



Clay-Platte Children's House Montessori School

PRIMARY

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Kansas City, Missouri 64151
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www.clayplattemontessori.com

Facebook page - facebook.com/clayplattemontessori

tax ID # 43 088 7803

Office hours:	8:00am – 5:00pm
Main Building hours:	7:00am – 6:00pm
Hill House hours:	8:00am – 3:45pm

***“Whoever touches the life of the child,
touches the most sensitive point of a whole
which has roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future.”***

Maria Montessori

Mission Statement

By employing the philosophy and methodology of Dr. Maria Montessori, Clay-Platte Montessori School will educate young people to their fullest potential, instilling a deep sense of personal independence and responsibility to self, others and the earth.

Statement of Purpose

Our purpose is to provide, through the Montessori philosophy and curriculum, an environment where each child will be free to function and develop individually, naturally and sequentially into the whole child that lies within, realizing the full potential of his/her innate talents.

Goals

To facilitate each individual child in the development of:

- A true joy of learning
- Independence
- Self-confidence
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation - the ability to choose
- The ability to learn through personal discovery
- Concentration
- Responsibility
- An attachment to reality
- A love of order
- An appreciation of silence
- The ability to solve problems

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Clay-Platte Montessori School admits all children regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, gender or ability.

Programs

Preprimary - ages 6 weeks to 3

Red Room

Full-day: 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Half-day: 8:45 a.m. to 11:20 a.m.

Primary - ages 3 to 6

Sunrise, Orange, Yellow and Green Rooms

Full-day: 8:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Half-day a.m.: 8:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Half-day p.m.: 12:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Elementary - ages 6 to 9

Blue Room

Program Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Upper Elementary - ages 9 to 12

Located in the Indigo Room

Program Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Montessori Middle School - ages 12 to 15

Located in the Indigo Room

Program Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Extended Care Program

7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Absences and Late Arrivals

Late arrival can create unnecessary stress for your child and a disruption to the work time in the classroom. In the event your child will be absent or late for the day, please call the school's office between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.. The academic day begins at 8:45 a.m.

Allergies

In order to keep our students with life threatening allergies safe, we ask that you **NOT** pack "loose nuts" in your child's lunch. Nut butters, to include peanut butter, will be allowed but you will need to let a teacher know if you include this in the lunch so safety procedures can be followed. If your child has an allergy or medical condition, come to the office to complete our allergy awareness form.

Balloons

Balloons are a safety risk for children. Aspiration of the balloon, or a piece of the balloon, can cause blockage of air passages leading to death. Because of this danger, we only allow balloons in the school under supervised curriculum use.

Birthdays/Celebrations of Life

We celebrate students' birthdays by having a "celebration of life" in the classroom. A celebration can be arranged by setting a time with your child's teachers. On the special day, please come prepared with the following:

- One or two photos of your child from:
 - birth to 1 year of age
 - 1 to 2 years of age
 - 2 to 3 years of age
 - etc. up to current birthday

You may mount the pictures on popsicle sticks or unsharpened pencils to allow easy handling. Check with your child's teacher for additional ways of displaying the photos in the room.

The student and his/her parents may come prepared with a short "story" or memory of the child and/or standout events during each of the years. As the celebration begins, you will be asked to share these moments with the class. It is a nice summary and progression of your child's life and special moments.

Since this is a special and unique celebration, we ask that you save more traditional party items for home. Please **do not send** hats, balloons, favors, drinks, or treat bags, as they can create too much of a distraction in the classroom. To avoid potential hurt feelings, we also ask that personal invitations to parties not be distributed at school.

Below is a list of suggested food items if you and your child would like to provide a room snack for the celebration. (Please ask your teacher about any specific food allergies)

- Fresh fruit and/or vegetables
- Mini muffins
- Mini cupcakes with little or no icing
- Rice krispie treats
- Whole grain cookies

Water is always available in the rooms but if you would like to bring a jug of milk, that would be fine as well. Having your child help in the decision on what to bring from this list will help to make this extra special. We encourage you, if available, to join your child and classmates for this unique Montessori celebration.

Child Abuse Policy

Should staff suspect possible child abuse or neglect, observations and dates will be documented. The staff member must inform the Director, who in turn must notify the Missouri Division of Family Services. Any suspicion of abuse by staff must be documented and reported immediately to the Director. The Director will confer with the staff member, then report to the local family services agency if the Director determines that abuse is a possibility. Procedures outlined by family services will be followed.

Clothing - Footwear

The following types of footwear are needed during the school year: *(please label all items with your child's name)*

Outdoor Shoes - Safety is paramount. Tennis shoes, sneakers, and closed-toe shoes are preferred. Please, no flip-flops. It is preferable that they are shoes your child can put on and take off themselves to help facilitate transitions to recess, bench time, etc.

Slippers—Please provide slippers to be worn in the classrooms. The slippers should be simple and functional, no large heads, animals or cartoon characters, please! Again, these should be easy for the child to put on and take off. Robeez-style, ballet slippers and regular slippers are best. Crocs are fine but can be uncomfortable when sitting.

Boots - Rain boots and snow boots are a must during wet or snow days. Many boots look alike, it is particularly important to label these with your child's name.

Clothing - Indoor

We are busy during the day and we get dirty! Please encourage your child to wear practical, comfortable play clothes. Children need one full set of extra clothes in a Ziploc bag, labeled with their name, to be kept at school. **This is important:** Should your child's school clothes become wet or soiled during the course of their school day. Any wet or soiled clothes will be sent home in the Ziploc bag. We ask that you send a replacement set of clean clothes in a labeled bag the following day. We ask that a complete set of clothes be provided (e.g. socks, underwear, pants, shirt or dress). Please label all clothing to be kept in the classroom.

Clothing - Outdoor

The outdoor environment is an important part of the Montessori curriculum and we often take our work outside. We are fortunate that the environment surrounding Clay-Platte Montessori School provides opportunities for learning and recreation that are utilized every day. Please ensure that your child comes to school with appropriate clothing for the weather. Missouri temperatures can fluctuate dramatically within several hours. Layered clothing is often helpful. Please send boots for rainy and snowy days. Our outdoor clothing policy is as follows:

60 degrees or warmer	coat is optional
40 – 60 degrees	warm coat
Below 40 degrees	warm coat, hat, mittens
Snow	warm coat, snow pants, snow boots, hat, mittens required

“There is never any bad weather, only wrong clothing!”

Communication

We use several modes of communication with our families. There will be an email message once a week, letting you know the events for the next week. Each classroom has a Shutterfly site that is accessible by room parents only. This site may be used by the teachers to share pictures and/or as a class calendar and message center. In addition, your child will be presented with a canvas bag that will go home every day to be returned to school the next day. Please check your child's bag every day for your child's work or messages from the teachers.

Community Gatherings

Our CPOCH Community Gatherings are held on the first Friday of each month at 9 a.m. in the Learning Center. Community Gatherings serve two important functions: The first is to bring our community together (from our youngest to our oldest students) to experience each other's friendship, fostering a sense of community. The second function is to allow an opportunity for classrooms or individual students to share a special talent or prepared play or song with their peers fostering self-confidence and appreciating one another's gifts and uniqueness. Families are always welcome to attend to watch the gatherings. If your child does not normally attend school on Friday mornings, you are welcome to come with your child and attend the Community Gatherings.

MPTO Helping Hands occurs prior to Community Gatherings at 8:30 in the kitchen. This is a time when parents gather to lend a hand to the classrooms by helping to prepare materials, while also providing an opportunity to get to know one another. Everyone is invited.

Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. This is a time to meet one-on-one with your child's teacher to discuss the progress your child is making in his/her educational journey. If parents or teachers have concerns or questions during the school year, a time can be arranged to speak in person, via telephone, or by email. Likewise, should stressful home situations, deaths, illnesses, etc. occur, please notify your child's teacher as this stress can often impact a child's behavior at school. Please share any information you feel will help us understand your child's actions or distresses.

The first six weeks of your child's experience at school is an important time for bonding with teachers, getting comfortable in the environment and building relationships. Please use this time to observe any changes in your child and list any questions to be addressed with the teacher after six weeks. If you have a strong concern that needs immediate attention, please let someone in the office know and your child's teacher will be in touch.

We believe we have an important role to play in guiding children and assisting parents in a child's beginning years of education. Observations of behavioral, developmental or physical concerns may be shared with parents, for the sole intent of assisting a student in meeting his/her potential while in our care. While staff is not qualified to determine any special needs of children, we will make recommendations for further professional evaluation when we feel there is a need. Any medical or behavioral diagnosis and subsequent treatment or therapies will then be woven into a cooperative plan between the child's family and the school in order to ensure the highest possibility of success for the student.

Drop Off and Pick Up

8:30 - 8:40AM	Morning drop-off
11:30 - 11:45AM	Morning pick-up
3:15 - 3:30PM	Afternoon pick-up

Morning Drop-off

Children arriving between 8:30AM and 8:40AM can be dropped off on the south side of the circle drive. **Please do not get out of your car.** Staff will be available to escort your child from the car into the school. You are always welcome to park in a parking space on the circle drive and walk your child to class.

Please walk your child in if you arrive prior to 8:30 or after 8:40.

Encourage your child to **walk** into the building as opposed to being carried. This encourages self-confidence and independence. Assist your child in removing sweaters or coats and **allow** your child to hang their wrap on their hook in the hallway and put their lunch box and other belongings away. If your child has extra clothing or items to share, please have the child hand them to the teacher at the door and say your good-byes at the door.

(See **Separating** for more information.)

A teacher will greet your child at the classroom door. If a teacher is not at the door, the child learns to wait until we come to greet them. This is one way we are **certain** your child has arrived and is in the room.

Pick Up

First pick up time is between 11:30—11:45. Second pick up time is between 3:15 - 3:30 pm. Children who attend the half-day program come out to “bench” at 11:30 am and those who attend the full day program come out to “bench” at 3:15 pm. Your child will be brought to your car by a teacher. **Please remain in your car** and a teacher will place your child in the rear car seat. You may then pull forward to make sure your child is properly secured. Following this procedure will help the traffic flow and ensure the safety of all our students. As students from all classrooms are being picked up at this time, your patience and consideration of others is most appreciated.

If you are going to be late picking up your child please call the office so we can let your child know.

Emergency Contacts

In the event that we cannot reach a child’s parents, it is important to have the names and phone numbers of relatives or family friends who have permission to pick up a child. Please be sure to give several names with numbers so they can be placed in our contact file.

Emergency & Safety Procedures

Inclement weather

The school is equipped with a National Weather Service Emergency Weather Alert system. We also monitor weather on the Internet. Teachers are kept updated and if necessary, children are evacuated to our basement classroom. Inclement weather drills are practiced on a regular basis.

In **severe weather emergency**, the school will remain open after hours to provide safety and care

for your child(ren) until you are able to arrange for transportation.

Fire

Each room has evacuation routes in case of a fire. Fire drills are practiced on a regular basis.

Emergency Lockdown—In the event of an emergency in the area, children stay inside and classroom and building doors are locked until an all clear is given. Lockdowns are practiced on a regular basis.

In a case when we need to be evacuated to a secure area away from school, a “One Call Now” message will be sent to inform you where to pick up your child.

Health and Well-Child Policy

Clay-Platte Montessori School policy regarding a child’s admission to or removal from school is in compliance with the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Please keep your child at home with any of the following symptoms:

- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Vomiting
- ◆ Body rash
- ◆ Sore throat and swollen glands
- ◆ Severe coughing
- ◆ Eye discharge
- ◆ Yellowish skin or eyes
- ◆ Irritability or continuous crying (which requires more attention than can be adequately provided, thus neglecting the needs or safety of the other students)

When **fever free for 24 hours without medication** and other symptoms are gone, a child may return to school. Because our staff is not qualified to determine the communicability of infections and illnesses, we ask that your child’s treating physician provide a readmission statement for any condition (such as rash or inflamed eyes) that is not communicable, but not symptom free. We can only administer **doctor-prescribed medications** to a child. It is necessary to complete a medication form indicating the name of the medication, the amount and time to be given. These forms are available in the office. All medication should be brought to the office. **At no time should medications be packed in a lunch box or backpack.**

Inclement Weather School Closing

In the event of challenging weather, our policy is to monitor the closures of Park Hill and North Kansas City school districts, but will also take into consideration the condition of the roads and the ability of our families and staff to arrive at school safely prior to closing. We will notify local television stations (listed as Clay-Platte Montessori School) and a One Call Now notice will also go out to families.

Immunizations

Families are required to submit a current record of your child’s immunizations and keep it continually updated. Please inform the office when you update your shots.

Families who do not immunize are welcome at Clay-Platte Montessori School. We are in close communication with the Platte County Health Department. If there are any outbreaks of

diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), or polio, children who are not immunized must stay home for their safety and that of the community, according to Missouri Department of Health regulations, which can be found at

<http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/immunizations/pdf/DayCareRequirements.pdf>
<http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/immunizations/pdf/1516schoolrequirements.pdf>

Independence with Potty Training

Children enrolled in the Primary program must be independent in his/her toileting skills. This means they must be in underwear and able to clean themselves after using the bathroom. Accidents happening daily over a two week period could result in temporary leave from school until these skills have been mastered.

Lunch

Good nutrition plays a noticeable part in behavior and work habits. Please be aware of this when preparing your child's lunch each day and when providing a classroom snack. Sodas offer no nutritional benefit to growing children and will not be given to children at lunch.

The following is a short suggestion list for nutritious snack and lunch items: fruit, granola, bagels, muffins, popcorn, graham crackers, apple sauce, crackers, cheese, cereal, yogurt, cottage cheese, vegetables, raisins, meat. Please note that suckers present a safety problem and we cannot allow them at the school.

Drinking water is important and some of our classrooms encourage reusable sports bottles. Microwave and refrigerator usage is not available for students.

Lost and Found

A basket containing "lost and found" items is located in the hallway near the kitchen. Please check this regularly especially during the winter months. All unlabeled articles and clothing go into this basket. All unclaimed items are periodically taken to a local charity.

Montessori Parent Teacher Organization (MPTO)

The MPTO is instituted to foster community among staff and families through the education of the Montessori method and raising funds to enhance the school environment to enrich the lives of our children. Anyone who is a part of the Clay-Platte Montessori staff or a family member of a student may belong to the organization. Open meetings will be held at Clay-Platte Montessori as scheduled. Signs will be posted as meetings are scheduled. Look for special events and activities sponsored by the MPTO throughout the school year. Call a member of the board if you would like to volunteer.

Nap / Rest Time

Each room designates a nap area. All children rest for 20-30 minutes. If your child will be napping at school, the school will provide a nap bag, resting mat and a sheet. Please provide a small, travel size pillow (please, no large pillows or animal pillows or pillow pets) and a small blanket. These items will be kept in the nap bag. All items will be sent home every week to be washed and returned on Monday. It is very important that the nap items be returned on Monday to ensure that your child has all of their nap items for rest time. The following need to remain at home as they are distracting to other children and create problems during rest: toys, jewelry, stuffed animals and dolls.

Observations

Parents are welcome to observe their children in the classroom after our initial six weeks of school.. Please contact your child's teacher to schedule an appointment and to pick up observation guidelines. Our main priority is to the children and we request that you do not interrupt your child's teacher during class time, conversations with teachers should be scheduled by appointment either before or after school.

Personal Items

Please keep the following items at home: gum, candy, toys, money, jewelry, stuffed animals, watches, and dress-up clothes, as all these things create distractions at school.

Recommended Reading

Following is a list of books that may be helpful for further understanding of child development and Montessori philosophy and methodology.

- ◆ [A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom](#) by Aline Wolf
- ◆ [Absorbent Mind](#) by Maria Montessori
- ◆ [At Home with Montessori](#) by Patricia Oriti
- ◆ [Education and Peace](#) by Maria Montessori
- ◆ [How To Raise An Amazing Child the Montessori Way](#) by Tim Seldin
- ◆ [Montessori: A Modern Approach](#) by Paula Polk Lillard
- ◆ [Montessori Madness](#) by Trevor Eissler
- ◆ [Montessori, The Science Behind the Genius](#) by Angeline Stoll Lillard
- ◆ [Positive Discipline](#) by Jane Nelson
- ◆ [The Discovery of the Child](#) by Maria Montessori
- ◆ [The Montessori Method](#) by Maria Montessori
- ◆ [Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents](#) by Maren Schmidt

We have books on a variety of topics available in our school library. Books may be checked out through the office at any time for a 2 week period.

Security

The safety of the children is of utmost importance. We are continually working to make our community secure. Guidelines are in place for a variety of situations that are reviewed with staff throughout the year. We also work with a local security company and the Kansas City North Police Patrol to insure we are doing what we need with regard to security.

Separating

Separating is not easy for all parents or children. We have found that a child's adjustment occurs with greater ease when parents leave the school quickly. Rest assured, we will not let your child cry for a long period of time and will call you if the situation does not improve. Please see the article titled "Starting: The First Day" in the back of the handbook.

Share Bag

Each classroom has a traveling "share bag". Each student will have an opportunity to bring the share bag home and select an item to share with the class the following day. We ask for your cooperation in assisting your child in choosing items from nature, homemade item, special gifts from relatives or souvenirs from a trip. We request that toys and stuffed animals stay at home.

Small Items

If an item from our classroom comes home with your child, please put it in an envelope and let your child return it to school. It may be a piece of an exercise that cannot be replaced. Some things that seem minor are really an important part of the material best loved by your child. Out of fascination, children often want to take a piece home with them.

Snacks

Good nutrition plays a noticeable part in behavior and work habits. The following is a short suggestion list for nutritious snack items: fresh fruit and/or vegetables, bagels, mini-muffins, popcorn, waffles, dried fruit, apple sauce, whole grain crackers, cheese, whole grain cereal, yogurt, cottage cheese and tortillas.

Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen before your child arrives to school. We will encourage/assist in reapplying in the afternoon or as needed. The school supplies children's sunscreen but if your child has sensitive skin, please supply your own, labeled with your child's name and give to the teacher.

Traffic and Parking

The following are some guidelines for parking and pickup at Clay-Platte Montessori School. Remember to model grace and courtesy while driving. Children are keen observers.

- ◆ When utilizing the car loop to drop-off or pick-up your child please:
- ◆ Stay single-file only – the inside lane (lane closest to the building) needs to be kept moving; no parking allowed.
- ◆ Stay in your vehicle. In order to maintain a safe environment for all, it is important the children stay on their bench or with the teacher at all times during this process. ***Please do not call your child over to you.*** A teacher will safely bring your child to your vehicle.
- ◆ Please drive forward and past the loading area (the yellow line) to buckle your child safely in their car seat.
- ◆ If a family member or friend is picking up your child, please share the CPCH guidelines with them.
- ◆ Courtesy is appreciated. Please do not pull ahead of others who are also waiting. If you are in line and there is a space in front of you, please pull forward, or if you are first, please pull up to the yellow line.
- ◆ If parking, even briefly, please park in a parking space. Do not stop on the circle drive.
- ◆ Be aware of bridge etiquette - our beautiful bridge is a one-lane bridge, in part to assist with safe traffic flow. Please, always stop before the bridge to allow for pedestrians present and to yield to on-coming traffic.
- ◆ And finally, please Never Leave Your Unattended Car Engine Running! It is not safe, or friendly to the environment.

Transitioning Students

It is beneficial to your child to have the following skills and activities in place. All of these help the child with independence, self sufficiency, and feelings of self-worth that we encourage in the Montessori environment.

Allow your child to walk into the school and classroom. This gives your child a good feeling to be able to walk on their own accord as adults do.

“Children have a deep sense of personal dignity” M. Montessori

Say your good-byes quickly and positively. Linger and long good-bys increase your child's anxiety. Leave your child with positive thoughts and loving reassurance that their day will be a good one. Prompt departure by the parent also allows your child to bond with their teacher thus creating a smoother and more positive transition.

“The child is extremely sensitive to everything he feels from the adult” M. Montessori

Wait at the classroom door to be greeted by the teacher. This will enable your child to know that school has begun and when he/she enters the classroom by him/herself, their school day gets off to a good start.

“The greatest help you can give your child is freedom to go about their own work in their own way.” M. Montessori

Let your child handle their own coat, shoes, and clothing. Children coming into the classroom need to be able to get their own coat on and off themselves and hung on their hook, pull up their pants by themselves when toileting, and remove and put on their shoes without assistance. Overalls, belts and other clothing must be manageable by the child.

“Any child who is self sufficient, who can tie his own shoes, dress or undress himself, reflects in his joy and sense of achievement the image of independence” M. Montessori

Visitors

All visitors are to report to the office.

Websites

Clay-Platte Montessori School - www.clayplattemontessori.com

CPCH Facebook Page - www.facebook.com/clayplattemontessori

MEPI - www.mepiforum.com

North American Montessori Teachers' Association - www.montessori-namta.org

Kids Talk Newsletters by Maren Schmidt - www.kidstalknews.com

Montessori Madmen—www.montessorimadmen.com

Montessori Guide—www.montessoriguide.org

Social/Emotional Development and Discipline

When working with children's social and emotional development, we use best practices in Montessori education, child psychology, positive discipline and peace education. This approach involves action on behalf of the child and the community of children as well as open-ended inquiry and learning. How a conflict is resolved will be tailored to the specifics of the situation. The focus will always be on the physical and emotional safety of the children while also allowing children to explore and practice their abilities and knowledge in conflict resolution.

Children's behavior reflects how well their needs are being met. A sense of belonging is a critical need for children. Our role as the adults in a child's life is to help the child find healthy and age-appropriate ways to meet this need to belong. There are many ways in which we provide opportunities for this development in a Montessori classroom. There are lessons in grace and courtesy, collaborative work in groups of mixed gender and age, and daily interactions and guidelines that help to balance the needs of the child and the community.

Social conflicts that naturally arise in an environment are looked at as "teachable moments" for the teacher to observe and respond with the appropriate support for the situation. In any situation involving a conflict between children, everyone is part of the solution. Focusing on only one child or the other can be harmful and is not productive in the emotional and social development of all involved. A teacher will observe a situation carefully before intervening, allowing the children to have the opportunity to solve the problem on their own. If an adult needs to intervene, it will be done in a way that empowers the children and allows knowledge and growth so future situations can be solved without the adult.

If at any time a child gives or receives aggression perceived by the teacher as excessive, whether it is physical or verbal, the teacher will respond in any of the following ways: changes in the prepared environment, redirection to materials, discussion, mediation, problem-solving sessions, relationship coaching and/or natural or logical consequences, as deemed appropriate. The teacher will contact parents of the children involved and share any excessive aggression that results in an incident. Teachers will describe what was actually observed or reported, what they expect to see in children in a particular situation and how they worked with or will work with the children to develop a plan of action to develop positive change. They will talk with the parents on how to support the children at home and throughout subsequent school days.

When a child receives or gives aggression repeatedly, the teacher will get help from the director, and together, they will meet with the parents to decide a plan of action that will assist the child in replacing a negative pattern with a neutral or positive pattern.

If the school concludes that the children and their families need more support than the school can give, the school may require that the family engage outside professionals to work with the child. Depending on the area(s) of development that need support, such professionals could include family counselors, children's counselors, occupational therapists, parenting educators, or academic tutors. If the family is not willing or able for any reason to engage the needed professionals, it may be necessary that the family withdraw the child from the school.

The school will do its best to ensure that all communications from the school in relation to children's conflicts are respectful, professional and offered in the spirit of working together. The school will expect the same from parents. Because solutions to conflicts often involve working with several families and the whole community of children, the school needs to know that all parents are modeling respect for others and a willingness to cooperate with the teachers, the administration, and the other children and families – both in speech and in actions.

Starting: The First Day

*Written by Warren Gale & Jane Nickens, Ph.D.
For Tot's Room Inc. Copyright 1984*

For Parents Only: Your search for a quality pre-school environment is an important one. It is advisable to assure yourself that your child's pre-school represents your basic ideals and that it provides the quality care that is most consistent with your home environment. Once you have assured yourself of this and made your selection, you're prepared to start the first day.

Preparing Yourself: It is common to have a variety of emotions as you approach the first day. You may share a sense of pride and a sense of sadness. The fact that your child is growing up may give you the urge to protect your child more than ever. Realizing that you feel this way may make it easier to make this transition, and if necessary, it may be important for you to cry a little in private. One of the most frequent feelings is an occasional thought that your child no longer needs you, and this may cause some difficulty for you in separating from your child the first several days. Your child is bright, talented, and special to you; be assured that the school personnel are very well trained to facilitate his opportunities for individualized learning. The excitement that you express about your child's school experiences will become her own, and this will be reflected in happiness and a love of learning. Please take every advantage of opportunities to become involved in your child's school experiences; the director welcomes and encourages your questions and suggestions.

Preparing Your Child: It is important to continuously reassure your child during this new experience. The most effective way to accomplish this is to talk positively about your own special school experiences and to speak with enthusiasm about the adventures she is going to enjoy. This transition can be made easier once the child knows that you are firm in your decision about school; so reaffirm this with your child by saying "When you go to school" not "If you go to school." Excitement before your child goes to school can be generated by encouraging your child to tell friends and relatives that he is going to enter school, and to give them details.

Some children become anxious. If your child does, tell your child that "It's all right to be anxious - it's just a new experience; you won't be alone and there will be many people to help you." A way to help lower anxiety and replace it with excited anticipation is to allow your child to participate in choosing supplies and clothes he will need for school. The night before school, help your child select the clothes she wants to wear to school; this will make her feel good about herself and more readily adapt in the new surroundings. Quality time with your child at this juncture is extremely important; if at all possible, grant him a "grownup" privilege at home to coincide with the grownup experience of starting school.

Entering the Class: It is helpful that your child be as comfortable about starting school as possible. To remove some of the mystery and anxiety felt by your child, it is advisable to take your child for a brief visit to his new school. During this brief visit show her the surroundings, and introduce her to the director and the staff.

The first day of school, remember to reintroduce your child to the school's personnel. Brevity at this point is essential for a smoother transition. Remind your child what time you will pick him up (it might be helpful to relate it to a function of the day i.e. naptime, snack, etc.), say your goodbyes, and leave. The natural tendency of most parents is to stay and try to get their child to settle calmly into the environment. This, however, makes it difficult for the class to function normally, and in fact, delays your child from participating in the group. You must assure yourself that your decision on this is a good one, and that the staff is professionally trained to introduce your child into this new experience.

If Your Child Cries: It is not rare that a child cries on the first day. The school's trained staff is prepared for this, and they will comfort your child and direct him to an activity that helps make him feel a part of the group. It is important that when you leave that you do not "sneak away" without her knowledge, even though you would like to avoid the pain you feel if crying occurs.

Be assured that very rarely does a child continue crying after a short period. You need to remember that initially separating from your child is difficult for both of you, and that your feelings are very normal and appropriate. It is suggested that if your feelings of discomfort continue beyond a few days, or if your child seems to be having a difficult time in acclimating to the new surroundings that you visit with the Director and ask for suggestions.

Children are learning all of the time. The exposure your child will experience at his new pre-school will be fundamental to the things she will learn and participate in later in life. The parents that deal firmly but supportively in this transition and who become involved in the ongoing activities of the school will share with their children the rich rewards of a fulfilling education.