



# Educare Family Handbook

## Greetings

The Director and the teachers of Educare Children's Center welcome you and your family to our Center. This handbook presents our philosophy, goals, policies, and procedures. The Director and the Administrator will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to providing your child with a program that will help develop his/her fullest potential.

## Mission Statement

Welcome to Educare Children's Center, a Montessori-based preschool serving children from 18 months to age six. We are a privately owned and licensed school founded in 2009 by owner and director Rossana Broll. We occupy two recently-renovated buildings in eastern Corte Madera, with 5 classrooms and a total capacity of 85 children.

The word education comes from the Latin root EDUCARE (e-du-ka-re).

Educare means to bring out that which is within. We believe that children are born with everything that is needed to learn and develop each aspect of their being. As educators, we facilitate the experiences that are needed for your child's development. We believe that the fusion of the Montessori philosophy and an emergent curriculum in human values is the ideal approach that offers a loving environment where children are free to

discover and learn. This method of education leads to emotional regulation, social interaction, cognitive development and creative growth.

The Montessori curriculum offers unlimited opportunities for self initiated activities that allow children to naturally learn as many skills as they are ready to learn. The different areas of the curriculum are carefully prepared and changed periodically to offer children practical, fun, interesting activities in which they can learn about the world in their own environment.

The aim of our curriculum in human values is to use the child's experiences to make them aware of their own feelings. Through effective communication and role modeling we give children useful tools that can show them how making informed choices can keep them safe, happy and have a positive impact in the people around them. This awareness is a valuable tool that can be used by families in any situation that requires your child's cooperation.

## **Our Philosophy**

### **Who was Maria Montessori?**

Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in Italy and became the first woman to receive a medical degree, from the University of Rome. In the first decade of the twentieth century Dr. Montessori observed children carefully and experimented with different materials and teaching methods. She visited various schools throughout Europe seeking effective teaching approaches. Unimpressed with the teaching styles and methods of the day and based on careful observation and experimentation with children; Dr. Montessori developed the world famous Montessori Method and Materials.

### **What is a Montessori Education?**

The method consists of a philosophy and a curriculum. The educational philosophy explains the nature of the child. The detailed and sequential curriculum supports the needs of the child. The alignment of both provides harmony between the learner and the curriculum. Children in Montessori classes move freely around the room, choose their own work, and learn at their own pace. They learn the same kinds of things as children in traditional classes, but learning occurs through self-paced, hands-on activities rather than teacher-directed planned lessons. The primary goal of Montessori is to help children learn concentration, coordination, self-discipline, order and love for learning.

# Montessori Concepts

## The Absorbent Mind

As a medical doctor, Maria Montessori observed children from a scientific perspective. Montessori uses the term “absorbent mind” to describe how much of a child’s learning is unconscious and without effort.

## Sensitive Periods

During a sensitive period, a child will have a very strong desire or ability for acquiring a certain skill or type of knowledge. From birth until the age of 3, sensory experiences are dominant. Language development occurs during the ages of 1 ½ to 3. Writing soon follows, between the ages of 3 to 4 ½, with reading taking place from the ages of 4 ½ to 5 ½.

## The Prepared Environment

Dr. Montessori created her curriculum in response to the interest of the child. The classroom design and materials support both, the absorbent mind and the sensitive periods. She referred to this specially designed classroom as the “prepared environment”. This environment meets the needs of the young child for movement, order and language. The environment is prepared in five major areas: practical life, sensorial, language, math and cultural subjects. One of the purposes of the prepared environment is for children to learn from their experiences without restrictions of time.

## Mixed Ages

Mixed age groups free children to enjoy their own accomplishment rather than comparing themselves to others. Older children provide leadership and guidance, and benefit from the satisfaction of helping others. Younger children are encouraged by attention and help from older children. Children easily learn to respect others, and at the same time develop respect for their own individuality.

## Ground Rules

These ground rules lay the foundation for the young child to balance the needs of his/her self and the needs of others. Having clear and consistent expectations fosters independence, order, concentration and coordination in a safe and predictable environment.

These procedures include:

- The use of a soft speaking voice inside the classroom
- Walking versus running in the classroom
- Exercising the ability to select a material

- Taking the material to a table or rug
- Using the materials with care and respect
- Returning the material to its original position on the shelf
- Pushing in one's chair
- Asking permission to join another child's activity
- Not harming or hurting any living thing

## **Circle Time**

Circle time is a teacher directed activity that takes place at the beginning of the day. This activity encourages social, emotional, physical and academic growth interacting in a group setting. During circle, the teacher introduces age appropriate activities related to academic subjects, songs, calendar, role playing, grace and courtesy lessons, and more. Consider this time the heart of the philosophy and the success of our program, this time brings children together allowing them to experience a sense of community.

# **Montessori Academic Programs**

## **Practical Life *WORKS!***

Children are naturally inclined to imitate what adults do. They are attracted to things that give them independence and control of their own lives. Like adults, children want to use real tools, such as brooms, sponges, utensils, etc. The practical life area offers a variety of exercises that are periodically changed to maintain them interesting and challenging. They may seem repetitive and simple, but as a child waters a plant or pours colored water, she is in fact, accomplishing much more: a high level of concentration, developing a sense of order, pride in a job well done, increasing a sense of independence, and improving fine motor movements. Lessons of grace and courtesy help the children feel socially acceptable and confident.

## **Sensorial *EXPERIENCE...***

Since infancy, children learn about the world around them through their senses. Sensorial materials are designed to develop and refine the five senses. The child will be free to discover and discriminate visual cues of size, shape and color, tactile cues of texture, weight and temperature, and auditory, olfactory and gustatory cues. Sensorial materials also prepare the mathematical mind and help language development for logical thinking.

## **Language *TALKS!***

The language area is divided into the categories of receptive language (listening and reading) and expressive language (speaking and writing). We use the phonetic approach in preparation for blending sounds which is the foundation for reading. Through the use of the Sandpaper Letters, children are able to trace and recognize the letters. When the child is ready, the movable alphabet is used to build words in conjunction with pictures and objects.

## **Math *COUNTS!***

The base-ten system of organizing quantity is introduced with units, tens, hundreds and thousands in the quantity and in the numeral. Children are able to manipulate the materials, allowing them to acquire a concrete idea of the relation between the symbol and the quantity, and thereby enabling the child to joyfully assimilate many facts and skills of arithmetic.

## **Cultural *ADVENTURE***

### **Botany *GROWS!***

Children learn about flowers, trees and plants, their parts and functions, and the important role they play in our environment.

### **Zoology *ROARS!***

Children naturally show interest in the animal kingdom. The major classes of invertebrates and vertebrates are studied: insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

### **Geography *DISCOVERY:***

The globe's components of land, air and water are introduced. Land forms are then presented. Puzzle maps of continents and countries aid in teaching geography. Children are exposed to other countries' cultures and ways of living, increasing their awareness and appreciation for similarities and differences.

### **Composers and Artists *WITH SOUL***

A different composer is introduced every month. Children learn to appreciate classical music and listen to an array of symphonies. Monet, Van Gough, Degas, Renoir, and Picasso are some of the artists whose art will be presented to the children, exposing them to a world of beauty and the endless ways of self-expression through art.

## **Espanol *FOR ALL!***

Children learn an extensive vocabulary, courtesy phrases and basic conversational skills in Spanish through songs, games and activities. Spanish circle takes place daily.

## **Enrichment Programs**

### **Soccer Shots**

Soccer Shots is changing the lives of young people forever by teaching principles and life skills like confidence, respect, honesty, and teamwork. Soccer Shots is a national organization of caring individuals positively impacting children's lives with memorable and engaging experiences through the game of soccer. This program is offered once per week and it consists of 10 sessions per season, there is a cost of \$175. The children enrolled get to enjoy this special activity with their friends and are accompanied by one of our staff members. This activity takes place on the grass field behind the school.

### **Panda Bear Gymnastics**

These sessions will be filled with obstacle courses, beams, bars, trampoline, music, games, ribbons, balls, tumbling, vault, and a whole lot of fun! All of these activities assist in building children's confidence, expanding motor development skills, and increasing coordination, all of which lead to happy kids. This class takes place once a week, and the cost is \$15 per class, billed monthly.

### **Dance**

Children will discover how to use their bodies to express various emotions, and to resemble animals, objects, and actions. They will use their imagination and creativity to give life to characters from stories they are familiar with. Basic dance steps, rhythm, and music will complement this fun activity and help them develop their balance, coordination, and flexibility, while reinforcing a positive body image through fantasy play and games. These classes are included in the tuition for the children enrolled in the full day program. A maximum of 14 children can be included in the dance class. It is offered on a first come, first serve basis, as parents sign-up. Children who have not previously participated will have priority for the next season.

## **Kid's Yoga**

Children will learn yoga basics in a fun, friendly environment. They will work on strengthening their body muscles, improving their balance, coordination, concentration, and flexibility. Children will learn how to relax, slow down, and focus on their breathing. These classes are included in the tuition for the children enrolled in the full day program. A maximum of 12 children can be included in the yoga class. It is offered on a first come, first serve basis, as parents sign-up. Children who have not previously participated will have priority for the next season.

## **Art**

Our art studio offers a variety of materials that allow the children to express their individuality and develop their creativity. Art is a form of self-expression and children experience the freedom to release their feelings and emotions in a positive way. They learn to appreciate their own work and get a sense of accomplishment.

## **Our Human Values Program**

The word education comes from the Latin root EDUCARE (e-du-ka-re).

**Educare means to bring out that which is from within. What is within?**

Human Values are latent in every human being; one cannot acquire them from outside. Every child comes with this inheritance. All the child needs is for us to reintroduce these values to him/her. Once these values are brought to the forefront of his/her consciousness, the child gladly embraces them. With very little help from us the child begins to understand how he/she can bring joy and happiness into the lives of all those who come his/her way.

What sets our Center apart from others is our "Education in Human Values" program that is integrated throughout the curriculum. The children are taught the universal values of Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct and Non-Violence. Children learn about these values through clear and short definitions, quotations, songs, stories, role-playing, interacting with other people as well as, experiencing them within the Center's environment. A curriculum that focuses on developing the child in this manner is a wonderful asset to the family. We believe in a holistic growth of your child. This cannot be done without bringing out the natural goodness found in

our innocent children. To do this we place great importance on the education of human values.

The practical demonstration of these values by the child along with the acquisition of knowledge and skills; is the most precious success story of what education is all about.

## **Play**

At Educare Children's Center, we recognize play as a vital part of the children's development. Through play, children learn from other children, they make discoveries on their own, make choices and find out what interests them while experiencing a wide range of emotions. Play is natural to young children and should be regarded as an important use of their time. By interacting with their peers, children learn about the world, their power in it, and their effect on other children.

Indoors, children are exposed to a variety of dramatic play furniture and materials that reflect their daily life and encourage exploration and discovery. Our outdoor space is also an open invitation for play and social interaction.

## **Birthdays – Celebration of Life**

If your child's birthday falls on a day that he/she attends school, it will be celebrated at 10:30 am during circle time. The birthday child holds the globe and walks around the sun once for each year of his/her age. After each orbit, the child imagines what he/she was like at age one, age two, age three, etc. You are welcome to send pictures of your child at different ages and share details about the milestones he/she achieved each year. The classmates then sing happy birthday in both English and Spanish.

### **Academic Program: 8:30 am to 3:00 pm**

Children who are enrolled in the Academic Program are welcome to have a celebration at 10:30 am with their classmates. If the family wishes to bring a special snack, it should be a food group that complements the fresh fruit that is provided by the center. A bigger celebration in the afternoon needs to be approved by the Center's director.

### **All Day Program: 7:30 am to 6:00 pm**

Children who are enrolled in the All Day Program are welcome to celebrate their birthday either at 10:30 am with their classmates or at 3:00 pm with the children from both classrooms who are enrolled in the All Day Program. If you wish to have a big celebration, we suggest that it takes place in the



afternoon. The center will provide fresh fruit for the children and parents are responsible for bringing something to complement the children's snack. Teachers are available to assist; however, parents are responsible for the set-up, execution and clean-up of the party. If a child who is enrolled in the academic program is invited to the celebration, he/she needs to be accompanied by a parent and the center needs to be informed ahead of time in order to prepare enough fruit for all children. For our children's safety, only pull-string piñatas are allowed at the center. Piñatas and goody bags should be filled with novelty items that are preschool age appropriate. Goody bags will be opened at home. Please keep in mind that small objects and hard candy are choking hazards for young children. All the details of the celebration need to be communicated to the center at least two days in advance.

All celebrations should take place on a day that your child normally attends school and need to be approved by the center's director.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are arranged during the school year with appropriate notice to families and a permission form to be signed and returned to the Center. Families are requested to assist with transportation and supervision on the field trips if your schedule allows. Families who volunteer to drive other children are only authorized to drive the children to the field trip destination and back to the Center. Proof of insurance, a valid driver's license and car seats are required.

### **Discipline**

Children experience security where there is consistent adult guidance and discipline. Adults, in their role of caring for children, model, teach, and reinforce pro-social behavior. Teachers use constructive and consistent methods of discipline in order to maintain a peaceful and nurturing environment that supports learning.

The teachers do not use negative physical touching such as spanking, slapping, tapping, pulling, pinching, etc. Additionally, teachers do not use humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threats, mental abuse, or interference with daily living functions.

The teachers are trained in observation to anticipate possible conflicts and to prepare the environment to minimize difficult situations. Natural and logical consequences, redirecting, active listening and I-messages are techniques used by teachers.

Consistent ground rules, examples and reminders of proper behavior result in clarity for children a majority of the time. In situations in which the array of techniques do not produce expected results, the Center's position is that this environment is not meeting the child's needs and a more suitable environment is required.

Assertive Communication through I-messages: I-messages are statements containing three or four key parts that can be put together and used to communicate assertively. Here are the key parts of an I-message: Part 1: "I feel" or "I am" or "I have"; Part 2: "when"; Part 3: "I want", "I need"; Part 4: "because".

## **Family Involvement**

### **Family Communication**

We recognize the importance of creating a strong home and Center connection by developing a process of open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and experience at the Center. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and the Center's staff. Changes in a child's physical or emotional state are reported to you regularly.

The family and Teacher Communication Log for daily information exchange is available to families at all times.

The bulletin board located at the entrance of the building, and the monthly newsletters are used to communicate daily events, news, holiday closing dates, field trip information, etc.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

You are invited to initiate a conference at any time you feel the need. Formal conferences are scheduled in February. Your child's progress, accomplishments, and challenges at home and at the Center are discussed. At both, formal and informal conferences, we work together to make decisions about how to best support your child's development.

### **Conflict Resolution**

The emotional health of a Center is determined not by the absence of conflict, but by its caring and timely resolution. We are committed to responding to all family grievances in a timely fashion. Difficulties or differences that arise from interactions between teachers and families are resolved through special conferences, or individual meetings involving all participants. The Center's director facilitates the meetings.

## **Confidentiality**

It is our policy that any information regarding a child, a child's family, or other matters discussed with the Center's director or teachers will be held in the strictest confidence.

## **Toddler Program**

We offer two toddler programs, one is designed for children 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 years old, the other is designed for children ages 2 to 3 1/2 years old. These programs are an introduction to the academic Montessori curriculum complemented with our enrichment program with emphasis in language, cognitive development, social interactions and motor skills.

The transition into the preschool program takes place in September with the new school year and is based upon the child's readiness. In order for this transition to take place, your child must be fully potty trained.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Child Illness Policy**

This policy is based on the Model Health Care Policies developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Educare Children's Center understands that it is difficult for a parent/guardian to leave or miss work; therefore, it is suggested that alternative arrangements be made for occasions when children must remain at home or be picked up due to illness. Exclusion from the Center is sometimes necessary to reduce the transmission of illness or because the Center is not able to adequately meet the needs of the child. Mild illnesses are common among children and infections are often spread before the onset of any symptoms. In these cases, we try to keep the children comfortable throughout the day, but will find it necessary to exclude them from the child care setting for the following reasons:

- Fever of 100 axillary, 101 orally or 102 aural/ear or more
- Diarrhea – unformed and/or uncontrolled stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – 2 or more times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores associated with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease in which case, we would request a doctor's note.

- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge) until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat until 24 hours after treatment.
- Scabies until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
- Pertussis (Whooping cough) until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus until one week after onset of illness, after immune globulin has been administered
- Difficulty in breathing
- Ear ache or drainage
- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need or care than our center can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

We ask that for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children be picked up within 1.5 hours of notification. Children need to remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to the program. In the case of a (suspected) contagious disease or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note may be required before returning.

Children who have been excluded may return to the center when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a full 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.

### **Non-Prescription Medications (e.g., Tylenol)**

The Center will administer non-prescription medications to your child on your written request noted in the *Authorization for administration of Medication Request* form (not to exceed a 3 day period). You may come to administer medication to your child during the day or, if possible, check with your child's physician to see if a dose schedule can be arranged that does not involve the hours your child is in the Center. All medications must be given directly to a teacher for proper storage. A designated staff member shall administer the medication. Each time medicine is given, it must be recorded on the form. This form will be kept at the Center in your child's file. All unused medicine will be returned to the parent/guardian.

Note: The Center will not administer Acetaminophen or other fever reducing medicines so a child can remain at the Center. Fever reducing medicines will be given at the parent's request (with a signed note as

outlined above) while the child is awaiting the parent's/guardian's arrival. The child cannot be readmitted to the Center until she/he has been fever free for at least 24 hours, with no other symptoms.

### **Non-Prescription Topical Ointments (e.g., Sunscreen)**

A note signed by the parent/guardian, specifying times and dosage to be administered is required. Duration of the administration is not to exceed one year for sunscreen and 90 days for all other non-prescription topical ointments (e.g., diaper rash cream).

### **Prescription Medications (e.g., Penicillin)**

Prescription medications require a note signed by the parent/guardian and a written order from the child's physician (this may be included on the label of the medication). The medication must have a current pharmacist's label that includes your child's name, dosage, current date, times to be administered, and the name and number of the physician. All medications must be in the original container. You will need to complete the *Authorization for Administration of Medication Request* form, indicating the dosage and times to be administered for each medication.

### **Absences**

Please call the Center if your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 am. If we don't hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If your child has a contagious illness, please let the Center's director know so that other families can be alerted. It is important for us to have a head count no later than 10:00am of the children who will be having lunch at the center.

### **Communicable Diseases**

When the Center is notified that a child or an employee has a (suspected) communicable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Department of Public Health agency. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventive measures.

We believe it is extremely important to notify families about exposure so that children can receive preventive treatment if available. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following: Bacterial Meningitis, Botulism, Chicken Pox, Diphtheria, Haemophilus Influenza (invasive), Measles (including suspect), Meningococcal infection (invasive), Poliomyelitis (including suspect), Rabies (human), Rubella congenital and non-congenital (including suspect), Tetanus (including suspect), and any cluster/outbreak of illness.

## **Infection Control**

All teachers are trained with regard to proper hygiene practices, which include hand-washing procedures, general infection control, safe food handling, and diapering and toileting procedures. Educare Children's Center will sanitize certain equipment, materials, and surfaces using soap and water followed by disinfectant (bleach solution) on a regular schedule.

## **Meals**

Educare Children's Center believes that meals and snacks are critical to a child's health and development. They are also an important part of our program. Every effort is made to ensure that mealtime is enjoyable for children.

A light breakfast is available to children who arrive before 8:15 am. Lunch is provided by the Center and it is also included in the tuition fee. A weekly menu will be posted on the parent's bulletin board. Water and organic milk are provided. Children with special diets are welcome to bring their own lunch. Please advise the Center if your child has a food allergy or a dietary restriction.

## **Snacks**

Snacks are provided at 10:30 am, 3:00 pm, and a smaller snack is served at 5:00 pm. Snacks consist of two food groups for the first two snacks and crackers for the last one.

## **Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to inform the Center regarding children's food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the Center with a detailed Personal Care Plan detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of children's allergies is posted in the classroom and the kitchen. Our teachers are trained to familiarize themselves with the list and to consult as appropriate to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. Educare is a peanut free Center.

## **Injuries**

Teachers for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned area and equipment. Defective equipment will be removed or repaired as soon as possible to prevent injury.

In the event that your child does sustain a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee), you will receive an Incident Report outlining the occurrence and course of

action taken by the teacher. You will be contacted if the injury produces any type of swelling, bruise, or needs medical attention. In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital by ambulance, while Center management or a staff member contacts you or a designated emergency contact.

## **Report Abuse and Neglect**

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The child protective service agency will determine the appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Educare Children's Center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our foremost concern is always the protection of the child.

## **Disaster Procedure**

In the event of a disaster such as an earthquake your child remains at the Center unless advised by authorities to evacuate. If your child is moved, you will be notified as soon as possible. All reasonable precautions for your child's safety and health will be taken. Three days of food and water supplies are on site for each child.

## **Biting**

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among toddlers and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that almost all children will try at least once. When it happens, it's scary, frustrating, and very stressful for everyone involved. It is a natural phenomenon and not something to blame on children, families or teachers.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten, help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior, and examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with the children's needs.

We reserve the right to ask parents of the child who bites to pick up the child and take them home for the rest of the day.

Injury reports will be written for the child who was bitten and the biter. We will work together with the family of the biter to develop strategies for change. This work may include the development of an individual action plan and/or referral services, hiring a person to "shadow" the child (at the

family's expense), etc. If the Center feels that we have made every effort to make the program work for the biting child and still do not see progress and/or cooperation from his/her family, we do reserve the right to ask the family to withdraw the child from our program.

## **Aggressive Behavior**

Aggressive behavior is any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in social interactions. This includes unresponsiveness to appropriate guidance and actions such as prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive vocal and motor behavior, property destruction, self-injury, noncompliance, and withdrawal. If a child displays this type of pattern, family conferences will be scheduled and a plan of action will be put into place. . We will work together with the family to develop strategies for change. This work may include the development of an individual action plan and/or referral services, hiring a person to "shadow" the child (at the family's expense), etc. If the Center feels that we have made every effort to make the program work for the child and still do not see progress and/or cooperation from his/her family, we do reserve the right to ask the family to withdraw the child from our program.

## **Toilet Training**

The most important factor in making this experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. There are different views on the when and how of toilet training, and every culture approaches it differently. Research indicates that young children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Thus, toilet training is generally most successful when it is started around that age or later. Most positive toilet training will occur only after children show signs of physical control (or awareness) of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. These are general guidelines that will be followed during this process: children will be closely supervised during toilet training, and shall be praised for their efforts and accomplishments; this process shall not be coerced. Children shall not be punished emotionally or physically for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Families will provide sufficient clothing for their child to change into in the event of a toileting accident. Any extra clothes that are worn home should be replaced the next day. Families shall be kept advised of their child's toilet learning progress on a regular basis.



## **Naps**

Naps are offered to all children from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Typically, the younger children nap longer than the older child. But all children are provided opportunities to nap. A cot is provided by the Center. Parents are required to pay a small fee for the use of a cot sheet provided by the center, we also ask parents to provide us with a blanket; both items are to be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered.

## **Non-Napper Program**

We offer a program for children who are at least 4 years old and whose behavior doesn't change due to the lack of rest. Parents are expected to request this change in their child's routine. During this time, children will enjoy activities such as yoga, math, receptive and expressive language, cultural subjects and outside play.

## **Clothing**

Children need to be dressed in comfortable clothes that they can manage themselves. We foster independence and children feel very proud when they manage their own clothing. We discourage the use of flip-flops. During the rainy season, we ask you to bring your child's raincoat and rain boots. Two complete changes of clothing should be kept at the Center in your child's cubby. Please write your child's name in all jackets, sweaters and clothing.

## **Personal Belongings**

Children are welcome to bring items of educational value from home during sharing day. Toys should remain at home or in the car. If your child brings home an object that does not look familiar, please check with the teacher. Even seemingly insignificant objects may be critical to a Montessori material. Please return all materials.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## **Programs and Hours of Operation**

The Center is open year round. The Center is open from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

## **Academic Program**

The academic program is from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. In addition to the core Montessori subjects of Practical Life, Sensorial, Math and Language, the

program is enriched to include Spanish, Zoology, Botany, Geography, Artists, and Composers.

### **All Day Program**

The all day program, (7:30 am to 6:00pm) is designed for children who need care all day. In addition to what the academic program offers, children will be exposed to the enrichment program offered in the afternoon, which includes: Music, Movement, Dance, Yoga, and Art Projects.

### **Admission Policy**

The Center offers an educational service for children ages 1 ½ to 5 years old. Enrollment is available to children within this age range regardless of race, gender, ethnic background, national origin, religion or disability. Returning students and siblings are accorded first admission. Enrollment is then open on a first come, first serve basis. The Center reserves the right to refuse admission based upon likelihood to benefit from the Center's program. A one time non-refundable registration fee is due at the time the application is completed.

### **Tuition**

Tuition may be paid in full for the school year or in monthly installments. Families who choose to pay for the whole year will receive a 5% discount. Tuition installments are billed at the end of each month for the following month's attendance. Payments are due via checks on the first of each month.

### **Extra Days/Extra Hours**

Extra days and/or extra hours are available upon request and approval of the Center's Director. These fees will be added to your bill at the end of the month.

### **Late Fees**

Tuition installments are due the first of the month and are delinquent after the fifth of the month. A late fee of \$25.00 is billed after the fifth of the month. When a payment is delinquent longer than one week, the space can no longer be reserved, and the child cannot attend the Center until the balance is current. Payments not honored by the bank incur a \$25.00 return fee.

## **Schedule Changes**

If you need to permanently change the number of days your child attends the Center, a new admission agreement needs to be signed by you and approved by the Center's director. The number of teachers employed is based on daily enrollment, in order to keep our staff consistent and regular, the center will not accept swapping of days.

## **Refunds/Tuition Adjustments**

If you pay in full for the school year, no adjustment or refund is made if your child is withdrawn from the Center after April 30<sup>th</sup>. Before April 30<sup>th</sup> adjustments are made only with a thirty day written notice submitted to the director. Registration fees, deposit to reserve your child's space and material fees are not refundable. Each classroom must meet its specific ratio requirements. The operating expenses of the Center, including staff salaries, must be met each month from tuition fees even when children are absent. Therefore, no refund is given for days missed including absences due to illness. Our tuition schedule is based taking into account all holidays; therefore, full tuition is due for the months in which holidays occur.

## **Discounts**

A 10% discount will be given to the oldest child if a sibling with the same schedule is enrolled at the same time.

## **Materials Fee**

There is a bi-annual fee per child due every September and February to help cover costs for art supplies, equipment, and classroom and playground materials.

## **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

To ensure that each child is safe and supervised at all times, a parent or authorized guardian must accompany each child and ensure that the child is under supervision before leaving the premises.

Prompt arrival is important for your child to fully benefit from the program. The general continuity and calm of the classroom is disrupted by late-comers. We always recommend a loving, re-assuring goodbye. The following are the arrival and departure times for the two programs:

Academic Program:

Arrival is between 8:15 am and 8:30 am

Departure is between 2:45 pm and 3:00 pm

All Day Program;  
Arrival is between 7:30 am and 8:30 am  
Departure is between 5:30 and 6:00 pm

## **Sign-in and Sign-out Procedure**

Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) requires families to sign a full signature (first and last name) at time of arrival and departure of your child. The sign-in and sign-out book is located at the main entrance of the center.

## **Child's File Requirement**

Prior to attendance the following forms must be completed and submitted to the Center:

- Application and Registration Fee
- Admission Agreement
- Identification and Emergency Information (LIC 601)
- Physician's Report (LIC 701)
- Child's Pre-admission Health History (LIC 702)
- Consent for Medical Treatment (LIC 627)
- Emergency card
- Parents' Rights (LIC 995)
- Personal Rights (LIC 613A)
- Family Handbook Acknowledgement
- California School Immunization Record:
  - Polio – at least three doses (if the third or last dose was given before two years of age one additional dose is required)
  - DTaP/TD – at least four doses (if the fourth or last dose was given before two years of age one additional dose is required)
  - MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) – one dose of each on or after the first birthday
  - Hib & HepB – third dose at least four months after the first dose
  - Varicella – on or after first birthday
  - Booster Polio, DTaP and MMR between four to five years old
- These forms must be reviewed and updated each year of enrollment.

## **Community Care Licensing**

Community Care Licensing may review your child's records in order to ensure the Center has followed its requirements in maintaining the necessary information. All information in the record is kept confidential.

## **Release of Child to Authorized Persons**

Your child is only released to those persons appearing on the Emergency and Identification form that each family completes prior to attendance. You need to notify the Center if someone in the list will be picking your child up from the Center. Photo identification is requested if the person is not recognized by the dismissing teacher.

If someone is picking up your child that is not listed on the Emergency and Identification form, you may leave a note in the notebook located at the entrance of the Center, or send an email with the information.

## **Late Pick-up**

It is important that children be picked up at their scheduled time of departure. If a child is left in the center after closing time, we will call all the numbers listed on the Emergency and Identification form after trying to reach you. An automatic, non-negotiable late fee of \$1.00 for each minute is charged.

## **Dismissal of Students**

Educare Children's Center may terminate a child's enrollment in the following manner:

Upon a two weeks' notice for the following reasons:

- Parental failure to abide by the center's policies and admission agreement.
- Center's program is not meeting developmental or special needs of the child.

Immediate dismissal may result for the following reasons:

- Health or behavioral reasons that threaten the safety, health or well being of the child or other children and staff.
- Disregard of tuition policies.
- A pattern of late pick-up.
- Conduct of parents/guardians or child that threatens the well being of other children or staff.

## **Withdrawing from the Center**

A 30 days written notice is required of all withdrawals. Families are liable to pay for the remaining 30 days after a written notice is given to the Center's director if they choose to withdraw the child sooner than 30 days.

## **Babysitting**

It is Educare policy that current school employees are not allowed to provide childcare services outside of the school to any families enrolled at the school.

## **School Holidays**

The traditional School holidays are observed: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, two days at Thanksgiving, Winter Break; Martin Luther King's Birthday, President's Day, Spring Break; Memorial Day, and Independence Day. The Center is also closed during two scheduled staff development days.

## **Recommended Readings**

- The Absorbent Mind. Maria Montessori
- The Secret of Childhood. Maria Montessori
- The Discovery of the Child. Maria Montessori
- Positive Discipline. Jane Nelson
- Children the Challenge. Rudolf Dreikurs