



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 childcare 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**, Program Director/Children’s House Lead Teacher, is a graduate of North Carolina A & T State University. She has a BS in Child Development and a Montessori Teacher certification and has been in this field since 1979.

The school facility is leased from Fairfax County. There are five classrooms, 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 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. The health, safety, and emotional well-being of children are cared for first in our Montessori environment. 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. True to the Montessori philosophy, we “follow the child” through their interest and developmental readiness.

Terminology: We use “parent” to mean parent or guardian. “Infant” means any child under 24 months old. “Toddler” means any child between the ages of 24 and 36 months.

3. Philosophy and Goals of Lewinsville Montessori School

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that every child delights in spontaneous activity directed towards intellectual discovery. The attitudes and confidence developed during these formative years will serve the child throughout their lifetime. Students at Lewinsville Montessori School are honored and respected as the unique individuals that they are. In a Montessori environment, your child will develop a sense of order, concentration, coordination and independence. Thus, values such as compassion, harmony, and justice develop naturally in our environment.

Commitment

We understand that choosing a school can be a challenging and difficult decision. We know that we offer a great experience. At Lewinsville Montessori School we are focused on the child. We are committed to sharing the responsibilities with parents in helping each child reach his or her potential in a safe, warm and loving environment. We are confident that you and your family will find your time with our family and in our community to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Our Pledge to You

- We will listen carefully and respond quickly to your questions and concerns.
- You will feel confident your child is safe and in a nurturing environment while in our care.
- We will teach your child to respect themselves, respect others and respect the environment.
- We will respect your role as a parent and work together with you in the care and education of your child.
- We will value your child as a unique individual to be nurtured, cared for, and respected at all times.

4. Enrollment Procedures

Choosing the right school for your child is an important decision. Once an offer of admission has been made and accepted, all of the forms have been received and the Registration fee has been paid, your child(ren) will be eligible for enrollment.

Enrollment is offered on a rolling-admission basis throughout the school year as space becomes available. Consideration is given to the age and gender of the child(ren) so as to create and maintain a balanced distribution in each classroom environment. This is especially important in the Nido III and Casa dei Bambini/Children's House multi-age programs. According to Department of Social Services-Bureau of Licensing, a record of each child must be kept on file at the school. 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 school personnel and vice versa. This is also a Virginia regulation. All children need to be accompanied into the school 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 school closes will be called. If the parents cannot be reached within 15 minutes after school 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 school 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 school 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 \$ 40.00 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 school (illness, vacation, etc.) or for the school closing for a scheduled holiday or weather closing or delayed opening. For an extended leave (one month or more) and in order not to incur ongoing fees, you must remove your child from the rolls, with a month notice and re-enroll upon return. In such cases, re-enrollment in the classroom or school 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 school will have an individual storage unit provided by the school. Please bring the following items (**LABELLED**) for your child:

- Full change of clothing, including socks and underwear,
- Blanket for sleeping (or sleeping sacks for infants),
- 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 school 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.

What not to Bring:

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

9. Food Policies

Infants Nido I (and 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 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 school 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 and Casa/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 water 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 teachers 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. Teachers 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 school. 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 muffins or cupcakes in place of the afternoon snack. *Please note: VA regulations require that all items be commercially produced (store purchased).* What is a Montessori birthday celebration? Each school has its own slight variation, but basically it goes like this: A candle, representing the sun, is lit in the middle of the room. Labels with each month of the year are laid out in a circle radiating out from the “sun.” The children and teachers sit in a wide circle around the sun and months of the year, while the birthday child stands next to the month of his or her birth holding a globe to represent the Earth (this is not shown in the pictures, though, because my son chose not to hold the globe...). The child then walks around the sun one time for each year of his or her life. As the child walks, the teacher talks about what the child was doing when he or she was that age. Parents usually write a sentence or two or send in pictures of the child).

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 school 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 ill child to school will spread the infection to classmates and also to teachers, 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 attending, and please let us know the nature of the illness so we can be alert to symptoms in classmates and teachers.

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. Teachers 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 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 lead 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 school 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 teacher 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 anyone other than the parent is picking up the child. If possible, introduce the alternate to the teacher before such time the alternate is picking up your child. The school will ask for identification from the alternate at 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 rooms, adults are required to remove their shoes before entering
- Take an active interest in who is at the school. Please help us by bringing to our attention anything suspicious or anyone you see acting suspiciously around the school.
- **Drive slowly!** We are constantly amazed at the drivers who race into and out of our parking lot. There are always pedestrians in our lot.
- 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 school. The children tend to race out into the parking lot.
- Alert the teacher to scrapes or bruise your child has when arriving at the school. The teacher will then know the injury did not occur at the school.
- 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 thru New Year's 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 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 under a delayed arrival policy:**

LMS will make *also be under a delayed opening (usually 2 hours)*
However, the Administration, at his/her discretion, may elect to open the school later, 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 closing:

LMS will announce an early closing. 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 of early closing. For the safety of our children and staff, parents **MUST heed this and come to pick up their children promptly after being informed of the closing decision.**

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 teacher 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 teacher may fail to meet his/her personal/family commitments due to your lateness. Third, the nightly cleaning process can only take place when children are absent due to use of equipment and cleaning materials and their work may be disrupted. There is a charge of \$10.00 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 will be grounds for termination of enrollment.

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 school, 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, enrollment may need to be terminated (*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
- The child is repeatedly left at the school when sick

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:

- Children are taught the normal behavior that is expected so they may enjoy social interaction with their friends and teachers. 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.
- Encouragement and praise for appropriate 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/end errant behavior. The children, for the most part, care for and respect the teachers and as result will act appropriately in order to receive their approval. Thus, disapproval is usually enough to stop misbehavior.
- Time out. Time out is quiet time in a calm space away from the other children, but in presence of the teacher.
- Removal of a privilege (such as use of a Montessori material) due to misuse or poor behavior, or removal from the playground or play area.

- The appropriate staff member will handle discipline. Parents will be advised of any incidents and the action taken.
- 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.

Biting:

Children biting other children is an unavoidable occurrence of group childcare, especially with toddlers. It is common 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. It is important to understand that because a child bites, it does not mean that the child is “mean” or “bad”. Nor does it mean that the parents of the child who bites are “bad” parents or that 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. 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 teachers by biting, the School Director may have no alternative but to terminate enrollment.

Severe Behavior Problems:

For a variety of reasons, some children develop behavior problems. Some of these can be severe. We encourage parents to seek help for their children and we will make every attempt to assist your child. However, if a behavior problem is too

severe, there may be circumstances where a child must be removed from the school. These circumstances may be, but are not limited to, the child needing constant individual attention, disruption of the education and care of other children and parents resisting 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. It is an exciting developmental step for a child. Below are steps that we take **to assist parents in toilet training their 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 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 Casa/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 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.

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 school 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 School 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 (Director), and Montessori Program Directors in the Lewinsville building. The Lead Teachers and other Administrators report to the Director. The Assistant Teachers report to the Lead Teachers.

The Director of Operations (Director)

The Director of Operations (Director) 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. The 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. He or she works closely with the staff to ensure an ongoing program that contributes to the growth and development of children. He or she also monitors contractors such as caterers, cleaning staff, and county facilities workers.

The Lead Teacher & Program Directors

The Lead Teachers, along with the Program Directors 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. Lead 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 Lead Teachers are the primary parent contact for comments about the education and care of the children. The Program Directors work closely with the staff to ensure an ongoing program that contributes to the growth and development 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 and 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 be 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's 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 Director.

Outdoor Policy

Weather permitting, all children, including infants, will spend from 15 minutes 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.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation of Lewinsville Montessori School, one of the following plans shall be implemented. In all situations, the teacher in charge will: Take an accurate attendee list,

- **Account for all children and staff as they leave classroom,**
- **Take a cellular phone to be used for emergency notifications.**

Disaster Evacuation Plan

Personnel in charge of evacuation will be in readiness and implement the following procedures:

- **The Director is responsible for all phases of evacuation. In the Director's absence, the Program Director shall assume responsibility.**
- **The Lead Teacher from each classroom is responsible for taking along the sign in/out folder and the emergency contact folder.**
- **The teachers assigned to his/her classrooms are responsible for the children in their respective classrooms.**
- **All employees are required to be familiar with the plan.**
- **Employees will move immediately, taking the children to their designated shelter in place classroom closet and/or bathroom (S.I.P.) as required.**
- **Evacuation exit plan is posted in each classroom, for the teachers to take the routing from the classroom.**

Precautions to observe:

- **Keep the children as calm as possible in a group**
- **Remind children to walk toward the S. I. P.**
- **Close and ensure the classroom doors are locked.**
- **Reassure the children of your presence and their safety.**
- **Move the children out of danger as far as possible.**
- **Take attendance and make sure all the children are accounted for.**
- **No one should return for his or her personal belongings.**
- **Director should check each classroom and restroom for children.**
- **Re-enter only after proper authorities have deemed building safe.**

Removal to emergency shelter:

If the emergency disaster is in the immediate area of the School and the children cannot stay on the premises, emergency accommodations will be provided.

Shelter-in-Place Procedures

'Shelter-in-Place' is done in response to hazardous materials incidents when people are moved into a building isolated from the outside environment, involves keeping all windows and doors closed and covering all air intake vents to provide protection from airborne hazardous materials. It shall be:

- **Safe location appropriate for the type of Emergency.**
- **Teacher in charge will bring Emergency Kit with him/her. Kit should include food/water for 3-5 days.**

- When the phone pager announcement (“shelter tornado” or “shelter intruder” or “shelter chemical”) is activated, designated staff will calmly direct the children to the designated S.I.P. (classroom closet and/or bathroom).
- The Lead Teacher will take the Sign In/Out Clipboard (this indicates the children present at the time of evacuation), and the Classroom Vital Information Notebook with you.
- Teachers will take a head count to assure the children present.
- The Director will ensure all School staff and children are in the building and outside playground areas are unoccupied.
- Remain in the building until notified by the emergency response authorities that the situation has been resolved

Fire Evacuation Plan

1. Fire drills are held on a monthly basis at different times of the day to involve all staff members.
2. The person suspecting or discovering fire will blow a whistle over the phone while paging ALL rooms.
3. The teachers will calmly direct the children to the exit as per the procedure posted in each classroom to the further end of the parking lot. Teachers will calmly put babies in fire evacuation cribs and wheel cribs to the ramped EXIT as indicated by the outline posted by the classroom door.
4. A designated teacher will take the sign in/out folder and the notebook with the emergency contact #s, and take a head count to account for each child present.
5. The last teacher to leave the room will check the bathrooms, under the table and any other hiding space.
6. The head teacher will again take a head count of children after reaching the designated location outside.
7. Return to the building only after directed to do so by the Fire Department personnel or Center Director.
8. On return, again take head count, reassure the children and talk to them about their performance.

*** PLEASE DO NOT STOP TO DRESS THE CHILDREN FOR OUTSIDE WEAR.]**

Designated teacher will collect coats and dress children once outside if necessary.

[THE PURPOSE OF EVACUATION IS SAFETY AND SURVIVAL NOT COMFORT!!]

* All Emergency and non- emergency numbers are posted beside the telephones located in each room and office.

Hurricane / Tornado Evacuation Plan

Watch: The Weather conditions, on TV or battery operated radio.

Warning: A hurricane/tornado has been spotted or indicated on radar.

Personnel in Charge of the Procedures:

- 1. The Director is responsible for all phases of the tornado procedures. In the Director's absence, the Program Director shall assume responsibility.**
- 2. The Lead Teachers are responsible for taking with them the emergency contact #s and the sign in/out folder from their respective class rooms.**

Procedures in the event of a tornado drill:

- 1. During the tornado season, the Director and/or Assistant to the Director will serve as weather spotters and be particularly alert to threatening weather (examples: dark rolling clouds, hail, driving rain, a sudden increase in wind, in addition to the telltale funnel cloud).**
- 2. During the threatening weather, the Director and/or the Program Director will monitor the Radio/T.V. stations for announcements of tornado warnings.**
- 3. A working flashlight will be kept in each classroom at all times and checked regularly.**
- 4. In the event of the tornado warning or watch, children will be kept indoors and away from windows, in the classroom closet and/or bathroom.**
- 5. If the warning or watch does not involve an immediate danger, parents will be allowed to pick up their children.**
- 6. In the event the weather service issues an alert that a tornado has been cited in the area, each classroom will go to its designated area in their learning cottage when directed to do so by the Director and/or the Program Director with an alert from a phone page.**
- 7. A working flashlight will be kept in each classroom at all times and checked regularly.**
- 8. During the warning children will assume protective posture during imminent danger, facing the interior wall and follow the commands:
Command: "Knees and elbows on the floor"
Command: "Heads down"
Command: "Hands over the back of the head"**
- 8. The Director / Program Director will monitor the progress of the Hurricane/Tornado and the warnings, on a battery operated radio.**
- 9. Teachers will remain near the children and reassure the children until the appropriate emergency personnel or the Director communicate that it is safe to return to regular activities.**

STEPS FOR POWER (OR WATER) OUTAGE

- 1. Remain calm.**
- 2. During an electrical outage, if the weather is nice, the teachers may choose to take the children outdoors to play.**
- 3. In case of inclement weather, keep the children indoors.**
The Director will check on the reason for the outage and let the staff know an approximate time frame for the return of service.
- 5. The Director will make a 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. Based on the information the Director will decide whether the School should be closed until essential services are reinstated.**

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

- Stay calm. You will think more clearly.**
- Make a quick search of the immediate area where the child was last seen to ensure that the child is really missing.**
- Immediately notify the Director once it is determined a child is missing.**
- The Director and Program Director will quickly search the School and the surrounding outside area.**
- If the child is not found within five minutes, the Director will notify the police and will also contact the parents or if they cannot be reached, the emergency contact.**
- Continue the search while waiting for the police to show up.**
- The Director will remain at the School as the contact person and to gather and share information with the authorities.**

Insurance Coverage

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