your cell phone in your car or on silent while in our school. What your child or their teacher has to say to you is important, please be respectful of both.

## PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

We will be observing your child throughout the year to assess their development physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively, creatively, and verbally. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled annually for teachers to share their observations with the parents.

A conference can be requested at any time by either the parent or teacher. If you have something to discuss in length with the teacher please make an appointment, since it is necessary for the teacher to devote their time during their day to the children.

## PARENT NIGHTS

Parent Nights are held at different times during the year. Parent Nights focus on different aspects of Montessori education and child development. These meetings are an excellent chance for you to deepen your knowledge of how your child learns. This is also a time to meet the parents of your child's classmates.

## Arrival and Transportation

### ARRIVAL

Grace Montessori Academy opens each weekday at 7:00am for full-day Infant thru Primary programs. **All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult and received by an adult.** Parents need to allow enough time to assist their children in hanging up their coats and bringing them into the classroom. Please escort your child to the classroom door. As part of our efforts to encourage independence, we ask that you take the time to hug & kiss your child outside the classroom door. The teacher/assistant will welcome your child into the classroom and assist them in putting their belongings in their cubby.

**\*\*All children must arrive by 8:15am to appropriately participate in the Montessori Work Day. If you know your child will be late, please give us notice. Grace Montessori's cut-off time for arrival is no later than 8:30am unless accompanied by a doctor's note. Children arriving beyond 8:45am without prior notification will not be accepted for the day. Please understand that this is a school and it is disruptive for both the classroom and your child's schedule.**

We ask you to call or email us by 8:30 am when your child will be absent.

### SIGN-IN/SIGN-OUT

**Please check your child in and out at the Check-In station. State regulations require parents to sign their children in and out every day, including times when the child leaves for a doctor's appointment or other activity.**

### DEPARTURE

The school closes promptly at 4:30 P.M and children are to be picked up at the agreed time. We ask that any socializing with other families past 4:30 pm be done outside. Parents should make the staff aware that the child

is leaving and check the child out at the computer. If you are going to be late you need to call the school so that the child does not feel abandoned. **\$25.00 per 15 minutes per child (regardless of the number of children)** will be due in cash at time of pick-up or before child can return. If your child is picked up after 4:30 more than twice, we will terminate enrollment effective immediately.

If someone other than persons on the "Authorized Pick-Up list" is to pick up your child, a written and signed note from the parent should be given to the teacher and a call to the school from the parent. A valid picture identification will be required and a copy will be placed in the child's folder.

## **Administrative Policies/General Health Policies/ Practices**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

Grace extensively interviews all potential staff, follows through with contacting their reference and notifies all staff that there is a required 90 day probationary period to see if Grace is a good fit for them and that they are a good fit for Grace. We understand that the Montessori curriculum is very different and can be a difficult transition for those trained in a traditional setting. Grace meets with it's staff on a regular basis for verbal evaluations and also conducts annual evaluations per the NCDHHS Childcare Division requirements. We also utilize our Professional Development Days as a way to train, brainstorm and effectively

We welcome and encourage communication with our parents. Please feel free to contact us at any time via phone, email [jen@gracemontessoriacademy.com](mailto:jen@gracemontessoriacademy.com) or face to face. We will also happily make an appointment to be able to speak with both the Director and your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. We understand the importance of objective evaluations of our Administrative staff, our teachers and our program and we welcome any information that will help us grow in a positive manner! Grace abides by the NCDHHS Childcare Division Standards and ties to incorporate both our Montessori Program with the Traditional requirements.

Grace is a private corporation and is responsible for all operational and fiscal management aspects of the building along with the daily operations of Grace Montessori Academy.

### **PERSONNEL POLICY**

All staff (volunteer and paid) who have any contact with the child/ren will have required health assessments, a public records check for history of conviction of crime, and be oriented to the program's policies. They will have current training in First Aid and CPR as required by the North Carolina Division of Child Development. Continued education will be maintained and kept in a personnel folder for each staff member.

### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

To help the provider better understand the child's needs, the parent/guardian will be asked to complete a "Special Care Plan" in agreement with the child's health provider. The program will attempt to accommodate children with special needs consistent with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If the program is unable to accommodate the needs as defined by the child's health care provider or the Individual Family Service Plan/Individual Educational Plan without posing an undue burden as defined by federal law, the provider will work with the parent or guardian to find a suitable environment for the child.

### **EXCLUSION FROM CHILDCARE DUE TO ILLNESS**

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. If in the opinion of the staff or director, your child is sick we will call you to come and pick up your child. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home and **cannot return the next day:**

- After the first vomiting episode
- Diarrhea (two consecutive diarrhea episodes within an hour's time)
- Temperature in excess of 100.5 degrees F
- Symptoms of contagious diseases: Measles, Mumps, Chicken pox, Hepatitis, Strep Infections, Scabies

Head lice, Ringworm, Scarlet Fever, Hand, Foot & Mouth

- Discharge from ears or complaint of pain in ear(s)
- Green discharge from nose or eyes
- Pink Eye
- Deep congested cough, difficulty breathing, croup, complaining of sore throat or chest discomfort
- Any visible rash or skin source with suspicion of communicable nature.
- Unknown rash
- Pain
- COVID-19 Symptoms, COVID-19 Exposure or COVID-19 Diagnosis.

Any child whose illness required that the child be sent home shall be provided appropriate attention until the ill child's parent or guardian arrives to pick up the child. You are requirement to pick up your child within **one hour** of notification and sign our illness form. The child shall be provided separate care apart from the other children until the parent arrives if available. **If you child is sent home due to an illness, he/she cannot return to the center until they have been symptom free for 24hrs without medication.**

**While we understand that parents have to work, please do not medicate your child to reduce their fever prior to dropping them off at the center. If they require medication to reduce the fever, they need to stay home as to not infect the other children at the center.**

It is your responsibility to notify the center if your child has a communicable disease, such as; measles, mumps, chicken pox, head lice, etc. A child may be readmitted without a physician's note if a period of time equal to the longest incubation period of the disease as specified by the Department of Health and Social Services. In the case of parasitic infestation, a child is readmitted when all evidence of the infestation is gone. This is determined by the director or assistant director before the child can enter the classroom.

Families of children who may have been exposed to a child with a communicable disease or reportable condition will be informed about the exposure according to the recommendations of Albemarle Regional Health Services.

Minor injuries will be treated with soap, water, ice and bandages. Should there be a serious accident, parents or other persons listed on emergency form will be contacted. If no one can be reached, we will call the physician you have listed or 911 if necessary.

**\*If your child has a contagious infection, written notification from his/her physician will be required before returning to care.**

All medications shall be kept in locked storage. This includes diaper rash ointment, topical teething medications, allergy medicine; eye drops, and cough medicine. If you need a form to complete, please notify the provider. All unused medicines shall be returned to the parent. Medication permission forms will be kept in the child's record.

#### **Types of medication permission slips include:**

1. Prescription Medication Permission Form
2. Over-The-Counter Medication Permission Form
3. Permission Form for Asthma and Allergic Reactions
4. Diaper Cream, Sunscreen, Teething Medications and Bug Spray Permission Form

### **ALLERGIES**

All allergies must be listed on the registration form. I will accommodate your child's diet, if there is an allergy to a particular food item, but we **must have a diet statement from a certified health professional**.

## **Safety**

### **OUTDOOR SAFETY POLICY**

No child will be left unsupervised while attending the program. The provider will directly supervise children by sight and hearing at all times, even when the children are sleeping. The provider will conduct monthly inspections of the facility for hazards. The results of the inspections will be reviewed to arrange for correction of hazardous conditions identified. Written reports of inspections will be kept in the program files. All potentially toxic materials such as pesticides, toxic cleaning materials, aerosol cans, and poisons will be kept inaccessible to the children.

### **ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Any suspected abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred. I will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent/legal guardian. Staff members that are accused of child abuse will be suspended or given leave without pay pending investigation of the accusation. However, no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty will be summarily dismissed. Each complaint will be submitted to the Division of Child Development within 24 hours. Department of Social Services: 252-338-2126  
Division of Child Development: 1-800-859-0829

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES AND INJURIES**

In the event of an emergency, established procedures will be followed to ensure prompt action to the emergency. Emergency situations will include but are not limited to lost or missing children, injuries or illness of children requiring medical or dental care, serious illness, hospitalization, and death of a child or staff member.

First aid kits will be locked and inaccessible to children, and will be restocked to maintain the supply of items. The kit will be taken on field trips and during any transportation.

The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, and Hospital, EMS, and Poison control will be posted by each working phone. Emergency contact information for each child and staff will be kept readily available and updated regularly.

To prevent lost, missing children, the provider will count children frequently while on a field trip. The staff will not make the child's name visible to a stranger who might use the child's name to lure the child from the group.

In the event your child should suffer an injury while in my care, a record will be kept in a notebook. You will be notified of the injury and asked to sign a notification of injury. Please alert us to any injuries received elsewhere.

### **OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**

Other emergency situations will include but are not limited to evacuations due to fire, explosion, power failures, and closings due to snow/storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, public safety or other natural catastrophes. During these situations, should it be necessary to evacuate the facility, child: staff ratios will be maintained, and the children will be evacuated to the local designated shelter. The provider will carry attendance and emergency contact information from the facility to the location where evacuees will gather and compare attendance at the shelter to the attendance sheet to be sure no children/staff have been left behind. A final "sweep" of all areas accessible to children will be conducted before the last person leaves the facility. Families will be notified by phone or local radio/television stations. Parents/Guardians should be prepared to pick up their child within one hour of the emergency situation or send someone on the emergency contact list. *If is essential that emergency names, telephone numbers and work information be current and accurate.*

Evacuation and Shelter In Place drills will be held monthly. The timing of the drills will be varied to include early morning, meal times, and nap times. Documentation will be maintained in the facility records for review by the licensing consultant. Fire exit plans are posted in the facility. The infants will be carried out in a fire evacuation crib, and the mobile children will be led out of the facility in the quickest way possible.

### **HAZARDS**

Please do not allow your child to bring gum, hard candy, or small toys/items to childcare. These can be dangerous to other children.

# Policies and Procedures

## MEALS

Grace Montessori encourages and requires that parents pack their children's snack and lunch daily. We will be able to assist with helping children prepare their lunch to an extent, but we will help teach independence in their meal preparations. The lunch containers need to be reusable and allow your Toddler - Elementary child to independently unpack. **Each item in their lunchbox needs to be labeled with your child's name and date daily.** Water is provided or he/she may bring his/her own beverage but any beverages in sippy cups in Toddlers will be poured into glasses so they learn to drink from an open cup. We wait for everyone to unpack, say a thankful poem, and then begin eating. At the end of lunch any leftovers are repacked in the lunch box and sent home.

Each parent in our Primary rooms will be asked to sign up to bring in snack and drink for each child in that class on one day per month. Snacks must be store bought and in the original packaging. Suggested snacks include (but are not limited to) fresh fruit, crackers, yogurt, cheese sticks, etc. We ask that you bring a reusable water bottle daily for your child. Please refrain from bringing cookies, cupcakes and other high sugar snacks.

All parents are to provide at least 2 snacks daily for your child. Please assure that these are healthy snacks that the children can open independently, if possible. Additionally, please supply a reusable labeled water bottle daily for you child.

**To ensure the safety of the children, we cannot serve carrots, celery, raisins, popcorn, nuts or any other foods that may pose a choking hazard to our Toddler children. GRACE IS A NUT FREE SCHOOL!**

**Serving times:** Please serve your child breakfast prior to bringing them to school

AM Snack: 10:00 am snack available in all classrooms

Lunch: 11:45am (Toddlers) and 12pm (Primary)

PM Snack: 3:00 p.m.

The parent/guardian of each child under 15 months shall provide the facility with a written feeding schedule. This will include instructions on preparing the formula. Formula will be stored in the refrigerator and labeled with the child's name. Breast milk needs to be labeled and dated daily. Any breast milk that has not been used will be sent home with the parent that evening. All children 12m-24m need to be drinking from sippy cups, Grace does not accept bottles for children until 12m of age.

## DIAPERING/TOILETING PRACTICES

Diapers will be checked for wetness or feces at least hourly and whenever the child indicates discomfort and shall be changed when found to be wet or soiled. Grace Montessori respectfully declines the use of cloth diapers due to strict sanitation guidelines.

Soiled clothing will be stored in a plastic bag and sent home with the child at the end of the day. These will not be rinsed out, and thereby will decrease the spread of germs in the childcare setting. At the parent's request, staff will throw away the soiled undergarments.

Once a parent feels their child is developmentally ready for toilet learning (typically in age 2) a Provider/ Parent consultation will be arranged to discuss how to proceed with this process. We discourage the use of pull ups except for at nap because it gives a mixed message to the child. When your child is ready for potty training we will give you more information.

### **NAP TIME**

Each child in the program is encouraged to take a nap after lunch. If the child does not sleep they are still required to remain on their cot and rest. If the child refuses to stay on their cot, a parent will be called to pick their child up and a meeting with the Director will be mandatory. *Additionally, it is important to maintain the safety of all children in the classrooms, if a child cannot follow the napping rule of staying on their cot. After consultation with the parent, if the child's nap behavior does not improve, Grace reserves the right to terminate childcare.*

Kindergarten and Elementary children are not required to nap.

### **ITEMS REQUIRED FOR YOUR CHILD**

Children should dress comfortably, simply and suitably for the weather. Art and creative activities are planned every day and your child will have the opportunity to participate. Despite smocks and aprons clothes get dirty from both indoor and outdoor play. We do not want to inhibit children unnecessarily, so we ask you to send them in comfortable old clothes. Dress in layers on cold days. Every day, unless there is inclement weather, the children will be going outside so please send coats or sweaters, hats and gloves during the cold weather. An extra set of clothing is required for all children. This should include underwear, socks, pants and shirt. Please place them in a sealed plastic bag and label the clothing appropriately. An extra sweater or jacket is recommended to be kept in the cubby since the temperature changes often. If your child is in the potty training stage please be sure to supply us with extra training pants labeled. **Closed toed shoes must be worn.** Also, each child will be required to have "indoor shoes" to change into when they arrive at school. These indoor shoes are to stay in their cubbies and are not to be taken home daily unless the parent has supplied a new pair of indoor shoes.

Parents of Bambinos through Primary children are to bring in a crib sheet & blanket to be used for nap time on our cots (we provide the cots) each Monday for the week and we will send them home to be washed each Friday.

### **POSSESSIONS**

Each child will have his/ her own cubby for jackets, extra clothes, nap blankets and treasured art projects. Please check your child's cubby daily for items that do not need to remain at school or for any notes from the teachers. We do not allow your child to bring toys to school nor may they be left in the cubbies; please leave personal belongings at home. Additionally, please do not bring backpacks or diaper bags for children in Bambinos through Elementary.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

It is our custom to celebrate this most important day for your child. The Primary classes celebrate birthdays using a Montessori tradition, "The Circle of the Sun". We ask that parents fill out a Celebration of Life form and bring pictures of their children representing each year of life. Treats are not shared in the classroom for birthdays. Please notify your child's teacher if you would like to participate in your child's birthday celebration. You may put invitations and notes in the children's cubbies, but please notify the teacher before doing so.



## DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

*"To let the child do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control, is to betray the idea of freedom,"*

*- Maria Montessori*

At Grace Montessori Academy it is our goal to promote each child's physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being and growth. The staff believes that self-discipline is the desired goal of all people. To this end, the staff provides the children with clear examples of positive behavior and how to act in specific situations through Grace and Courtesy lessons. We believe that prevention of inappropriate behavior, based on clear expectations, is best. Expectations are developed and discussed with students in an age appropriate manner.

We, as a staff, do not believe in threats of reward or punishment. We also prohibit Natural and logical consequence is used as a means of helping the child to develop inner limits. If a child is disruptive or endangers himself or others, we will stop that child. Expectations will be verbally clarified. If these measures should not work and if a child should continue to lack self-control, a teacher will separate the child from the group, but continue to supervise him/her until he/she regains control to resume normal class activity. If a persistent breakdown occurs, parents will be notified. If a child should show some of the behaviors below on a continual basis and it cannot be modified, we may request that the child leave the program. Such behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Constant over activity, undirected toward any specific activity
- Inability or refusal to follow even simple instructions or requests
- Uncontrolled emotional state when spoken to or unable to calm oneself
- Being destructive to the room and the materials
- Physical aggression towards other children, staff or danger to self
- Being unable to separate from the parents after one month of attendance
- 2 biting incidents by a child 2 years old and under, 1 biting incident by a child 3 years old and over

When a child demonstrates an inability to respond appropriately to ordinary discipline the following steps will be taken:

1. Parent will be notified and the teacher and Head of School will meet with the child's parents to discuss concerns.
2. Next offense- Parents will be notified and met with to discuss concerns. Parents will be called to remove the student from school immediately for that day.
3. Last offense- Expulsion from school

The Director of the school reserves the right to review each situation and respond to the needs of our students and staff and serve their best interests while preserving the integrity of our programs.

## **The Art of Creating the Perfect Arrival**

At Grace Montessori it is our goal to help children develop feelings of support, security, and self-confidence. During the beginning of the school year, children experience a major transition. For many, this is the first time in a classroom and there is a lot to become familiar with. Even if your child has been in a classroom setting before, it is still an adjustment to learn the names of new friends and teachers as well as navigate through new routines and expectations. Difficult transitions are a normal part of childhood and the beginning of school and will only get easier with time.

One of the best ways to help children feel comfortable at school is to see their parents sense of confidence. Consistency in the way parents handle the daily transition away from their child also helps support the child's ability to build trust. A loving hug or kiss and confident demeanor as you leave are routines that help your child adjust to the "newness" of school. Passing successfully through these tough transitions and into a confident separation is a learning experience for your child and will help build his/her self-esteem!

### **A Couple of Helpful Hints:**

The night before:

- Provide a nutritious evening meal free of harmful additives while engaging in positive conversation that includes all members at the table.
- Avoid electronics such as videos and video games, television, cell phones, and computers
- Arrange the selection of next day's clothing for easy access
- Gather and place all necessary items the child will need for school in one prepared place that is used consistently (tote bag, lunch box, jacket, any notes or correspondence)
- Provide a soothing, unhurried bedtime preparation (bath, story-time, lights out)
- Ensure ample, undisturbed sleep for child and self

The next day:

- Arise early enough to wake your child with genuine warmth
- Assist only as needed as child dresses for school (no switching outfits, stick to the plan)
- Provide ample time for routine chores (making bed, grooming, assembling lunch)
- Provide a nutritious breakfast free of harmful additives at home rather than in the car.
- Avoid videos, and video games, television, cell phone, computers, newspapers, and magazines
- Provide ample time for your child to collect items from the pre-arranged storage space, and assemble neatly in appropriate containers (totes, lunchboxes)
- Engage in positive interaction and conversation with your child en route

Upon Arrival:

- Make goodbyes short and sweet. As hard as it can be to leave a crying child, prolonged goodbyes can make thing even more difficult for you and your child. We ask that you say goodbye to your child at the door to our classroom.
- Stay positive and enthusiastic at drop-off. Tell your child you know he or she will have a wonderful day and that you will be back to pick him or her up when school is out.
- Read books together about going to school. In our class we like "The Kissing Hand", "Wemberley Worried", and "Owl Babies".

**NOTE: *Be prepared for regression.*** Just when you think your child has conquered his or her feelings of separation anxiety, along comes a weekend or an illness that keeps your child home for a few days and you are right back to square one. As frustrating and upsetting as this can be, it is perfectly normal. Stick to the above strategies and you should notice a significant difference within a few days.

**Grace is a completely nut free building!**

Lunch Guidelines  
Grace Montessori Academy

Children bring their own lunches to school. Please send a nutritious, balanced lunch for your child each day. According to the guidelines on the DCDEE Meal Patterns Sheet, lunch must consist of at least four components: milk, 2 or more fruits or vegetables, meat or meat alternative, bread or bread alternative

**Please exclude the following from your child's lunch:**

1. Highly processed foods such as Lunchables
2. Foods that pose a choking hazard for Toddlers including: grapes, carrots, nuts & popcorn
3. Highly sugared foods
4. Any candy or gum.

The above items will be sent home to be enjoyed once school is over.

Lunch boxes should be clearly marked with your child's name and date. Please pack food items in reusable containers labeled with name and date. Please pack yogurt in a re-sealable container that your child can open independently or with minimal assistance. Pre-packaged yogurts spill easily and are often wasted, but yogurt sleeves are great!

If a food item should be served warm please pack it in a thermos. We do have access to a microwave in the classroom, however it would take far too long to heat every child's lunch. Food items such as pizza that don't fit in a thermos may be heated if needed, **but for no more than 1 minute**. The food must be labeled with instructions for heating. **We ask that you refrain from bringing Mac-N-Cheese cups; they take too long to heat.**

Teachers will call parents if they notice a pattern of eating which they feel does not support the student's learning and physical activity throughout the course of the day. Children may not share or trade lunches.

Most children prefer small quantities of a variety of foods, rather than a large quantity of one or two items. If your child cannot finish his or her lunch, the remaining food will be sent home in the lunch box. This will help parents gauge the amount of food needed for lunch.

In addition to eating nutritious foods, meal times are an opportunity for learning and developing social and self-help skills. Offering a pleasant meal time environment gives children the opportunity to enhance their social skills by letting them interact with each other. Self-help skills develop when children are encouraged to set the table, clear their place, wash their hands before and after meals, and use child-size utensils.

# Bambinos & Toddlers Supply List

Please label everything with name

**Diapers-** 1 pack

**Wipes-** 1 pack

**Nap blanket**

**2 crib sheets**

**2 complete sets of extra clothes**  
(don't forgot socks and underwear if worn)

**Hard-soled slippers or Croc styled shoes:** to be kept at school as indoor shoes, must be closed toes with a back. All shoes need to be slip-ons with no ties.

**Lunch box** with a healthy lunch and easily opened reusable containers, label all containers and outside of lunch box with name and date. Please do not send rice, spaghetti, soup or anything else that your child can not eat independently. We encourage independent eating and will not spoon feed your child once they are in our One Year Old Room. Rice, spaghetti, soup, etc. tends to end up on the table or floor and the children are still hungry.

**Daily Reusable Water Bottle** labeled with your child's name and date on it. Please bring it filled in the morning.

Please **keep all toys at home, thank you!**

\*Clothing should allow for independence and the freedom to play, which sometimes means getting messy. Please, no frilly dresses, accessories or light up shoes or clothing.

# Primary Supply List

Please label everything with name

**Nap blanket**

**Crib Sheet** for napping

**2 complete sets of extra clothes** (don't forget socks and underwear)

**Hard-soled slippers or Croc type shoes** (to be kept at school as indoor shoes, must be closed toes with a back, no media characters or logos please)

**Lunch box** with a healthy lunch and easily opened reusable containers (no media characters or logos on lunch box please, label all containers and outside of lunch box with name and date) Please do not send uncooked mac-n-cheese cups; please cook at home and send in a heatable container.

**Morning and Afternoon Snack**

**Daily Reusable Water Bottle** with your child's name and date on it. Please bring it in already filled in the morning.

Please **keep all toys at home**

\*Clothing should allow for independence and the freedom to play, which sometimes means getting messy. Please no frilly dresses or tops.

**Grace Montessori Academy, Inc.  
104 Commercial Blvd  
Elizabeth City, NC 27909  
252-621-1777**

**PARENTAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARENT/  
STUDENT HANDBOOK AND CHILD CARE LAW**

I have received a Parent/Student Handbook from Grace Montessori. I have read and understand what is expected of me as a parent, of my child as a student, and Grace Montessori as my child's care provider. I agree to do my part in helping my child to transition into this child care program, making it the best it can be for my child, by cooperating with the teachers and Director. I agree to be supportive in every way I can with the program that is prepared for my child, whether it be in communication with their teacher concerning positive or negative situations, positive verbal promotion in the community, or my financial support in order to keep the center in operation for the future. I have also received a summary of NC Child Care Law and Rules with an opportunity to review and ask questions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date