



PARENT HANDBOOK

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1. About Lewinsville Montessori School

Lewinsville Montessori School (“LMS”) was founded in November 1997. McNair Child Development Center, Inc. purchased LMS (formerly Fun & Friends) in August of 2005. Currently, LMS operates only one Child Development Center, located in McLean, Virginia.

Lewinsville Montessori School at the Lewinsville Center
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McNair Child Development Center, Inc. (dba Lewinsville Montessori School) is a Virginia corporation registered in Fairfax County. We employ caregivers, teachers, and support staff to provide full-time daycare for infants and young children.

Elizabeth Garcia, Director of Operations, has an MS in Education/Administration and School Supervision from the University of Puerto Rico and also has a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA). She has been in this field since 1982. **Inell Ellis**, Special Programs Director/Children’s House Lead Teacher, is a graduate of North Carolina A & T State University. She has a BS in Child Development and has been in this field since 1979.

The Center facility is leased from Fairfax County. There are five classrooms (three with bathrooms) a kitchen, an office, and a teacher’s lounge. The playground in front of the facility is exclusively for the use of Lewinsville Montessori School. The driveway, parking lot, entrance hall, hallways, public restrooms, the blacktop to the rear of the building and the sports field are county property and are shared with other tenants and users of the facility.

2. Description of Child Care

Any child from six weeks old up to admission into kindergarten (but not children over five years old), and who meets health and other requirements is eligible for admission to LMS. All children’s health, safety, and emotional well-being are cared for first. Secondly, we provide activities throughout the day to explore: arts and crafts; rhythm and music; language and communication; sensory experiences; nature and environment; manipulative and perceptual experiences; social living and dramatic play; and fine and gross motor skills.

Terminology: We use “parent” to mean parent or guardian. “Infant” means any child under 18 months old. “Toddler” means any child between the ages of 18 and 24 months.

3. Philosophy and Goals of Lewinsville Montessori School

Early Childhood development is a process that is continually changing and expanding, therefore both structured and unstructured activities are offered for children. However, our basic philosophy is one of freedom to learn, grow and make choices. We believe that children learn through play and we have structured the environment to reflect that belief. This does not mean that the program is not carefully planned. Teachers are encouraged to be flexible and to allow the children freedom to learn at their own pace.

We believe that all children have the ability to excel in their own ways, and, given the opportunities, can reach their fullest potentials. We make it possible for parents to choose a professional setting for the care of their children by dedicated caregivers. It is our primary purpose to offer children the love and nurturing they expect from a parent within the inherent limitations imposed by a preschool/child day care center environment. It is also our purpose to provide a challenging environment, comprehensive curriculum, and qualified staff to motivate and teach our children to want to learn. As our staff learn and grow in their profession, we will occasionally reconstitute teams in each classroom. This allows staff members to utilize new skills and to share and mentor with one another. We dedicate ourselves to the children and respect them as individuals, realizing that we can teach them, they can teach each other, and they can teach us. As educators, and child development specialists, we bring a rich diversity of skills and experiences to enhance the programs we design. Parents are an integral part of the learning process for their child. Parents must be intimately involved in their child's day, with purposeful methods of integrating the child's day activities with those of total family life. Parents' involvement is crucial, and programs are established to involve the parent as much as possible, without interfering with work and career demands. The center's programs serve as a support to a working family. By working closely with parents we offer these experiences to encourage children to develop to their fullest potential physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

4. Enrollment Procedures

Choosing the right school for your child is an important decision. Consequently, we urge you to allow yourself time to speak with the director about your childcare needs and concerns. In addition to visiting our center with your child, we suggest you visit other centers as well, and make the final decision based on the program best suited to you and your child. According to Department of Social Services-Bureau of Licensing, a record of each child must be kept on file at the Center. The following forms must be submitted **before** your child begins.

- Registration Form
- Emergency Contact and Alternate Pick-up Form

- Authorization for Emergency Treatment
- Physical Examination/Immunization Form, completed by your child's doctor (must be updated)
- Vital Information Card
- Proof of Identity for the child (we need to see original copy of birth certificate, proof of birth letter from hospital, or passport)
- Release of Custody
- Intoxication Agreement
- Authorization for medication administration, if applicable

5. Daily Schedule/Routine (Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures)

The hours of operation are 7:00 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Children may be dropped-off any time after 7:00 am. Direct adult supervision of the children needs to be maintained at all times, and direct transfers need to be made from parent (or other authorized person) to the center personnel and vice versa. This is also a Virginia regulation. All children need to be accompanied into the center and the staff person who is the principal caregiver must be verbally informed of the child's arrival. At the end of the day, the parent or an authorized person either inside or on the playground must pick the child no later than 6:30 pm.

6. After Hours Pick-up

Remember that the School closes at 6:30 pm. **Please be on time!** Even a short delay can seem endless to a child who is waiting. Parents who fail to pick up their child (children) by the time the center closes will be called. If the parents cannot be reached within 15 minutes after center closing, the emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. If arrangements for pick-up cannot be made with either parents or emergency contacts within one hour after center closing, Child Protective Services will be contacted to pick up the child. *Please see Absences & Late Pickup for fees.*

7. Financial Policies

Tuition rates and fees are based on the age of the child and assigned classroom. The current tuition rates are included in the enrollment packet. **All tuition payments are non-refundable.**

Payment is due on the 1st of the month for monthly payers, or on the 1st and 15th of the month for semi-monthly payers. **Late payments:** a 5% late fee will be charged on all payments made after the 1st of the month (and the 15th day of the month for semi-monthly payers). **Tuition payments that are ten or more calendar days overdue will be sufficient reason for immediate withdrawal of the child from the center program.** Any deposit fees will be applied to the delinquent fee and will be deemed non-refundable.

We prefer payments by check. You will be charged \$ 30.00 for returned checks. Checks should be made payable to "Lewinsville Montessori School". If more than

one personal check is returned due to insufficient funds, the payee will be required to pay all future fees by cash, money order or cashier's check.

Tuition rates and fees may be changed with 30 days' advance notice. We make no reductions in rates for your child's absence from the center (illness, vacation, etc.) or for the center closing for a scheduled holiday or weather closing or delayed opening. For an extended leave (one month or more), you must remove your child from the rolls, with a month notice and re-enroll upon return in order not to incur ongoing fees. In such cases, re-enrollment in the classroom or center CANNOT be guaranteed.

A security deposit of \$200.00 is due one month PRIOR to the first day of attendance and is refunded ONLY if written notice of withdrawal is given one month in advance (starting with the first day of the month) and there is no outstanding balance. We staff our classrooms with specific ratios in mind in order to offer the safest environment and strongest program to the children AND to ensure our staff consistent, reliable employment. Sudden changes in enrollment negatively affects our ability to maintain this practice.

8. Items to be provided by Parents

Each child attending the center will have an individual storage unit provided by the center. Please bring the following items (**LABELLED**) for your child:

- Changes of clothing, including socks and underwear,
- Blanket for sleeping,
- Five crib sheets for infant,
- Bibs for newborns,
- Diapers (must be disposables),
- Wipes if used,
- Pacifiers if used,
- Diaper cream,
- Outdoor wear. In accordance with center policy and Virginia regulations, all children play outside every day, unless the weather is inclement. Even in inclement weather, we have fire drills and other occasional events that require us to take the children outside.
- Please dress your child for play. Realize that children will get their clothes dirty during the day. The teacher will advise you if an item of clothing causes a problem – a long, loose string on a hood, shoes too loose, neck too tight, etc.
- Items requested on certain days. For example, the older children have book days and game days and children can become very upset when parents forget their special item.

What not to Bring:

- ✓ Crib mobiles and crib bumper pads. Virginia Licensing does not permit these.

- ✓ Toys. Please try to persuade your child to leave toys in your car. Personal toys become mixed with center toys and may receive rougher treatment than you expect at home and may even become lost. The toys may also violate our licensing requirements even though you consider them fine for your child (for example a soft toy that your child chews. At the center, classmates will try a little chew also). Other children become quite competitive and bring in even more extravagant items. Exceptions are toys for planned show and tell classes. We will work sensitively with your child on the issue of comfort items such as blankets, etc.

9. Food Policies

Infants Nido I & some Nido II):

Parents provide food (including formula, expressed breast milk, baby cereal, and jars of baby food) for at least the first year. Your caregivers will work with you on finding the appropriate time to introduce different types of food to your child. Please let the caregivers know if your child prefers his or her food warm or cold. We serve infants on cue, and you may discuss any special timing requirements with the caregivers. Some parents request that babies not be fed right before mother is scheduled to arrive and breastfeed, but if your child is upset and hungry, the caregiver will bottle-feed the child.

It is vital that you inform us of any allergies you know or suspect your child to have. We will work closely with each family who has a child with known food allergies. Such circumstances require special attention by our staff as it relates to the storing and preparation of foods that a child can be served. Therefore, we do not offer tuition discounts when parents have to provide the food(s) their child CAN consume.

Any food and bottles to be given to your child must be brought fresh to the center daily and clearly marked with the child's full name and dated daily. Please label both bottle and top. Bottles and fresh food are kept in the classroom refrigerator. Only unopened containers of food will be accepted. All unused food will be sent home or disposed of daily. Unopened cans or jars of food may be stored in your child's cubby as space permits.

Toddlers/Preschoolers: (Nido III, Casa and Children's House)

All food will be provided by the center. We use a professional catering service that specializes in schools and daycare centers and retains back-up food supplies at the center. The food arrives daily in the morning and is heated and served out of the center's kitchen by trained staff who have a Certified Food Handler certificate. Menus for both lunch and snacks are posted in your child's classroom.

We provide morning and afternoon snacks with milk or juice and a lunch, (usually hot) with desert and milk. As appropriate, older infants are served finger food and small pieces of appropriate table food on their feeding table. The caterer prepares

the food as appropriate for infants versus older children--the older children may be served carrot sticks or celery sticks, which would not be served to infants or would only be served, steamed. Older children sit at group tables with their caregivers and are either served plated meals or can enjoy the food served family-style. Toddlers are encouraged to experiment with spoons and forks. Older children may help set the table, and each child learns to clean up after meals. We use all disposable plates, napkins and eating utensils at the table.

We do not require children to “clean their plates”, but we do encourage them to try the food.

On sunny days when a sandwich lunch is planned, an outdoor picnic may be held. Caregivers should be made aware of any food restrictions (i.e. medical reasons such as allergies or religion), please make sure the caregivers are aware. In such circumstances, please review the menu plans for the month and provide an alternative meal for your child that day and/or request that the caregivers not serve the particular item that you do not want the child to have. The caterer provides several servings of vegetables, grains or fruit each day, so vegetarian diets may be accommodated by leaving the meat serving off the plate.

Many children like to bring their breakfast “to go” and eat it when they arrive at the center. Since morning snack may not be served until 9:30 am, you may want to make sure your child has something to eat. Any unused food will be disposed of. On a child’s birthday, some parents may provide a birthday cake, cookies or cupcakes in place of the afternoon snack, and occasionally may provide candy in the form of party favor bags or a piñata. *Please note: VA regulations require that all items be commercially produced (store purchased).*

10. Special Events and Activities

As related to a season or particular theme, storytellers, artists and/or musicians will be hired to come to the school for performances and entertainment. At other times, the children may participate in special art and exploration activities that are chosen to enhance experience. Parents are welcome to attend such events. *Please note: for reasons of safety and security of our children, we do not take children on Field Trips or leave the premises.*

11. Health and Safety Procedures

Each child is given a daily health inspection in order to detect signs of possible health problems which could adversely affect the health and well-being of not only that child, but other children and center personnel.

Illnesses

If your child is too ill to participate in the day’s activities and needs individual care, you may not bring the child to the school. He or she will need your personal attention at these times. Sending your child to the center will spread the infection

to classmates and also to caregivers, causing disruption to the school, and eventually to other parents, causing them to lose valuable work time. When your child becomes ill, please call the school to let us know the child will not be coming, and please let us know the nature of the illness so we can be alert to symptoms in classmates and caregivers.

You may not send your child to the school with a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit (100 degrees Fahrenheit during flu season) or more within the preceding 24 hours, or with vomiting or diarrhea, a persistent cough, or severe nasal discharge. The common cold is a fact of life at schools and daycare centers and most of the time your child may come with a **mild** cold. However, fevers and persistent coughs will result in your child needing to be at home. Other illnesses such as chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), strep infections, and influenza are highly contagious and will result in your child needing to stay home as directed by your pediatrician or family doctor.

If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be isolated from the other children, and you will be notified immediately so that you can come and pick him/her up. It is essential that you leave current, reliable telephone numbers where you can be reached. Caregivers giving your child individual attention due to illness put a strain on the staff to children ratio in your child's class and increase the time of exposure to the illness for the rest of the class. You are expected to have the child picked up within one hour of being called. Also, if your child is fussy, cranky, and overly sleepy or rubbing an ear or an eye, we will let you know as this is often a sign that the child is getting sick.

Children with a suspected contagious illness will be sent home and not readmitted within 24 hours without a written note from the doctor, indicating the child's status is not contagious and therefore not placing other children and staff at risk.

By State Regulation, parent(s)/guardian(s) must notify the school within 24 hours or the next business day after their child(ren) or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by State Board of Health. **Life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.**

Administration of Medication

As in all matters, we follow the licensing guidelines required by the Commonwealth of Virginia with respect to the administering of medications. The school can only administer emergency medications (such as but not limited to albuterol, glucagons, benadryl, and epipen). Staff is **not** authorized to apply insect repellent or sun block. All medicines must be labeled with the child's full name, the medication name, the dose amount, and the exact time the medication is to be given. Medicines need to be in the original containers with the original labels attached. A completed Medication Authorization Form must be attached. The medication form also has a space for you to let us know what side effects to look for.

If droppers, dosing cups or measuring spoons are required, please make sure these are also provided.

Accidents and Injuries

If your child sustains a small injury while at school (i.e., an injury that the head teacher determines needs no medical attention), the staff will administer first aid and will notify the parent about the injury. The staff then completes an accident report detailing what happened, where, the child's reaction, any first aid given, when and how the parent was contacted, and which staff members witnessed the accident. The staff and parent are required to sign the report.

Emergencies

If a child becomes seriously ill or injured at school, 911 will be called and at the direction of the medical experts dispatched, the child may be taken to a local hospital. The Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization Form allows the center to have your child transported to the hospital emergency room and treated there. It is essential that the school have current phone numbers where the parents and emergency contacts can be reached in case of emergency and that all other information on this form be current and up-to date.

Safety Procedures

For the safety of all children, it is important for parents to remember some common sense rules:

- At drop-off and pick-up, connect with the caregiver to ensure they are aware you have dropped-off or picked-up your child. Complete the sign in/out sheet.
- The school must have an alternate pick-up form on file. Make careful arrangements if any one other than the parent is picking up the child. If possible, introduce the alternate to the caregiver before such time the alternate is picking up your child. The school will ask for identification from the alternate pick-up. Make sure your alternate knows the pick-up procedures for contacting the caregiver and signing out.
- Take care when opening and closing doors to classrooms. Children may be playing at the door and may be hurt when you open or close it. In the Infant room, adults are required to remove their shoes before entering. Be particularly alert to a child leaving the room when you open the door. The same holds true for the playground gate.
- Take an active interest in who is at the school. The Lewinsville Center is a busy center ... a senior center and another daycare center share the facility, and sports teams use the field adjacent to the center. Even so, please help us by bringing to our attention anything suspicious or anyone you see acting suspiciously around the center.

- Drive slowly! We are constantly amazed at the parents who race into our driveway.
- Buckle up! Virginia law requires all children up to the age of 6 to be in child care seats, and we ask you to comply.
- Take your children by the hand as they leave the center. The children tend to race out into the driveway.
- Bring helmets for bike day.
- Alert the caregiver to scrapes or bruise your child has when arriving at the school. The caregiver will then know the injury did not occur at the school.
- Please enter the office through the external door and not the adjacent classroom.
- Please use judgment when bringing an older sibling into the infant rooms. For most siblings, it is an important ritual to drop-off or pick-up a baby brother or sister. However, in some cases, the older children represent a danger to the other infants and can cause injury. Try to pick-up the infant first, or else ask the older child to wait and stand still by the door as you pick-up your infant.

12. Lewinsville Montessori School Holiday Schedule

New Year’s Day (and sometimes next day)	Holiday(s)
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Holiday
Presidents’ Day	Staff Training
March Professional Development	Staff Training
Memorial Day	Holiday
Independence Day	Holiday
Friday before Labor Day	Staff Training
Labor Day	Holiday
Columbus Day	Holiday or Staff Training
Thanksgiving Day and Following Day	Holidays
Christmas Eve & Christmas Day	Holidays

Please note: The above schedules of closing dates are provided for parents and teachers use in advance planning. We, however, reserve the right to make changes to the above schedule upon providing parents and teachers with at least thirty (30) days advance notice.

Inclement Weather Policies

Lewinsville Montessori School will use the Federal Government’s decisions on closing for inclement weather or other emergency situations as a guideline. Parents will receive an e-mail notification from LMS Administration as to the operating status for the day. In addition, an emergency message will be placed on the homepage of the LMS website: (www.LewMontessori.School).

The following guidelines will apply to Lewinsville Montessori School:

1. When all Federal agencies are closed, whether due to inclement weather or an emergency situation, *LMS will be closed*. **This applies only to the first day of an event. Subsequent closing decisions will then be made on current conditions and information available at that time.**
2. When Federal agencies are open under an unscheduled leave policy OR under a delayed arrival policy:

LMS will make every effort to open on time. However, the Administration, at his/her discretion, may elect to open the school late, close early or not open the school at all, if conditions are deemed too hazardous to permit a minimum number of staff members to travel safely to the school.

In the event of a delay, conditions may worsen by where LMS will have to be closed for the entire day. Should this occur, the decision will be made by 8:00am and will be communicated through e-mail, and on its website.

3. When Federal agencies announce early dismissal:

LMS will remain open until all children have departed. However parents are urged to pick up their children as soon as possible or make other arrangements if necessary. We will begin to call parents, as well as send out email notices, as soon as the decision has been made. NOTE: Federal guidelines state that federal employees should leave their workplace immediately upon notice. For the safety of our children and staff, parents **MUST also heed this guideline and come to pick up their children.**

13. Absences and Late Pick-up

Parents must inform the school if their child will be absent. This is for safety reasons so that the caregiver knows the child's whereabouts, and also for staff coverage. We frequently ask staff to work overtime, and this may be unnecessary because absent children bring class sizes down requiring fewer caregivers.

If parents expect to be late in picking up their child, they must notify the school immediately. The consequence of late pick-up is very serious. First, your child may become anxious and concerned for both you and himself/herself. Second, the caregiver may fail to meet his/her commitments to family, college or other employer due to your lateness. Third, the nightly cleaning process, which can only take place when children are absent due to use of equipment and cleaning materials, may be disrupted. There is a charge of \$5.00 for any portion of the time from closing time to 15 minutes after closing and \$5.00 for each additional minute thereafter. A pattern of late pickup (3 times in a 60 day period) will be grounds for termination of childcare.

14. Withdrawal/Termination from Lewinsville Montessori School

Withdrawal from LMS

Written notice of withdrawal must be given one full month in advance, *starting at the first day of each month*. The final month of tuition after giving notice must be paid in full, and tuition is not prorated based on days in attendance. Any deposits will be applied to any fees due upon withdrawal.

Termination from LMS

LMS reserves the right to immediately, without prior notice, withdraw a child from care at the school on either a temporary or a permanent basis, if:

- The child’s behavior deters successful school experiences and/or endangers the physical or mental health of the other children, as determined by the Director
- The parents fail to abide by or accept LMS policies and procedures, as well as the guidance, support and/or suggestions of the directors and staff
- The child fails to adjust to the center, as determined by the LMS Director
- The program is unable to meet the developmental or special needs of the child, as determined by the LMS Director and Classroom Lead Teacher(s). LMS will work with families to access outside resources. However, if parents choose not to accept this assistance, the child may need to be disenrolled. *(in such cases, Security Deposits will be remitted without the required 30 days notice. If there are siblings and parent chooses to remove siblings as well, the 30 days notice **DOES** apply for the siblings withdrawal.)*
- Proper health or other required forms are not provided on a timely basis
- Tuition and/or other fees are 10 or more days late
- The child is repeatedly picked up late (3 times in 60 days)
- The child is repeatedly left at the center when sick (3 times in 60 days)

The Parent-Teacher-Child triad is a critical aspect of an early childhood education program and a positive, respectful relationship **MUST** be maintained at all times. Parent/Child disrespect towards the school, staff, policies or even other children/families may result in a termination of enrollment. LMS retains the right to terminate enrollment of any student/family at any time to insure a safe environment for our students and teachers. Please refer to our Discipline, Biting and Behavior Policies found below.

15. Discipline, Biting and Behavior

We do not tolerate physical (corporal) punishment of any of the children in our care. Children will not be struck, shaken, squeezed, pinched or pulled. In addition, children will not be shamed, yelled or screamed at, restrained, isolated or have food withheld as punishment. These punishments are all extremes that we dissuade

parents from using also. If parents use extreme punishment at home, the children may not respond to the developmentally appropriate techniques we use at LMS.

Discipline Techniques:

The techniques we use are immediate to the behavior and include the following:

- Encouragement and praise for good behavior.
- Verbal warnings and admonishments to stop the errant behavior. The teacher's expression of disapproval and tone of admonishment is usually enough to prevent errant behavior. The children, for the most part, care for and respect the teachers and as result will act in order to receive their approval. Thus, disapproval is usually enough to stop misbehavior.
- Removal of a privilege such as a toy is the subject of the poor behavior, or removal from the playground or play area.
- Time out. Time out is quiet time in a calm space away from the other children, but in presence of the caregiver.
- In extreme cases, the parent may be called to the school to remove the child for the rest of the day if the child is having a bad behavior day. This is necessary, not as punishment for the child, but so that teachers can return to the class and not spend the day with only one child.
- The appropriate staff member will handle discipline. Parents will be advised of any incidents and the action taken. Care is taken to ensure that
- Children are taught the normal behavior that is expected so they may enjoy social interaction with their friends and caregivers. Once children know and appreciate good behavior, they better understand what they may have done wrong, and this is a good step forward in behaving better.

Biting:

Children biting other children are unavoidable occurrences of group childcare, especially with toddlers. It is a common happening in any early childhood education center or childcare program. When it happens, and sometimes continues, it can be scary, very frustrating, and very stressful for children, parents and, staff. Every child in the Infants and Toddler classroom is a potential biter or will potentially be a biter. It is important to understand that because a child bites, it does not mean that the child is "mean" or "bad" or that the parents of the child who bites are "bad" parents or they are not doing their job as parents to make this stop happening. Biting is purely a sign of the developmental age of the child. Every child is different. Some bite more than others; or some may not bite at all. The group care setting is where the biting derives its significance. If a child has not really been around other children very much, he/she probably would not bite because neither the cause for biting or opportunities has presented themselves. The children are learning how to live in community setting. Sometimes that is not easy. Biting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or caregivers. Confidentiality is also practiced with biting. We cannot tell a parent who bit their child. Most children in this development stage use biting for the following reasons:

- To get attention of another child or adult
- To defend themselves or their position
- As a release of frustration
- Teething
- Impulsiveness and lack of control
- Excitement and over stimulation

Biting cannot always be prevented despite staff efforts to do so. It is difficult to find a discipline technique that will work with this age of child due to his/her lack of cognitive and verbal skills. This age of child, however, often responds to being removed from the peer group and freedom to play and staff is encouraged to use time-out for this behavior. We suggest you use this method at home also. Most children respond to timeouts and being told to stop. We will handle the biting child by looking for the causes of the behavior and try to take a preventive approach, shadow the biter in situations where we think the child might bite, be consistent in our interventions, and communicate to parents about the incident. If your child persists in hurting others and caregivers by biting, the School Director may have no alternative but to terminate enrollment for the safety of others while your child is experiencing this problem.

Severe Behavior Problem:

For variety of reasons, some children develop severe behavior problems. We encourage parents to seek help for their children, but we cannot provide individual care on a constant basis for a child with persistent, severe behavior problems while at the same time provides adequate care to the other children in the classroom. There will be circumstances where a child must be removed from the school for these reasons, particularly if the parents resist seeking professional guidance, which the School Director believes may be needed.

16. Toilet Training

Children usually start to toilet train between the ages of two and three. We may be caring for your child at this age, and it is an exiting developmental step for you and your child. Below are steps that we take to assist you in toilet training your child:

- 1) We talk to parents and find out what steps, if any, have been taken at home. It is very important that parents and teachers have a shared understanding of toilet training procedures for those procedures to be successful.
- 2) We use familiar language. Knowing the style and language used for body parts and the elimination process can help the child understand what is required.
- 3) We read books and show videos to the appropriate age group, and invite conversation about using the potty. We may utilize act-out dolls and teddy bears using the potty and being praised for doing so successfully.
- 4) We provide potty chairs in the classroom (except Children's House as children should be in underwear at this stage), and at the appropriate age,

- begin sitting the child on the potty. Encouragement and praise are used if the child manages to use the potty. The children will see the others using the potty.
- 5) We never rush the children. When children have mastered hand washing or tooth brushing, they begin to have the cognitive awareness to master potty training.
 - 6) At the appropriate time, we ask parents to start putting the child in underwear and provide clothing that the child can pull down or up by him or herself (*see #4*).
 - 7) We try to be consistent. It is important to let the child move along at his or her own pace.
 - 8) We show the child how to flush the toilet and try to remove their anxiety over flushing, which scares some children.
 - 9) We emphasize hand washing, starting while they are still in diapers, letting the child wash his or her own hands with soap.
 - 10) We lavish lots of praise on the children for working towards good toilet habits.

17. Communication

The building of a relationship between parents and teachers is the foundation for the child's positive experience at LMS. We encourage you to talk openly to teachers in order to establish this relationship. Continuity between home and LMS is essential to providing a meaningful experience for your child. It is important that you tell us about any changes or special activities in the home in order for us to be understanding, supportive and helpful. Please inform teachers of any changes (e.g. one parent has to take a trip, illness in the family, moving, parent changing jobs, etc.) before or when they happen. Changes at home often lead to changes in behavior at LMS. We can care for and work better with your child if we are aware of the changes at home. It is of utmost importance that you notify us with any changes in address, phone numbers at home and at work, caregivers or emergency phone numbers.

When the need arises to speak with a teacher about an issue or concern, please remember that a teacher's first priority is for the safety and education of the children in her room. Parents are welcome to make an appointment so that the appropriate space and time can be set aside to address any concern. LMS Administration should be included in the communication if the issue/concern continues to be unresolved. Under no circumstances is it appropriate to speak sternly or rudely to school staff or to engage in gossip as this is extremely detrimental to the overall environment of the school. Failure to abide by this can result in termination of enrollment.

A Back to School Night is held at the beginning of the school year. Parent conferences are throughout the year. We strongly recommend that both parents attend. This is a time to exchange information and set goals as well as report on the child's life at Lewinsville Montessori School.

Parents are welcome to visit their child's room anytime. We encourage parents to spend time at LMS. By spending time at LMS you communicate to your child that it is a place for your whole family and not just for your child.

18. Compliance with Section 63.1-248.3 Relating to Reporting of Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect.

We comply with section 63.1-248.3 which states that, "...any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten or nursery school, any person providing full or part-time child care for pay on a regularly basis; and any person associated with or employed by any private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report immediately, to the local department of the County or City wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is suspected to have occurred...Any person required to file a report...who fails to do so within seventy-two hours of his first suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall be fined..." Please contact the Child Protective Services nearest you for additional information and training.

19. Licensing Information for Parents about Child Day Care

Lewinsville Montessori School's current license is posted in each classroom. In addition, required licenses and information about insurance, health department license, and workers' information, are posted in the office.

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day care programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection, and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day care centers, family day homes, child day center systems, and family day systems. The Commonwealth may also voluntarily register family day care homes not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, and the ratio of children per staff member, equipment, adequate program, and record keeping. Criminal records checks and specific qualifications and health requirements for staff and most volunteers working directly with the children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the centers by licensing staff from the Virginia Department of Social Services. In addition, parent or other individuals may register a complaint if the center violates a standard.

Three types of licenses may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to demonstrate compliance with the standards. A regular

license is issued when the program substantially meets the standards for licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor, which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100.00 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Licensing Office at:

Fairfax Licensing Office
3959 Pender Drive, Suite 320
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 934-1505

Northern Virginia Regional Office
320 Hospital Drive
Warrenton, VA 22186
(703) 347-6345

Central Regional Office
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 23
Richmond, VA 23229-9743
(804) 662-9743

Persons Responsible for Center Management and Organization

The center is owned and operated by McNair Child Development Center, Inc. (dba Lewinsville Montessori School) with corporate offices in Alexandria, VA. The school is organized with a Director of Operations and a Program Director in the Lewinsville Center. The Head Teachers report to the Director. The Assistant Teachers and Teacher Aides report to the Head Teachers. The food preparation staff reports to the Director.

The Director of Operations

The Director of Operations is in charge of the day-to-day running of the school, and is also responsible of the public relations, personnel management, time management, decision making, and licensing standards compliance. He or she monitors contractors such as caterers, cleaning staff, and county facilities workers.

The Program Director

The Program Director is responsible for supervising all the staff, as well as program development. The Program Director is the primary contact for parents interested in enrolling their children and is always available to parents who wish to talk about their child's care or any aspect of the school. The Program Director works closely with the

staff to ensure an ongoing program that contributes to the growth and development of children.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teachers develop the programs for their classes. They are responsible for the care and safety of the children and the supervision of the assistant, aides and volunteers. Head teachers ensure that the children are well enough to be at the school, that food is adequate, that the class is in good order, and that the county requirements are met ensuring that the children can play outside and that the classrooms meet required ratios. The Head Teachers are the primary parent contact for comments about the education and care of the children.

19. Miscellaneous

“Shoe-free” Environment for Infant Rooms

With infants commonly on the floor, we want to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment in the Infant Rooms. We practice a “shoe-free” policy in these rooms. We ask that adults entering the carpeted area of the infant room remove their shoes. We take this action to prevent outside contaminants from being brought into the room and spread onto the carpet; particularly during the cold weather. The infants spend much time of their time exploring on the floor, so it is best that these areas be kept as clean as possible.

General Infant Safety Information

In order to prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Dead Syndrome), LMS follows the guidelines below:

- Infants are placed on their backs on a firm sleeping surface
- The space around the sleeping infants is kept clear with no fuzzy blankets, pillows or stuffed toys
- No smoking is allowed around infants under any circumstances
- The temperature in the nap room is kept cool

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is a goal of Lewinsville Montessori School to serve the needs of students, staff, parents, regardless of race, gender, class, ability, and ethnic background of children from the age of 6 weeks through the pre-kindergarten. LMS does not discriminate against children who are being breastfed.

Custody Issues and Policies

In the event of a change in custodial arrangements for a child, both parents are asked to notify the Director in writing of the specific changes. Staff members are to kept informed at all times of the schedule for arrival and dismissal arrangements and the

schedule for custody during the week. This will help the staff ensure that notes about next day events make it home to both parents in good time. Additionally, it is important to note that LMS is legally obligated to release a child to either parent unless there is a court decree on file with the School Director.

Outdoor Policy

Weather permitting, all children, including infants, will spend from 15 to two hours per day in daily outdoor play. It is necessary that children have freedom of movement, so it is requested that children are dressed accordingly. Shoes and socks are required. As we encourage children to explore, there may be times when he/she may become messy or ruffled. For this reason, we request that parents send one complete change of clothing to remain at the school. Parents are to be sure to label all articles of belongings.

Children will be outside unless the temperature is below 38 degrees, weather conditions permitting. Accommodations cannot be made for children to remain indoors if they are feeling “under the weather”. A child too sick to be outside, is probably too sick to be around other children.

Missing Child Procedures

In the case of a missing child, please follow these procedures:

- ✓ Stay clam. You will think more clearly.
- ✓ Make quick search of the immediate area where the child was last seen to ensure that the child is really missing
- ✓ Immediately notify the Director as soon as you have determined that the child is missing.
- ✓ The Director will make a search of the school and surrounding outside area. This should take no longer than one minute.
- ✓ If the child is not found within (5) five minutes, the Director will call 911.
- ✓ If a child is determined missing while in the playground area, make an immediate visual search of the surrounding area. If the child is determined missing, notify the Director and they will call 911 immediately.
- ✓ In the event that 911 is called, the Director will then contact the parents or if they cannot be reached, the emergency contact.
- ✓ The Director will continue the search, focusing mainly on the outside of the building.
- ✓ After 911 has been contacted, those persons searching for the child will continue to do so until help has arrived and they have been requested by authorities to discontinue the search.

Emergencies and Disasters Requiring Sheltering in Place

Lewinsville Montessori School will provide for the safety of each child at the center in the event of emergencies and/or disasters requiring keeping the children inside the building

Steps for Power (or Water) Outage

1. Remain calm
2. During an electrical outage, if the weather is nice, teachers may choose to take the children outdoors to play
3. If the weather is too hot, too cold, or otherwise inclement, keep the children indoors.
4. Office personnel and/or the School Director will check on the reason for the power or water outage and let the staff know an approximate time frame for the return of service.
5. The School Director will make decision based upon the estimated time frame for the return of service whether or not it is a health or safety risk to keep the children at the school, and, therefore, whether the school should be closed until essential services are reinstated.

Steps for Tornado Watches and Warnings

1. Remain calm.
2. In the event of the tornado warning, children shall be kept indoors and away from windows.
3. If the warning or watch does not involve an immediate danger, then parents will be allowed to pick up their children.
4. In the event the weather service issues an alert that a tornado has been cited in the area, children will be moved to a safe area:
 - a) Room 104, 106, and 108 (Casa, Children's House & Nido III) will proceed to the hallway. A teacher in each class will open the classroom windows and prop open the outside door in classroom 108 "Nido III". A working flashlight will be kept in each classroom at all times and checked regularly. Teachers will take sign-in sheets and flashlights with them to the hallway and promptly call roll with staff answering for non-verbal children.
 - b) Rooms 102 and 110 (Nido I & II) staff will place all infants in the evacuation cribs and push them to the hallway where the crib wheels will be either locked or removed. A teacher in each class will open the classroom windows and prop open the outside doors. A working flashlight will be kept in each classroom at all times and checked regularly. Teachers will take sign-in sheets and flashlight with them to the hallway and promptly call roll with staff answering for non-verbal children.
 - c) The School Director or teacher from classroom 102, Nido II, in the absence of the School Director, will bring the first aid kit to the hallway.

5. Reassure the children.
6. The School Director will monitor the progress of the tornado and warnings on a battery powered radio.
7. Teachers will remain with the children in the hallway until the School Director or appropriate emergency personnel signal that is safe to return to the classrooms.

Steps for Hurricane

Same as tornado except teachers should **not** open windows or prop open doors.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

A copy of this is available at the office.

Insurance Coverage

A copy of our commercial property and liability insurance is available for your review should you desire.