



LiMai Montessori Academy



We prepare children to become responsible global citizens.

Parent Handbook

www.LiMaiAcademy.com



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Welcome

To new and returning families, we extend a warm welcome into the new school year. We are so happy you are a part of our Montessori school family. Parents have the most important role in the lives of their children and are the most valuable component that makes our school community so special. We are honored to be partners with you in the development of your child. We rely on your communication, energy, support, and involvement to ensure a successful experience for your child.

We are delighted to share the many wonderful things about LiMai Montessori Academy and to orient you to our policies, procedures, resources, and events.

Please review carefully the information included in this handbook. It is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the school. It is important that you read it thoroughly.

We do our best to remain in close communication with our families in a number of different ways.

- We use email to send our monthly newsletter and to communicate important information. Please make sure that we have your most updated contact information.

- Please join our Facebook business page and private parent page.

[LiMai Montessori \(Main Account\)](#)

[LiMai Montessori Academy- RSM Campus](#)

[LiMai Montessori Academy- Buena Park Campus](#)

[LiMai Montessori Academy-Diamond Bar Campus](#)

[RSM-LiMai Montessori Academy Parents \(Private Group\)](#)

[LMAbuenaParkParents \(Private Group\)](#)



- You may visit our website at www.LiMaiAcademy.com for information about the school and to keep up to date on school events and news. Our school calendar can also be accessed on the website.
- If you have suggestions, ideas, or concerns, contact the director of the school, and make arrangements to meet. She/he is your first line of communication.
- If you believe your ideas or concerns are not being addressed, please contact us at rsm@limaimontessori.com for RSM campus.
buenapark@limaimontessori.com for Buena Park campus.
diamondbar@limaimontessori.com for Diamond Bar campus.
- Questions and suggestions about billing should be addressed to the administrative department of each campus, and disputes can be addressed to the director and our accounting department at limai.acct@gmail.com
- We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who participated in the parent survey to help our school improve.
- Please note if there is any conflict between this Parent Handbook and our Application for Admission, Terms of Enrollment, Enrollment Agreement or similar documents, the provisions in those documents will prevail over the Parent Handbook.

The partnerships between families and the school are collaborative relationships involving the school, parents, and other family members. Our school responsibility includes nurturing and educating future generations. At the same time, our school needs to emphasize the primary role of the family in their child's education. That is why it is so important for families and our school to work together in partnership.

Sincerely ,

LiMai Montessori Academy Team



ABOUT US

LiMai Montessori Academy (“LMA”) currently has multiple beautiful Montessori schools located in Southern California. They are in Rancho Santa Margarita, Buena Park, and Diamond Bar. We offer an exceptional academic program for children ages 24 months to 7 years old. (We serve 18 months to 7 years old at the Buena Park campus.)

CORE VALUES

At LiMai Montessori Academy, we are committed to building authentic, healthy, and happy Montessori schools. Our core values revolve around integrity, loyalty, teamwork, joy, and encouragement. We believe in servant leadership's power and recognize early childhood teachers' invaluable role as unsung heroes.

MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of LiMai Montessori Academy is to create a nurturing and diverse environment that encourages children to discover their purpose and passion in life. Once they find their own unique interests, they can use that knowledge to guide themselves, which will help them to become responsible global citizens.



SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Authentic Montessori Curriculum: We offer an education based on Dr. Maria Montessori's methodology. The children acquire knowledge, confidence, creativity, social skills, and physical strength to become successful life-long learners. All our Lead Teachers are Montessori trained and certified. We teach children Montessori regardless of cultural/language barriers. We follow the traditional Montessori method of teaching with the concepts and principles which can be applied across all ages.

We also provide extracurricular enrichment classes that vary from campus to campus. Some include Dance, Art, Soccer, Jiu-Jitsu, Taekwondo, Piano, P.E, Yoga, STEAM. Some of the classes are integrated in regular curriculum which is well-aligned with Montessori philosophy to discover children's talents and interests.

Multilingual Environment: Mandarin, Korean, Spanish: We believe exposure to other languages and gaining an understanding of cultural differences provides a huge head start for true proficiency and a solid foundation for future success. Our cultural curriculum is well equipped in teaching a second language to the children.

Child-Centered Individual Environment: LMA encourages all children to explore themselves and pursue their goals through individualized Montessori programs followed by developmental characteristics. At LMA, children are respected as individuals and encouraged to develop their total personality at their own pace and within their individual growth styles. LMA not only prepares accomplished students, but more importantly, empowers young people to think for themselves, think for others, and respect their environment.



OUR MISSION FOR THE CHILDREN

1. To develop independence, confidence, and high self-esteem
2. To cultivate creative intelligence and imagination
3. To foster curiosity and a natural desire for a love of learning
4. To help each child in building the habit of concentration
5. To help form habits of initiative and determination
6. To foster inner discipline and a sense of order
7. To discover and utilize new technologies appropriately
8. To have the ability and willingness to learn from experience
9. To help the child develop cooperative social skills
10. To help the child grow as a whole person, in balance to live a healthy, happy, and productive life



THE THREE-YEAR CYCLE FOR A PRIMARY STUDENT

It is very important for all of the families to understand that the Primary Program of LiMai Montessori Academy is at least a three (3) year program.

We strongly encourage all children to complete Kindergarten with their teachers. Our education, experience, and knowledge aid us in preparing and managing the classroom for your child to thrive via this very special philosophical aspect of the Montessori method, which is that all children need to experience a Three-Year Cycle in the same environment.

Every year is an important year for the child. The first year is one in which they are familiarizing themselves with the environment, learning how to care for themselves and the environment.

The children begin learning to focus and concentrate. Many changes occur as the child finds confidence in achieving important self-related goals. As the child looks around in their new environment, they notice older children working on fascinating materials. The Montessori method has found that the younger children in the classroom respond faster when emulating the older children.

The second year is just as important. The ease and comfort within the environment allow your child to jump right into choosing work – no adjustment time is wasted. Your child has now developed the concentration to teach themselves anything they show interest in. The child has the world to explore and a willing teacher ready to show them how to access that world. The child notices the older children using materials just out of their reach, giving the child motivation to practice their lessons further.

The third year (Kindergarten Year) is the most important year. Not only is the child more capable of learning even greater riches through the now very familiar materials, but they are also now at the top of the class. The child can truly feel confident, secure and independent with high self-esteem. The child now shares work and lessons with the smaller children in the class, solidifying the knowledge of all that they have learned in the past years. Moreover, those new young children look up to your now older child and the cycle starts again.



In this way, each child is allowed to experience being the “youngest”, “middle” and “oldest” child, which could never happen otherwise. Through this comfortable exploration in a known environment with the help of the child’s peers and teachers, the child is provided with the security and consistency so important at this age. This also means that parents and teachers will develop a close working relationship on behalf of the child. The child is the focus of our school. We feel it is important that all the people in the child’s life (parents, teachers, peers) work together to help the child. Please take this information to heart because we teach a Three-Year Cycle at LiMai Montessori Academy and require your commitment to this stimulating program.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

The Montessori Method encourages the use of cross-age grouping. Allowing children of various ages in one classroom creates an atmosphere where children are naturally challenged by the achievements of others. Older children learn to be patient as they become role models for the younger children. The younger and/or new children in the classroom learn courtesy, manners, and conflict resolution by watching their older peers. In this environment, teachers can focus on each child individually and work happens at the child’s pace. The multi-aged classroom also creates a sense of community and familiarity. Teachers can really understand their children’s learning styles and build on each student’s strengths and weaknesses by having the same student for an extended time. Generally, Montessori age groupings are as follows:

Infant: birth-18 months

Toddler: 18 months-3 years

Transitional: Potty Training class

Primary: 3-6 years

Lower Elementary: 6-9 years

Upper Elementary: 9-12 years



An Important Reminder:

While we encourage multi-aged classrooms, age is not the prime determining factor in classroom placement. During the school tour, the director or administrative staff is interviewing parents to best understand the child's strengths and weaknesses. As the child ages and becomes more prepared to move into the next classroom, the director and teachers will assess the child's developmental needs to determine when he/she will advance to the next classroom. We do not recommend to place siblings/relatives in the same class. Teachers will communicate progress and concerns with parents at our bi-annual parent-teacher conferences.



OUTCOMES OF A MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Independence

The social and physical organization of the Montessori prepared environment, as well as the guiding actions of the teacher, promote individual independence. Each child develops independence through a balance of freedoms and responsibilities. These include self-selection of opportunities for constructive work, care of environment, and care of self and others in the community. With the support of a meticulously prepared environment, and the consistent nurturing guidance of the teachers, this balanced structure of freedoms, and responsibilities leads to the development of concentration, inner discipline, internalization of the learning and learning strategies, and metacognition (thinking about thinking).

Confidence and Competence

Confidence is built upon success. A Montessori environment creates many occasions for success. In the spiraling framework of the Montessori curriculum each educational experience builds towards another. Each lesson and activity prepare the child for more complex learning to come, providing greater chances of success for the child throughout his/her experience.

Confidence and perceived competence are also built upon mistakes made. The teacher's respect for each child's efforts and the realization that each child constructs his or her own intelligence create a supportive learning culture where it is also safe to fail. Mistakes and difficulties are seen as valuable steppingstones to the development of self-perceived competence, (I can do that.), and, ultimately, individual confidence. A child growing in success is growing in confidence.

Autonomy and Collaboration

Grace and courtesy in the classroom contribute to the students' understanding of each individual's desire to work alone or with others. In a Montessori setting, children are able to hone their collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation skills in working through choices of work



partners. From an early age, children develop the vocabulary and skills needed to calmly accept or reject participation in the work of others, seek and accept help gracefully, and resolve conflicts peacefully and respectfully.

Intrinsic Motivation

The Montessori teacher knows that each child possesses the natural desire to discover, and the “work” is “its own reward” in a Montessori environment. External rewards such as gold stars, stickers, “smile” stamps and other forms of praise undermine the child’s development of intrinsic motivation and are not present in a Montessori environment. Instead, the Montessori curriculum and materials stimulate each child’s natural curiosity and promote engaged exploration and discovery. The child’s freedom to choose his or her work (within limits) nurtures individual initiative and personal responsibility. The teachers’ focus on acknowledging the elements of the child’s work, e.g., their effort, approach, etc., encourages the child’s concentration and effort in the learning process, not just the end products.

Social Responsibility

Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. Children in Montessori classes are “free” within the carefully crafted, mutually agreed upon limits of the group. These limits are articulated during the school experience through clearly defined class agreements which are modeled by the teacher and the children. The physical organization of the classroom contributes to the successful conformance to the class agreements by all members of the classroom community. Social responsibility develops from the child’s willful adherence and enforcement of these agreements. Children in a Montessori environment attain independence and autonomy while at the same time, develop social responsibility.



Academic Preparation

In Montessori education, children learn by doing. Academic preparation is achieved by nurturing each child's natural curiosity into a life-long love of learning. The spiraling nature of the Montessori curriculum, one experience building toward successively complex experiences, scaffolds learning for the child. Through the use of the Montessori didactic materials, the child achieves first perceptual understanding and then cognitive understanding of concepts. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum allows the child to make connections between disciplines, leading to deeper understanding and application of skills and knowledge. As an active participant in his or her education, each becomes the builder of meaningful knowledge helping him or her learn.

Spiritual Awareness/Cosmic Education

Dr. Montessori's distinctive notion of the child as a "spiritual embryo" emphasized her key principle that the growing human being is not simply a biological or psychological entity, but a spiritual energy seeking expression within the physical and cultural world. The Montessori curriculum develops children's awareness of ecology; existence that gives every living thing a meaningful function in the larger system and encourages each child to make his or her own unique contribution to the world.

Global Citizenship

From the earliest experiences of negotiating and adjusting one's behavior with other students through the study of people of various cultures, Montessori education guides children to move far beyond the family and school towards global citizenship. Personal responsibility is configured for the child in successively broader terms, to include an awareness of the importance of stewardship of the planet. Children acquire civic virtue, and an understanding of the natural world, and of the necessity to cherish it, respect it, sustain it, and to live harmoniously within it.



ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

To be considered for enrollment at LMA, children must be at least 1.5 years of age for the Buena Park campus. Children must be at least 2 years of age for the RSM and Diamond Bar campuses. Enrollment preference will be given to families with a firm commitment to Montessori philosophy. Classes are multi-age, and the school will make every reasonable effort to balance each class with respect to age and gender. The Montessori school is open to all children regardless of race, sex, religion or creed, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation.

Admission Process

- I. **Tour and observation:** Though not required, a tour of our campus is strongly recommended. You may visit the RSM campus, the Buena Park campus, and Diamond Bar campus or all of our campuses. During this tour, you will meet our teachers, and will have the opportunity to observe a classroom through our camera system. We encourage your child to be present during the tour. **The child should be met by the director prior to accepting the application.**
- II. **Application:** Interested families are encouraged to submit a completed admissions application accompanied by a registration fee and deposit fee. If the cost of tuition is a concern, you are invited to contact a local financial aid organization. When the application, registration packet and fees are received, we will follow up with you regarding the next steps.
- III. **Enrollment:** The school will notify you within one week, regarding the admissions decision. If accepted and space is available, the school will inform you. Signed application forms, along with an enrollment deposit and materials fee are due back to the office within 10 days to hold your child's place in a classroom. If you apply for enrollment, but there are no openings, the school requires the family to pay the deposit fee, which is not refundable, then your child will be placed on the waitlist and be accepted when an opening exists.

Enrollment Forms

State law requires Enrollment forms for each child. No child may be admitted until all necessary papers



have been completed, signed, and returned to school for final approval.

- Application Agreement
- Physician's Report-signed by the physician (*Two weeks grace period is allowed.)
- Media/Photography Consent Form
- Identification and Emergency Information (Child release authorization information)
- Immunization Record (**MUST HAVE ON CHILD'S FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**)
- Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment
- Child's Pre-Admission Health History
- Parent's Rights and Personal Rights Forms
- Sexual Abuse Information Sheet
- Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability

Student Success and Meeting Student Needs

The Montessori environment is unique. It cultivates an inner discipline that is the foundation for further learning and social development. Occasionally, the learning style of an individual child is not compatible with the climate of the Montessori classroom. If the lead teacher becomes concerned about the suitability of the Montessori class for your child, she will contact you to set up a conference.

We want every child to experience the satisfaction and joy of a successful education. Generally, children adapt to the Montessori classroom **within 60 days**. If your child is not functioning successfully in the classroom, we will make educational recommendations to your family. If we believe another environment may better suit your child's needs at this time, we will recommend alternate environments to you and remove him/her from the class.

Tuition

Fees are contracted on a school year basis, and payable in advance according to the terms of the signed application. Please carefully read your Application and review the Fee Schedule included in the application agreement. **Tuition will be prorated for the FIRST month only.**



Many children have the same last name. Please put your child's full name and classroom name on your check for accurate processing. **SMARTCARE does provide a monthly receipt of the tuition to you by email. Please save the receipt(s) for your own records timely.** A \$30 fee will be charged for duplicate invoice requests. **There is no reduction in tuition or credit for unattended days or for "Vacation Credit".** Please talk to the school office if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Due Date

All tuition payments are due and payable on the **1st of each month** and are **considered late if received by LMA after the 5th of that month. A late charge of \$50 must be included with your late tuition payment.**

Enrollment Termination Process

The Montessori school is dedicated to maintaining a safe, harmonious classroom environment for the optimum development of all our students. Parents of children with excessively disruptive or hurtful behavior will be asked to seek professional assistance. The lead teacher will consult with the director at the earliest opportunity to identify an at-risk student. The director of the school will observe the student in the classroom and/or on the playground and provide the lead teacher with information and recommendations to address the child's needs. Staff will document specific incidents of behavior that are worrisome or problematic. If needs or concerns are significant, the director of the school and lead teacher will meet with parents. Using observations about patterns of behavior, a plan will be created to address the needs of the child. The need for specific professional consultation may be identified. If the need for professional support is requested, parents are expected to respond in a timely manner to acquire those services.

A written statement of goals and strategies for achieving those goals will be created with the parents, the school and consulting professionals. A date for a progress review will be set. If support from the family is not forthcoming and/or the concerns are of such severity that the climate of the classroom and safety of the other children is in jeopardy,



parents will be given a date by which the student will be removed from the classroom and parents will need to obtain alternate care for their child. If a family is asked to leave the school, the student will be considered withdrawn after the last date of attendance. Tuition will be prorated for time attended, and the school shall refund the security deposit fee.

Other Reasons for Withdrawal

- We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone.
- If a parent or guardian fails to comply with any of our applicable school policies, he/she acts disrespectfully when interacting with any of our staff, we reserve the right to terminate the services to you with a full refund of the security deposit and a prorated refund of prepaid tuition, if applicable. LMA has the absolute discretion to determine whether your child poses a danger or a threat to himself, our staff or other students, and to determine whether parent or guardian fails to comply with any of our school policies, or whether parent or guardian acts disrespectfully when interacting with any of our staff.
- The school operates on the tuition and fees paid for services. **If a family's account is 10 days or more past due, the child will be withdrawn from the program until the account has been brought up to current status.**
- **Voluntary Withdrawal from LMA**
Parents and/or guardian may voluntarily withdraw their child from LMA at any time with, a thirty-day advance written notice of withdrawal to our school's director. The security deposit will be forfeited if no written notice is given, or the written notice is given but less than the prescribed thirty-day in advance. Please refer to our Application for Admission and Terms of Enrollment for more details.



Health Policy

Immunizations: According to California state law any children enrolling in a Childcare center or school must submit proof of up-to-date immunizations according to their age. Please inform the office of any new immunizations your child receives after their enrollment.

Below is a list of the immunization(shots) needed before starting at LMA.

Age When Entering	Immunizations (shots) Required
2–3 Months	1 each of Polio, DTaP, Hib, Hep B
4–5 Months	2 each of Polio, DTaP, Hib, Hep B
6–14 Months	3 each of DTaP 2 each of Polio, Hib, Hep B
15–17 Months	3 each of Polio, DTaP 2 Hep B 1 MMR on or after the 1st birthday; 1 Hib on or after the 1st birthday
18 Months–5 Years	3 Polio 4 DTaP 3 Hep B 1 MMR on or after the 1st birthday; 1 Hib on or after the 1st birthday; 1 Varicella

**Required only for children less than 4 years, 6 months

DTaP = Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis

Hib = Haemophilus Influenzae type B

Hep B = Hepatitis B

MMR = Measles, Mumps, Rubella

Varicella = Chickenpox

Parents must show their child's Immunization Record as proof of immunization on or before the child's first day at LMA.



Notification of Changes

For your child's health and safety, it is critical that we have updated records for your child's file. Therefore, we ask that you notify the school office in writing for any phone number/addresses/email/other contact information/change of designated pick up authorizations or any other important information.

Illness: For the protection of all of the students at the school, the school staff reserves the right to send a child home whose health (according to the Department of Health guidelines) poses a threat to other children in the program. Any ill child should be kept home. **Your child cannot be accepted in school if he/she shows signs of illness upon arrival in the morning.**

Some helpful guidelines to follow are:

SYMPTOMS	CHILD MUST REMAIN HOME UNTIL
Fever of 99°F or above	The temperature has returned to normal for at least 24 hours
Cold/Flu Symptoms	Discharge is no longer draining from the nose and the cough has subsided
Diarrhea/Vomiting	Loose stools and vomiting have subsided and the child has returned to normal eating without an upset stomach
Earache/Sore Throat	Until child has been seen and treated by a physician and/ or symptoms subsided
Red, Watery Eyes	Eyes return to normal, are no longer red and burning or itching



Rash	The rash disappears or has been diagnosed by a physician as non-communicable
Diaper Rash	The rash is under control and there are no open sores
Thrush	The white coating is being treated by a physician
Conjunctivitis	Eyes have been clear of all symptoms for 24 hours
Require more rest time than what is provided by the program	The child feels better
Are unable to play outside	The child feels better

Additionally, if your child has a communicable disease (e.g., **mumps, strep, chicken pox, hepatitis, pneumonia, measles, rubella, scarlet fever, scabies, pertussis, haemophilus/influenza type b, encephalitis, or meningitis.**), you must report this to the school office.

All reports and data associated with serious diseases, such as HIV infection and AIDS, that are furnished by the Department of Health, or a local health officer, are confidential. These reports are made solely to the director of the school. Any further disclosure about a serious disease can only be made with written permission of the child's parent or guardian.

Additional information is available from head staff members concerning health issues and Health Department guidelines. If you have any questions, please ask.

Hand washing: Children and staff wash their hands upon arriving at school daily. Children and staff wash their hands before eating, after using the bathroom and blowing their noses.

Handling bodily fluids: All staff members are trained in universal cleaning procedures to protect the children and themselves from possible contamination from bodily fluids.

Cleaning and sanitizing cots and equipment: Cots and sheets are washed and sanitized weekly. Equipment is regularly cleaned and sanitized to minimize the spread of disease.



Controlling Infection: The school uses disposable paper products to control the spread of disease. If the staff notices a child showing symptoms of an infectious disease, we send the child home immediately. When waiting for parent/guardian pick-up, the child will be removed from the other children and be in a separate room under staff supervision. We send an email to families of children exposed. If necessary or in severe cases, the school will contact the Health Department to discuss recommended action for this particular illness.

Administering Medication: The medicine that is brought to school must be given to the office manager or director. There are a few things you must know about how we handle medications. These policies are for the protection of your child.

- **The only medication we will distribute must be prescribed to the child, by a pediatrician and must come in the container with the pharmacy label that attached.**
- A **medication authorization form** must be filled out, which includes the length of time the medication is to be dispensed. These medication authorization forms (available in the office) must be completed and signed before staff can give your child medicine. One form needs to be completed for each medication your child is taking. Please resubmit the medication authorization form when the medication expires. Please provide only the amount to be given at school for the prescribed duration.
- **Give the medication to an adult. No medications shall be placed in your child's bag, water bottle, or lunch box.** If you want your child to have vitamins or nonprescription drugs, please administer them at home.
- The medication to be dispensed must be in its **original, labeled pharmacy container** with your child's name on it. This rule is for clarification in case of an allergic reaction and to help prevent any mistakes in medications.



Plan of Operation for Incidental Medical Services

LMA will provide certain incidental medical services for children in accordance with state licensing regulations and the following guidelines:

EpiPen Jr. or EpiPen

Inhaler/Nebulizer treatment

Diabetic Blood Glucose Monitoring

The following record must be submitted and will be maintained in the child's file and a copy will be kept in the child's classroom:

1. Parental/authorized representative's permission and detailed instructions to provide the incidental medical service needed. The telephone number and address of the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)/other authorized representative(s) must be included.
2. Detailed written authorization and instructions from the child's physician/healthcare provider. The telephone number and address of the child's physician/healthcare provider must be included.
3. Forms and/or records of medication/service provided:
 - Food Allergy Notification Form-use for children with any food allergy reaction.
 - Food Allergy Action Plan-food allergies that requires EpiPen Jr or EpiPen.
 - Anaphylaxis Emergency Action Plan Form-child requires an EpiPen Jr or EpiPen for an allergy to bee stings.
 - Nebulizer Care Consent/Verification (LIC 9166)-use for children who require inhaled medication.
 - Blood Glucose Testing Consent/Verification (LIC 92229-use for Diabetic blood glucose monitoring.



4. Verification of Staff Training-Staff members authorized to administer a specific incidental medical service must have a current Pediatric First Aid certificate, a copy of which must be kept in the teacher's file. **The school will only provide the incidental medical services when written permission, detailed instructions, necessary form(s) and/or training have been received from the child's parents/guardians/authorized representative and a physician/healthcare provider.** The instructions and training must include how to administer medication/service, use and maintenance of required equipment/supplies, and what to do in an emergency. A detailed requirement checklist will be provided to parents based on the service needed.
5. The EpiPen Jr or EpiPen shall be kept from exposure to light and extreme heat and should always be kept ready for use. Replace any auto-injector if the solution is discolored or contains a precipitate. Note the expiration date on the unit and replace the unit prior to that date. 911 and the child's parent/authorized representative will be called immediately after administering the EpiPen Jr or EpiPen. The parent will be financially responsible for all emergency services. Whether on site or away from the facility, at least one designated teacher from the trained staff will be available when the child in care needs incidental medical services to ensure services are not interrupted. The inhaled medication and/or EpiPen will be included in the Emergency Backpack which will be carried by the designated teacher.

As protection against the blood-related modes of transmission, all staff should use universal precautions such as wearing gloves when encountering the blood, or bodily fluids containing blood, washing hands after discarding the gloves and properly disposing of contaminated materials exposed to blood.

In case of an emergency or disaster that requires evacuation or relocation of children from the facility, the child's incidental medical service file, medication, equipment and/or supplies must be included in the emergency backpack and be carried out with



the child by the classroom teacher or office personnel/school director to ensure incidental medical services are not interrupted.

Parents or authorized representatives will be informed upon each occurrence of incidental medical service to the child through telephone call, email, or incident/accident report. In case of an emergency, 911 and parents will be called. The parent will be financially responsible for all emergency services. A parent or authorized representative must be always available to support any needs that may arise including coming to the school immediately if it is deemed necessary by school staff.

LMA requires one of the child's parents/authorized representatives to accompany the child on field trips or any activities that are away from our facility. If a parent will not be able to participate, the school will make judgment and communicate to see if the event is suitable for the child to participate. The school reserves the right to determine if the child should participate without a parent's presence.

Parents will also be informed of any changes to the school's Plan of Operation-Incidental Medical Services.

It is our school's responsibility to report to the Department of Social Services Licensing Office within 24 hours of serious incidents, as well as changes in Plan of Operation that affect children.



Emergency Procedure

1. Fire drills/earthquake drills will be held once every quarter. Lockdown drills will be practiced in the school twice a year.
2. The disaster evacuation plan is posted near each exit in your child's classroom for your reference.
3. Each child is required to have a package of extra clothes at school, which shall consist of a Ziploc bag, labeled with your child's full name containing a complete change of clothing in case of an emergency.
4. An approved emergency kit for each child is provided and stored in the school which contains items needed if we were to stay here at school or evacuate for an extended period.
5. In the event of an emergency which disrupts the school's operation, communications will be sent to parents via text message, email, and/or voice message. Cell phone and email addresses must be current for this purpose.

General Emergency Procedure

State Licensing Department mandates basic health and safety guidelines. In addition, LMA has specific procedures for handling medical and other emergencies. Each child must have emergency contact information on file on or before their first day in the school.

1. **Identification and Emergency Information form:** Parents/guardians must provide emergency telephone numbers and identification information about people authorized to pick up child.
2. **Consent for Medical Treatment form:** This form authorizes staff at the school to obtain any necessary emergency medical treatment for the child. It must be completed and signed by the parent/guardians on or before their first day in the school.
3. If a child is injured at school, the first step is for a trained and certified staff member to administer any necessary first aid and /or CPR. Paramedics will be called if necessary.



4. Universal precautions will be used by all staff when dealing with an injury involving blood. Disposable gloves will be put on by the staff member before they encounter the blood, blood-containing body fluids, or tissue discharges. Any blood that may have gotten onto floor, counters, etc. will be thoroughly washed off the surface and the surface will be sanitized with a bleach solution. Any blood on the carpet will be sanitized with a germicide. Hands will be washed thoroughly following outlined practices, after completing contact with blood.
5. A parent/guardian and/or other adult listed on the **Identification and Emergency Information Form** will be contacted immediately so that they can accompany the child to the hospital in the ambulance or transport the child themselves if no ambulance is called. The child's regular doctor is also listed on the **Identification and Emergency Information Form** and can be contacted if necessary. **The Parent will be financially responsible for all emergency services.**
6. If immediate medical attention is not required, but the situation does require that the child be seen by a physician, dentist, or nearby medical facility, every effort will be made to reach the parents/guardians or other responsible adults listed on the **Identification and Emergency Information Form** so that they can provide the transportation to the appropriate facility.
7. If LMA staff cannot contact the parent/guardian or other adult, staff will make sure that the child receives the necessary treatment by arranging transportation to the nearest hospital emergency room.
8. **It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that all the emergency information is updated when changes occur and at least on an annual basis.**
9. Any time an injury occurs to a child, an incident report will be completed.



Sunscreen

For primary and toddler students, sunscreen is considered a medication by the CA Department of Child Development. Please apply sunscreen to your child BEFORE school arrival. If your child is particularly sensitive to the sun or requires an additional application, please be sure that the school has a permission form on file to administer this. Otherwise, the parent/guardian of a primary and toddler student may come to apply sunscreen to their child. Elementary students may bring and apply their sunscreen individually.



CHILD SAFETY

Parent Notifications: Parents, guardians or their authorized emergency contacts will be notified immediately of any accidents, injuries, or illnesses. Behavioral incidents will be communicated on a case-by-case basis, depending on the seriousness of the incident (determined by Lead Staff). You will be contacted either immediately by phone for urgent matters, or at the end of the school day for less serious matters.

Child Abuse and Neglect: All schools, childcare centers, physicians and others who work with children are required by law to inform the Department of Social Services of any suspected abuse or neglect of children. By law, a suspicion of child abuse generally means that the reporter has “reasonable cause to believe” or “reasonable cause to know or suspect” that a child is being maltreated physically, emotionally or mentally. Employees are trained in identifying abuse and neglect.

Employee Screening: All employees are subject to criminal screening through the Department of Justice and fingerprinted as mandated by the State of California. Potential employees are required to interview and provide references. All volunteers are screened for abuse and child neglect.

Body Safety: LMA staff have received abuse prevention training, and follows the 5 safety steps:

1. Know the Warning Signs
2. Control Access through Screening
3. Monitor All Programs
4. Be Aware of Children's Behavior
5. Communicate Your Concerns



Visitors: We welcome and encourage visits to the school from parents, guardians, outside professionals and prospective families. When you visit the school, please sign in at the office, and observe the classroom from our camera surveillance system.

Harassment: All children must be free from harassment and bullying in our school. Children may not be cruel and/or abusive to each other in any way in our environment. If you believe an incident of harassment has occurred with your child, please report it immediately to your child's teacher and the director of the school. The school will investigate and take appropriate action.

Biting Policy: One of the most upsetting yet normal behavior of early childhood is biting. Infants may bite because their gums hurt, and to bite down hard on something gives them relief. With toddlers and young preschoolers, social skills are still limited. It is difficult for young children to distinguish between what is loving and what hurts. When an older child bites, it is usually a means of expressing emotions. Young children do not have a social conscience as we know it. They may fully understand that when they bite, someone cries; but they have not yet connected all the social consequences.

Parents will be notified if their child has been bitten, and of the procedures teachers have taken. The name of the child who did the biting will not be included when informing the parent of the incident. If the bite has broken the skin, it will be washed with soap and water. Both parents will be notified immediately and requested to call their child's physician for further instructions.

If biting becomes an ongoing behavior, the site director and the child's teachers will talk with parents and together they will carefully analyze the circumstances. Anecdotal information noting when the incident happened, where it happened, what precipitated the bite, who was involved, and the times of day the biting accrued will be recorded. A teacher will be assigned to stay near the child to interrupt the biting behavior before it happens and to provide needed



support. Reasonable action will be taken to modify the environment, routines, or interactions within the group, to help diminish the biting. If further action is needed, please review the "Discipline" section.

Weapons: The Montessori school is a private property. No weapons of any sort are allowed on our campuses. Any individual who is found to have brought a weapon on campus (regardless of a license to carry), will be asked to leave the LMA campus immediately and will be prohibited from being on any LMA campus in the future.

SCHOOL POLICIES

Attendance

Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for your child to receive the full benefit of the Montessori program. **Parents should notify the office by 9 a.m. if a child is unable to attend school.** Children with a contagious disease must be kept home for the health and safety of the other children. **Please inform the office if your child contracts a contagious disease.** More information can be found under the "Health Policies" section.

Primary Students: Daily attendance is vital for your child's development. If a student must be away for any length of time for reasons other than illness, parents should contact the school in advance to discuss the situation.

Elementary Students: Legally, all elementary-age children must attend school daily. Parents should be aware that taking their children out of school for vacation could be detrimental to their education. If a vacation is scheduled, parents should discuss with the Director of the school the educational experiences and activities that will be learned.

Arrival and Dismissal

Primary Students attend 9am to 3pm, with a 10-minute grace period for departure only. It is very important that you say goodbye to your child before you leave. If your child is worried that you might suddenly disappear, then he or she may hang on tight to you to be sure you don't



“sneak” away. Be honest and update. “Bye-bye, I know you’ll have fun and I’ll see you later.” **If possible, keep the good-bye short. Linger too long or engaging in too much conversation with other adults could lengthen the anxiety time for your child.**

It is crucial that children arrive on time, as the beginning of the school day sets a tone for their education. **Children are expected to be at the front door of the school promptly by 9:00 a.m. Parents must bring their children to school by 9:10 a.m.** Each family can notify the school in advance and bring their children to school later than 9:10 a.m. due to the family emergency twice a month policy. **The school reserves the right to close its doors to the family who is late and does not give the notice in advance.**

Full Extended Day students attend 7:00am (RSM campus only) or 7:30am – 6pm. Please drop off and pick up your child on time to avoid the early/late payment fee.

Sign In/Out

Dismissal and Release of Children: Please pick up your child at the designated time. **If you will be late, please call the school.** For children enrolled in the 9am-12pm Primary program, dismissal time is at noon. Children who have not been picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal time will be placed in the After School Childcare program and parents will be billed for this time. For children who are not picked up after the end time for the program he/she is enrolled, the school charges a late fee of \$20 for first 10 minutes and \$5 every minute thereafter. **The school charges a fee of \$10 if the parent/guardian forgets to sign in or sign out their child due to licensing regulations.**

For your child’s protection, we will not release a child to someone other than a custodial parent, a guardian or individuals designated on the Family Information Sheet **unless written authorization is provided to the school.** We will ask for photo identification of the person picking up your child. Authorization can be granted on the emergency information form, but make sure to include a note anytime changes in regular dismissal are made.

Please be sure to sign it/out with your FULL name when your child arrives and leaves the school.



When your child arrives for the day, his/her arrival time will be recorded by SMARTCARE system.

The departure time will also be recorded by SMARTCARE system. Staff members will be happy to discuss this process with you if you have any questions.

Late Arrival

It is important that children arrive on time, as the beginning of the school day sets a tone for the classroom. Children who are rushed and arrive late may not be in the right frame of mind to begin their activities. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that your child has the opportunity to begin his/her work at the start of class. **Parents should not enter classrooms or disturb guides once the day has begun.**

Primary children should arrive just before or promptly at 9:00 am. A Primary child who arrives after 9:10am, the school requires staff of administration office to accompany the child to his/her classroom.

Academic Readiness

Academic readiness is not an issue at LiMai Montessori Academy. In the Preschool program your child will not be evaluated as one of the criteria for enrollment. Whether your child knows colors or numbers is irrelevant. Of greater importance, the teacher is concerned about the whole child: his/her ability to communicate and to cooperate, and eagerness to accept and seek out new experiences.

Do not attempt to push your child into “readiness.” Make new experiences available, but do not attempt to force him/her inappropriately. This kind of pressure can produce anxiety and cause some fear.

Food Allergies

We strive to provide a safe environment for all children, including those who have life threatening food allergies. For students with dietary restrictions or food allergies, we must have a



doctor's note as well as any instructions needed. (If a child has a food allergy, we will notify the whole class.)

Naps and Quiet Time

Preschool children benefit from scheduled periods of rest. This rest may take the form of actual napping or a quiet time for children staying all day. At LMA all children under four years and nine months are required to rest. A napping space and a cot or mat will be available for each child under the age of five. Children who do not fall asleep will have a quiet rest time that may involve but is not limited to looking at books, listening to music, or other such quiet activities. Naps are available to all children if they need or want to rest during the day.

Outdoor Play

Our program is designed to include outdoor play in all seasons. Students who stay in school all day need fresh air, exercise and free time on the playground. Please be sure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play: sturdy, warm and easy to put on. Also, **label, label, label.** **Please label everything you send to school.** Children often do not recognize their own clothing. Labeling helps your child and us to sort out the myriad of items that come into the school each day. **Use names, not initials, and mark in an easily read place.**

Dress for Success

- **Clothing:** We ask that you send your child to school dressed in comfortable, non-restrictive clothing. It is most important that the children can remove their own clothing if needed. We are fostering independence and if your child needs to ask for help in using the bathroom because of a complicated belt buckle, then they will not be independent in that moment. We know how adorable children's clothes can be, but it is in the best interest of the child that they wear loose fitting, casual clothes. Please dress your child in



pants with elastic waists, roomy shirts and, if needed, short dresses (so the hem does not drag, get stepped on, or fall in the toilet!). **Please do NOT send your child to school with torn clothing, costumes, fairy wings, clothing that is too elaborate for school, clothing that lights up, clothing that is distracting for the children, and/or clothing depicting violent acts or violent cartoon characters, inappropriate or offensive language. It is very important that we keep LMA neutral and friendly, and we do not condone violent play of any kind.**

- **Shoes:** We also ask that you send your child to school with appropriate shoes. Your child may not come to school in shoes without a tread, like Crocs (too slippery). The shoes must be comfortable and preferably sneakers. In contemplating shoes for your child, please buy something that they can put on and remove on their own. **Please do NOT send your child to school with flip flops, open-toe shoes, ill-fitting shoes, shoes that light up, raised heels or platform shoes, including cowboy boots, as they pose a safety hazard for the children and are not appropriate for playground activity and equipment climbing; children are also NOT to wear shoes that are distracting to other students of LMA.** If your child is just entering our program, they should be in Velcro shoes so that they can put them on and take them off as they please. Around the age of 4 we begin teaching the children how to tie their shoes and we would ask that at that time the child come to school in laced shoes so that they may practice.

Extra set of clothes: Please bring two extra sets of clothes (socks, underwear, pants/shorts and top) to your teacher in a gallon Ziplock. Your teacher will let you know when replacement items are needed. **Please label all clothes brought to school,** especially jackets as those are often misplaced.

Lost and Found

If the school has this arrangement, misplaced clothing that is not clearly labeled with a child's name will be placed in the Lost and Found storage box. All Lost and Found items will be removed and donated to charity twice a year.

The Birthday Walk Around the Sun: In the Primary classrooms, each child is honored in a special celebration called "The Birthday Walk," an international Montessori tradition. Parents



may participate in this important occasion by helping their child select photographs from each year of her/his life and by helping her/him prepare a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. These milestones are shared as the child walks around the “sun”, once for each year celebrated.

Invitations and Presents: If you are planning a birthday party for your child, please do not send invitations to school unless all the children in the class are invited. If your child is attending a party after school, please do not send gifts to school with your child. We have found that these situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited.

Field Trips

We try to give ample notice for field trips. Notification of a field trip is given to the parents/guardians at least one week prior to an off-campus event. If you wish to have alternative care for your child for the duration of the outing, you will be responsible for making these arrangements. Some field trips include all students; others include only one or two classes or age groups.

The safety and protection of our students is a critical concern to LMA. Off- campus trips create potential hazards that require us to take special precautions. LMA reserves the right to refuse the participation of off-campus trips to children whose past behavior patterns indicate an inability to follow directions and basic rules. If we are concerned about the safety of a child based on observed behavior, development and/or maturity, we may require the parent/guardian of the child to accompany the child and take sole responsibility for the child’s well-being during the trip. Lead Guides and supervisory staff have the sole discretion to exclude a child from an outing if this parental supervision is deemed to be necessary but is not available.



Parent volunteers (preschool and elementary students) or privately contracted busing services (elementary students) are utilized for student transportation during field trips. All children under 4' 9" must be secured in a child safety seat or child booster seat. All parent volunteers who accompany children on field trips must be screened for child abuse and safe driving records.

For elementary students, Going Out Excursions offer enrichment opportunities beyond the classroom setting. These Going Out trips allow children to see, hear, and experience what we cannot offer within the classrooms. The trips usually relate to the topics being studied, but also may be scheduled to observe steps in a process or places and events that foster community awareness. We also attend musical events and visit museums of art in the area.

Toileting Independence for Toddlers

One of the important developmental works of the toddler age is that of toileting independence. Like all areas of development toileting independence progresses at varying rates for children and requires nurturing support both at school and at home. To facilitate effective collaboration between the parents and the teachers below are indicators for toileting readiness.

Indicators for toileting readiness:

1. Shows interest.
2. Dislikes dirty diapers
3. Has dry diapers for at least two hours during the day.
4. Can sit still and coordinate movements.
5. Can follow three or four step directions.
6. Has begun to dress and undress oneself.
7. Can verbalize when he or she needs to go.

If your child is showing some of these indicators, maybe he or she is ready. Please discuss with your child's teacher.



Diaper Policy for Toddlers

Children using diapers need to bring them clearly labeled with the child's name. Please send a pack of Velcro diapers (labeled with your child's name) in their cubby. Your teacher will notify you if more are needed. Parents requesting use of skin ointment after diaper changing must provide a "medication permission" form with the labeled tube of ointment.

No cloth diapers.

Teachers and parents will discuss independent toileting as soon as the child signals readiness. We do consider pull-ups and underwear to be a positive transitional step.

Toys and Possessions

Children may bring books, artwork, and other educational items to share with the class. Check with your child's teacher to learn what is appropriate. Toys and objects highly valued by children should be left at home because they are easily misplaced or damaged in the school setting.

Comfort items such as blankets may be brought if needed for nap time only. Be sure your child's name is attached. **No pacifiers are allowed at our schools.**

Child Custody Disputes and Matters

LMA is dedicated to the unique development of each child. We believe that all children need a loving, supportive family. When a family separates, it is especially difficult for the children. Their loyalties are torn as they love and need both parents in their lives. LMA will be supportive, open, and welcoming to both parents. We will remain neutral in conflicts between parents.

School records, conferences, meeting information, educational materials and similar items are available to both parents unless a court order states otherwise. Parents should try to schedule joint conferences with the teacher, but accommodations may be made for separate conferences if possible. Billing information is made available to any person who has signed the application form.



LMA will not limit a parent's access to his/her child unless there is a court order on file in the child's records at the school limiting or specifying conditions for a parent's access to the child.

DISCIPLINE

Positive Discipline

We embrace the philosophy of Positive Discipline at LMA. Much of the discipline at LMA is built into the design of our child-friendly environment. Such features as the ongoing “Grace and Courtesy” lessons, the gentle flow of the school day, and the authentic respect for the children's needs modeled by the staff, all serve to dissolve much of the need for what tends to be called “discipline”. When a child's behavior is understood as information about what is being learned and believed, it is quite natural to respond to the children's challenging behavior as opportunities for them to begin learning alternative ways of handling conflict and developing more effective communication skills. This program is ICPS.

I.C.P.S.- I Can Problem Solve

I can problem solve is a program that teaches children nonviolent communication and conflict resolution which can be a lifelong benefit.

As children learn the method, it is constantly reinforced by teachers and our other staff members who use ICPS style communication when they interact with children throughout the course of the day. We have found that concentrating on using “ICPS Talk” helps us to focus on each child's learning even in challenging situations. Though conflicts are a normal aspect of human interaction, they can often interrupt a teacher's plan or create a disturbance during routine activities. Using ICPS language helps us to take advantage of these interruptions transforming them into learning opportunities. This refocusing aspect of method can be a great help for parents as well.



“Be-With”

A “be-with” is when the child needs time to be-with a teacher. During this time, that child stays with the teacher and observes other children for more desired behaviors.

Unpermitted Discipline

Adults will not use corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse, or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to interference with daily living functions (i.e., eating, sleeping, or toileting), or withhold shelter, clothing, medication, or aids to physical functioning. Children will not be locked in any room, building, or facility premises.

Grounds for Dismissal

If a child becomes a danger or threat to the physical safety of himself/herself, staff, or other students, he or she could be terminated from the program. In this case, prorated tuition refunds will be given based on the time that the child is in attendance.

1st occurrence - Speak with the child and inform parents. Teacher who observed will make a note in the child’s file.

2nd occurrence - Child must go home. Give the parent an option to come and observe specific behaviors in the classroom. Observations must be arranged with the child’s teacher.

3rd occurrence - 1-day suspension from school

4th occurrence - Termination



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Cell Phone and Photography Policy

All LMA campuses have a “no cell phone” policy. If you must take or make a phone call, please step outside of the campus to do so. Transitions are made easier when your child has your full attention at drop off and pick up, and your full attention allows for clearer communication between teachers and parents. Photography of children with a cell phone or other electronic devices (iPad, camera, etc.) is not allowed in our centers at any time. However, photos and/or videos may be taken at family events at your child’s center, such as potlucks, ice cream socials, pancake breakfasts, or performances. In these instances, we ask that parents refrain from posting pictures or videos of other people’s children on social media without their parents/guardians’ permission.

Surveillance Camera Policy

The surveillance cameras installed on LMA campuses are intended to help promote the safety and security of people and property and can assist LMA in reviewing an incident not seen by a teacher or director. **Due to concerns of invasion of privacy, we do not allow video recording or cell phone usage when viewing our camera monitor.**

Placement: School security cameras are installed only in common rooms and spaces, like classrooms, play areas, and hallways. Bathrooms and changing rooms are not allowed to have surveillance cameras.

Review of School Surveillance Camera Footage: A Parent or guardian has no right to review the school surveillance camera footage unless your child is physically injured at our school. Parent or guardian may only review our surveillance camera footage for the date of your child’s physical injury at our school. Parent or guardian must make an appointment with the director of the school in advance to review such footage, and the viewing shall be no more than 15 minutes unless approved by the Director on a case-by-case basis.



Parent Participation

Both your child and our school benefit when you are an active participant, and we welcome your participation at whatever level you are comfortable with. We have an open-door policy, which means that you are always welcome to visit, observe or be involved in any of the day-to-day activities at our school. If you have an interest in music, art, cooking, woodworking or have another hobby or talent that you would like to share with us or would simply enjoy helping teachers with activities or projects, please let your child's teacher know. **Parents are required to show proof of a negative TB test, as well as MMR, Tdap and influenza immunizations** (or a waiver declining the flu shot) before being involved in activities that include close physical contact with children other than their own.

Parent Observation

All parents are welcome and encouraged to observe our classrooms from the camera system, within 15 mins, or make an appointment with the school director. Seeing the children at work is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful: look around the room and notice the amount and diversity of activity; the range of ages; the types of materials; the individual and group activity; and the interaction of the children. Focus your attention on the lead teacher and notice the composure, the teacher as an observer, and the respect the lead teacher shows each child. Focus your attention on your child and notice the succession of activities; the concentration on work; enthusiasm and self-satisfaction in each activity; and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the adults.

Family Commitment

Parents are a fundamental part of the well-being of our school and of a successful educational experience for their child. As such, we have the expectation that all members of the school community participate and support the school whenever possible.

It is the hope and expectation of LiMai Montessori Academy that parents make every effort to understand and embrace the mission of the school. To that end, we strive to help parents learn about the Montessori approach by providing information and opportunities for parent education.



Additionally, we expect parents to familiarize themselves with the philosophy, policies, and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook and other school publications, including our regular email communications.

There are committees to assist in special programming and to help the school meet long-term goals. Teachers value the assistance and participation of parents in the classroom and in adventures beyond the classroom. Both parents and students are enriched by parents' involvement in school activities.

Parent Education

As an integral part of a successful school-home partnership, LMA offers many avenues for parent education. In addition to online resources and our parent Montessori resource (See below), we offer a series of events throughout the school year focused on various aspects of our program, curriculum, and parenting topics. We encourage all parents to attend these helpful sessions. Childcare is provided free of charge for evening sessions. Reservations are required for childcare. Please check out our website and our parent Montessori resource for valuable information and see our calendar for offerings and dates of our Parent Education Series.

If you would like to observe a class, **we ask that you make arrangements with the classroom lead teacher and the director of the school in advance** to minimize disruption to the classroom and to make sure that the students will be in the room when you visit. When you arrive for your observation, please sign in at the office.

During a formal in-class observation, we request that you adhere to the following guidelines: sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated; try not to make your presence felt; do not initiate conversation; do not use the cellphone, and do not handle the materials. We recommend these guidelines to minimize interference in the children's peaceful environment. Feel free to make notes of items you would like to discuss during your conference with the classroom teacher.

Parent Information Nights

At the beginning of every year, each classroom holds an informational meeting for new and



returning parents. These parent-only evenings are an opportunity to explain the school's and teacher's plans, policies, and procedures for the new year. Parents have an opportunity to get acquainted, meet all classroom staff, and learn about the specifics of their child's classroom. The lead teacher and teaching assistants will answer questions about field trips, classroom procedures, volunteer opportunities, etc. Dates for the informational meetings can be found on our website at www.LiMaiAcademy.com

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We conduct Parent-Teacher conferences twice per school year in order to keep you updated on your child's progress. These conferences are required for all parents at LMA and are crucial to your child's success. Each lead teacher has also made their email address available for parents to contact them. Open and ongoing communication with all our families is of the utmost importance to us.

MONTESSORI RESOURCES

Montessori "Work"

In a Montessori school, all the students' activities are called work. By using the word this way, it does not denote something unpleasant and opposite from fun. To young children, their "work" is its own satisfaction. There is neither praise nor punishment. The urge to give too much praise is difficult even for an experienced teacher to suppress. But we try to remember this: whether you criticize or praise a child's work, you are evaluating the product without knowing how much effort was expended or even whether the child has developed his/her own opinion about it. The inequality between the child and adult is reflected in your response.

A more helpful approach is to comment on an actual attribute of the work. For instance, "I like the way you used this design to border your booklet." Or "I've noticed your addition work is becoming very accurate!" These kinds of statements encourage students to consider their own progress and begin to evaluate their own work with a critical eye. This allows them to move



away from dependence on adult approval. In our learning environment, regular discussions about correct behavior, courtesy and respect for others take place in the classroom as a part of instruction, not just as a response to a given negative behavior. Often, in traditional schools and at home, these lessons are given after the fact – when emotions are high, someone is injured and someone “must be punished.” Our approach does not eliminate all negative behavior, but it does give the teacher the opportunity to refer to the lesson. “Remember when we talked about walking carefully around someone's work?” or “I’ll bet you remember the lesson about pushing in your chair without a sound.”

In our modern hyper-stimulated society, the Montessori teacher's job is challenging. The children must come to love their own efforts without immediate rewards and praise. The materials beckon to the children, but their satisfaction must come from within. This intrinsic reward is the most meaningful and long-lasting. A 4-year-old lays out a felt mat and chooses a box of fabrics from the shelf. She arranges them carefully and begins to sort and make pairs – wool with wool, silk with silk. After adequate exploration, she puts on a blindfold and begins the process anew. Observing carefully, one can see the smile of satisfaction when like pairs are discovered and matched. What is most impressive is the calm, orderly manner of her work. Across the room, a 3-year-old pours water from dainty pitchers slowly and carefully, watching the last drop as it clings to the spout. With the same sense of independence and determination he begins the task again, checking his tray for a spilled drop.

This atmosphere of calm and joyful order is usually the first impression a visitor experiences in a Montessori school.

When you visit a play group or day care center with children grouped according to age, you may be overwhelmed by the boisterous activity, running and loud voices. Or you will see the children all involved in an activity that demands silence and immobility. These choices are managed by the supervising adult.



In a Montessori classroom you will experience a clear sense of freedom, but you will also realize that freedom is attainable for the children only because the environment is carefully prepared and controlled in a different way. There are a few rules, but they are consistent and equitable. These young students learn not to disturb each other or to misuse the materials. They are shown how to select an exercise carefully, complete the procedure, repeat it as many times as desired, and replace it on the shelf as they found it. They learn that preparation and clean-up are part of the activity, not an adjunct. Within these limitations, they can choose from every activity the teacher has presented to them.

Free play sounds like a similar concept, but it can be limiting for children, especially those who have not developed concentration skills. Play-Doh, building blocks, Legos, paints, puzzles, Big Wheels, and puppets may look exciting, but an observer will see children roaming from one activity to another, leaving toys strewn haphazardly, and eventually declaring that they have nothing to do. They may begin to interfere with other children simply because they have not developed enough self-control to handle their freedom. In a play-school setting, you will seldom see the children being allowed unlimited time and sufficiently challenging work to engage their concentration and intellectual energies.

Montessori students have the security of knowing that they each have exclusive use of the materials they have chosen for as long as they need them. Thus, one of the major conflicts in play between children is immediately eliminated. The child is satisfied because the work has value, challenge, and purpose.

The Adult Role

As adults entrusted with the lives of children, it is our obligation to help them develop their minds, enable them to use individual judgment, and learn how to contribute to society. It is up to us to keep alive their innate desire to learn.



The relationship between adult and child is fragile. We cannot think of ourselves solely as “teachers” or “parents” because we are often in an alternate role. We are guardians/custodians of the environment that prepares our children for the culture of today. This child/adult relationship is based on respect and knowledge of the child. Give and take is not always on the side of the child or the adult, but rather both are learners. Both are moving toward self-perfection. By avoiding certain inner restrictions or attitudes, we can feel more competent and joyful in our relationships with children. Some of these hampering attitudes are:

- Lack of trust or belief in a child's abilities
- Arrogance, especially related to knowledge
- Lack of patience
- Need to be right or to always know the answer
- Need for immediate results
- Inclination to see wrong in others
- Dishonesty
- Pride

Children need our help. The cultural ideal is, too often, a few winners and many losers...and always being in competition. Children learn to suppress their own inner drives very early. We, parent and teachers, are products of that same system. We must learn not to lose patience, not to give in to anger, but rather to grow through our experiences with the children.

Balancing our love for our children with intelligence, resisting the urge to keep the child dependent, developing enough self-discipline and, when needed, detachment to allow growth are examples of the kind of intelligent, thoughtful love we want our children to experience. The teacher or parent who is in “need” of love or reaffirmation can undermine this process. Rigidity in our own attitudes can be a sign of unresolved inner conflict, which can be easily communicated to children. As they grow, children will force us to look inward as well as outward to find more knowledge.



All adults working with children are in need of support. We can only make a definite difference in the lives of our children if we combine efforts, seek the same goals, and continue to respect dignity and innate capability of every child. If we truly believe in the unlimited potential of the child, we realize the importance of every period of childhood development and the significance of the adult role in the process, not just in the achievements of your child or mine, but in the progress of humanity.

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Often in Montessori, we speak of “the child who is not yet here.” We know the child is on his/her way and that we, all of the adults in this child’s life, can make the journey more successful, joyful and rewarding. Our belief in the emergence of this child is the activating force behind each day in the classroom.

First Plane of Development

Dr. Montessori talked about the absorbent quality of young children’s minds: their ability to take in knowledge through the senses; their amazing capability for learning language and the overall importance of those first formative years. Piaget wrote of the importance of the years from birth to six. Freud proposed that what happens to us before the age of five decides how we will live as adults in the world. But Wordsworth framed it most poetically in *My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold A Rainbow In The Sky* when he said, “The child is father of the man.”

In many families there are financial considerations when we make the decision to offer our children a Montessori education. We must discuss and evaluate early education realistically, looking at the many years ahead. We may need to consider private education and college as mutually exclusive, or at least difficult choices. Among those who have made that choice in years past, we have yet to hear a Montessori parent express discontent or regret over the commitment to a Montessori education. The benefits are far reaching and instrumental in the



total development of not only one child's future, but also to the generations of young people who will eventually take their places as leaders in our world.

On a smaller plane, it becomes clear that the adults in your child's environment at home and at school are the most important “teachers” your child will ever have. They create the possibilities for your child to explore. It will be this teacher who offers language. It will be this adult who encourages and helps sustain that soaring imagination. It will be this teacher who chooses the right moment to introduce a story, a concept, and an idea that will give the child the incentive to seek more information. Dr. Montessori said, “The essential thing is for the task to arouse such an interest that it engages the child's whole personality.” Once that energy has been engaged and that immense capacity for learning has been stimulated, there are no intellectual boundaries, no social or moral issues too complex, and no aspirations too grand for this small, powerful person. All we can do is remove obstacles, clear the way of debris, and through careful observation decide the right moment for that “special lesson.”

Although Montessori schools are well known for the early acquisition of reading skills, the beautiful concrete materials of math, and highly trained classroom teachers, our goals reach far beyond the memorization of math tables or sounding out phonetic words. We hope to instill in every child a lifelong love for learning; a joyful expectation for the new and unknown; and a continuous desire to find out, to seek, and to explore life's possibilities. In addition, in the first plane of development we try to instill an inner discipline – that we are polite, thoughtful, and ethical because it is the right thing to do. We hope to develop awareness in each child of his/her role in, and relationships with, the community of the classroom, family, school, and community.

Our curricula for the Primary classes are grounded in factually based information. Only through knowledge and experience can children begin to separate truth from fiction, reality from fantasy, and begin to feel safe enough to explore new ideas and accept the possibility of the unknown in the second plane of development.



Repetition

Understanding an idea and accepting a concept are just the beginning; they are the precursors to meaningful repetition for a child. Occasionally, curiosity and creativity can be confused with idle manipulation of an object or an idea. A period of involvement and deep integration begins when children of their own volition choose, focus on, and repeat an activity. A sense of satisfaction and calm may be observed. Dr. Montessori said upon observing such a child, “He shows no progress in speed or skill. It is a kind of perpetual motion. The achievement of repetition, no matter how trivial it is to the adult, gives a strength of power and independence to the child.” True inquisitiveness and curiosity are expanded here. An inner need of the child's has been satisfied. In the classroom and at home we need to protect children from interruptions during such a period.

Most adults have an external aim for which they are actively working. For children, the aim is internal. They work to grow. This is an unconscious process, indefinable in terms of the future. The work of the child, Dr. Montessori has said, is to create the adult he/she will become. When children reach the state of repeating an exercise, we know that they are on their way. The process has been set in motion. Externally, we observe self-disciplined children. They are working to perfect themselves using the environment, which is a reminder that the environment should be painstakingly prepared to support the children, to sustain their need for activity, and to protect their right to develop at their own pace.

Parents with young children are very aware that a three-year-old cannot be hurried! For us, the activity is a means to an end. To the child, the activity is the end. The whole person is involved.

We love what we know best. We repeat activities that we enjoy, that interest us. Through repetition, children create a faculty within themselves and then create something external. The 3-year-old tracing sandpaper letters would achieve little with only one introduction or one tracing experience. The tracing goes on indefinitely, with no obvious reward or result. We know that this indirect preparation is for the development of the hand. But the children do not know this, nor



would they care. Eventually, they will pick up a pencil and spontaneously begin to write words. The preparatory work frees them to experience a new kind of joy. This is creativity.

Recently we observed a small child, around 5 years of age, embroidering a geometric shape on a square piece of burlap. She had obviously been given several lessons prior to this experience because her stitches were careful and precise. She completed the shape with small stitches, tied the knot, and turned the fabric over to examine all sides. At this point I expected to see her place the finished product in her cubby or at least show it to a friend or an adult. Instead, she took the ripper and removed the stitches, and started the process again. This is a child with self-discipline. This is a child on her way to very positive self-formation.

Resources

i. Book Resource: Parenting is a challenge, and there are many insightful books that you might find helpful. A collection is available in the office for your review. Here are some suggestions:

- *Positive Discipline for Preschoolers — Nelsen
- Parent Talk – Chick Moorman
- Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius — Lillard
- Touch Points: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development — Brazelton
- How to Talk so Your Child Listens, and How to Listen so Your Child Talks — Faber
- Montessori: A Modern Approach — Lillard
- The Absorbent Mind — Montessori
- The Secret of Childhood — Montessori



*If you read only one book, this should be it!

ii. Online Resources:

www.MariaMontessori.com

www.amiusa.org

www.michaelolaf.net

www.montessori-namta.org

www.mmsoc.org