

It will be expected that all caregivers have read and discussed these guidelines.

Mary's School Parent Handbook 2016-17

The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind. Maria Montessori

Philosophy and Purpose

Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment. Maria Montessori

Dr. Montessori wrote: *"The child becomes a person through work."*, "work" being defined as "purposeful movement." She also said that children have the ability within themselves to create a competent, gifted adult. Our job is to remove impediments to that.

Dr. Montessori observed that what engages a child in a constructive way is filling a need in the child. She wrote *"the hands are the instruments of man's intelligence"*. In a Montessori classroom, the child is able to move from activity to activity. The "work" that you will see children doing in the classroom may include: making and serving snack, washing dishes, caring for the animals, helping each other, learning math, language, sensorial differences and similarities and geography with self-teaching materials, observing other children, making or moving to music. Montessori wrote that the teacher's job is to set up the "prepared environment" and to demonstrate ways to explore materials use language and solve problems.

Montessori environments are meant to appeal to the "whole child". *"...it is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give to the individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities."* Maria Montessori Montessori saw that intelligence is universal, although there are many types of intelligence. Children have innate abilities and challenges unique to them, some genetic, some developmental and/or environmental, some temperamental, and the Montessori classroom is designed to invite "stretching" for *each* child. The verbal child might be challenged to enjoy more large motor play, the active child might be challenged to focus on a task with a series of steps, the shy child might be challenged to "use his words", the cautious child invited to be bold with paint, or movement; to take a risk! Our goal for all children is confidence and independence.

Much research has been done which supports Montessori's theories about children and learning. One place to read many of the studies that corroborate Montessori's work is in Angelina Lillard's [Montessori: The Science behind the Genius](#).

"Every Unnecessary Help is a Hindrance." Maria Montessori

I have found parenting to be very challenging work. Many ideas and practices around the Montessori philosophy are a huge asset to parenting, and I will communicate to you about this in parent education events, conversations, conferences, emails and from the Facebook pages. The biggest aid that I have to offer is my training as a Positive Discipline Parent Educator. Positive Discipline is based on the work of Alfred Adler, and described through a series of books by Jane Nelson. Positive Discipline offers the tools

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and the practice in them, through workshops in addition to the books, to become comfortable trying alternatives to the extremes of permissiveness or punishment. I have a personal goal to make parenting easier for each of you, as I can. I help teach a Positive Discipline class at ASU twice a year. I strongly encourage each family to attend, together, at least once.

The purpose of Mary's School is to provide a safe place for children and adults to learn from each other, continue in their innate love of learning, and to become: *"a generation of triumphant adults."*!

Curriculum

I began teaching in 1978, as an ESL intern while I was at college in Davidson, NC. I have been teaching in Montessori programs since 1992, and received my Early Childhood Certificate from the Center for Montessori Teacher Education /North Carolina near Raleigh in 1995. I did my internship and taught at Mountain Pathways School, and my children attended there for ten years. I started Mary's School in 2002. I also did RIE Foundations training in 2014. I have three children and a grandchild.

I continue to read about early childhood education in Montessori and other professional journals; regularly reread Montessori's own writings and works about Montessori, keep up communication online with Montessori teachers all over the world, as well as having ongoing discussions about "our" children with the staff. Observing the children in the classroom remains my biggest inspiration.

In the classroom there are a variety of materials for 3 dimensional exploration, an art area with open-ended art activities, books, the introductory Montessori math, language and geography materials.

Science is explored inside and out, in as "hands-on" a way as possible, supplemented by reference books that the children explore.

Social studies is often described in Montessori materials as study of the "sense of self" and includes learning about the world from the child's point of reference (families, pets, our bodies, our senses, emotions).

The "sensorial" materials help the child explore through the senses, rough and smooth, comparison of weight, isolation of sound and color, and other work that includes hammering and sanding wood, sand and water play, ice, snow. Perception of these differences is part of the child's natural "mathematical mind" (Piaget).

Another part of the curriculum is called "grace and courtesy", when children are taught how to interrupt, how to ask for help, how to say and hear "no", how to ask if you can join a group or a lesson, how to tell someone that you don't like the way you are being

treated, how to shake hands, how to greet someone. This is often the best way to teach and inforce “social skills.”

Montessori recognized that children needed as much direction for social skills, and time for practice, as they do in doing math, or learning to write their name.

“Practical life” helps the children’s’ confidence and competence. This covers life skills from blowing your own nose and washing hands to pouring without spilling, simple food preparation, toileting and dressing/undressing independently. Montessori observed that children could learn many tasks if they were interested and time was taken to teach them the steps required. *“We must support as much as possible the child’s desire for activity; not wait on him, but educate him to be independent.” Maria Montessori)*

Our goal is a 3 hour work-period in the morning. This is a time when the children choose work and make their own transitions. New lessons are presented at this time. After this, we may have a brief morning meeting, then lunch, and then time outside. In the winter, the time outside is somewhat dependent on the weather. Some of the materials can be used outside as well. Snack is self-selected; the children choose when and if they have snack during the morning. We provide snack every day. If there is something that we generally serve that your child cannot eat, please send extra food in the child’s lunch. Allergies need to be noted on the application form.

“Our schools show that children of different ages help one another. There are many things which no teacher can convey to a child of three, but a child of five can do it with ease.” Maria Montessori A Montessori classroom has a variety of ages. The older children provide physical and emotional help and support to the younger ones, and the younger children allow the older ones to teach and nurture. This is the most beautiful part of the classroom experience for me. Many of the lessons the children see are those given to other children, providing a lot of levels of learning each day.

Of course you would like to be a “fly on the wall”, seeing what and with whom your child is doing and learning. As a parent, I know that, even with older children, the answer to: “what did you do at school?” might be “Nothing.”, or, more expansively: “Had snack”. To this end, we attempt to give you a glimpse into the classroom with weekly pictures.

In addition, there is at least one scheduled conference time a year. We set them up so that you and I can have a period of time while your child is at school. I may request additional conferences if there is a concern about your child. You may request to meet with me at any time.

Everyone has different needs in terms of feedback and questions. Email works well for me (my email address is johgoodrich@skybest.com or you can reach me through the website), but maybe not for you. Please let me know the best way to communicate with

you and give you the support you need. Texting does not work well for me; texts from 18 parents a day is too much. It should be noted that I do not check my phone or email during school hours, so, if you want to get in touch with us, please call 828-297-5045. Notes written in the information notebook in the cubby room are checked at 9 every morning.

Regulation

Because my program is half-day I am not required by the State of North Carolina to be licensed, although I am regulated by the Fire Marshall and the North Carolina Building Code for Educational Use. We are held very strictly to a “no more than two children for no more than four hours” rule, so we will be very strict about penalizing late pick up. There may be a separate aftercare program available, run by a member of the community.

I have had wonderful assistants and interns from ASU, Caldwell Community College and Watauga High School. In the summer I have wonderful younger “junior assistants” who are often former students.

We all maintain current First Aid and CPR training. Most Montessori programs far exceed average curriculum requirements from the State. The Children’s Council has given guidance and ongoing training and support, including help in writing these procedures.

Inclusion Policy

Montessori environments are flexible and developmentally appropriate, and are therefore suitable for many children. However, they are not therapeutic environments, nor am I trained in special education. Children and families in need of special help will need to get that from professionals, and may not have their needs met in my classroom without some supplemental help.

That said, I believe that there is a range of typical and acceptable abilities, behaviors and needs of children, and I will attempt to accommodate as broad a range of these as I feel is positive to the group.

We will take several weeks’ attendance during which we will observe the adjustment made by your child. If we do not feel that your child is adjusting satisfactorily, you and I will discuss options, which may include recommending that you seek evaluation or, in an extreme case, that you seek a different placement.

In order to protect the group, I reserve the right to end without notice the contract of any family which repeatedly hampers the safety or well-being of the group, which does not respect the guidelines outlined in this Handbook, which has misrepresented themselves or a child, or who is not current with tuition payments. You would be surprised that “bullying” also occurs from parents, and will not be tolerated. You are expected to read

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any information I send out; let me know if email is not a good way to communicate with your family. The website www.marysmontessori.com has much information on Montessori education, teaching and parenting. We also encourage you to attend parent education and Positive Discipline classes as offered during the year. Your ability to understand and support what we do will greatly impact your child's positive experience at school.

We expect children to begin to learn self-regulation; this means that we support children in learning to self-soothe when upset. We are holding each child up to his/her own best self at all times. We will help a child separate from you in the morning when you let us know you are ready to leave, if needed; equally, we will help them leave the playground if they are reluctant! ☺

Montessori noted that young children adjust best to consistency; this is why we offer 4 or 5 days a week enrollment. Conventional wisdom in the US is that less time away from home is less stressful, but young children find consistency comforting.

This is often the first “school” experience for children. As such, some concerns (behaviors outside the norm) are apparent to us, in the group, which are not apparent at home. I will take the opportunity to point these out, as I observe them, and to, perhaps, recommend evaluation. It is very hard to hear concerns about your child, but the sooner a real need is addressed, the better for all. At any given time, we have children at school who are being well served by pediatric Occupational Therapists and/or Speech Therapists. Under three years old, children in North Carolina currently may qualify for testing through the State of North Carolina (CDSA). After 3, children will need to be seen/treated by the public schools and/or those in private practice.

Enrollment Agreements

Applications can be offered at any time during the year. The process is: observation by all caregivers, a “day out at school” for your (2 and older) child, one or more parent meetings, and an application if/when there is an opening. An application comes with a one month tuition check, held as a deposit for your last month of the 3 year cycle (to aged 5). If you leave before this time, we will retain the deposit to help cover our costs while we replace your child (though it is true that “a Montessori child has no replacement”!)

In recent years, the class openings have been filled by the end of March, so waiting later is not likely to lead to enrollment for the current year. Potential applicants are put in a “pool”. We “graduate” about 1/3 of the classroom every year, so, after having confirmed all returning students, we will look at openings in each age group. Because of the nature of the classroom, most of the openings, if not all, will be in the youngest group (2.5-3) Current and former Mary's School siblings have preferential enrollment. Enrollment may also be based on: the date your family has finished the application process, your parenting style and goals for your children, your child's temperament. Ultimately it may

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come down to the day you return your application with the fee. All steps in the process are initiated and completed by the family.

Enrollment for the “school year” (August-May) guarantees a spot for the summer (“Dirt Camp”). We are moving to be, as much as possible, a year round program, for the good of the school and staff as much as for the children. Enrollment in the summer, however, does not guarantee enrollment in the school year.

Our options for enrollment for the school year are five days (\$398/month) or 4 days (\$336/month). . Tuition is due by the 1st day of the month (weekly or monthly in the summer), or the first school day for your child for the month. One household must be responsible for the full semester/year’s tuition; please don’t ask me to bill two or more households. After the first 2 weeks (Week 1 of the summer) of attendance there will be no adjustment to the tuition for the semester without a meeting with me. Tuition for the entire term (week or semester) will continue to be due, whether the child is in school or not. “Make-up days” will not be possible, due to numbers of children per day. Unless special arrangements are made, a “month’s” tuition is due for each calendar month, despite the number of days or weeks attended in that month.

It is disruptive for a child to attend sporadically. I will discourage this, for the sake of the child’s adjustment.

A late fee for late pickup is \$1/minute after ten minutes after pick up time. This will be due to the staff person supervising your child. Because of the strictness of our regulation by the state and the possible consequences to the school, continued late pick up will lead to dis-enrollment for your family. We try to be aware of parking lot issues, which are ungoing!

I am more dependent that other businesses on your children as my “customers”; I literally cannot have a Montessori classroom without a three year age span, or returning experienced children. A classroom with all 2s, or all 3s, or even all 4s and 5s, would be a completely different place, and not a Montessori one. The children who have completed two (or three) years enter that last year as triumphant experts, role models and teachers. This is the culmination of the entire experience, and does much to give confidence to a child. It does not serve the classroom or the child to lose this wonderful experience.

It is an added benefit to you that my wonderful staff are often available and willing to babysit outside of school hours. Unfortunately, having them babysit apparently opens me up to increased liability. Therefore, if/when they babysit I need to have, on file, a “Hold Harmless” form at the school, signed by you, me and the staff member. This, as the name says, holds me and Mary’s School “not liable” for any harm that could occur while a staff member is supervising your child at times when Mary’s School is not in operation, or places away from the school. This form will apply for one calendar year and is available on the website.

Discipline

Children feel most secure when they know where the limits are. The limits at school are: that you may not hurt other living things, yourself or the materials. We want children to know that all adults mean what they say, not just teachers, and so we will support you in backing up your words when you are at school. Children are expected to get things “ready for the next person”. They will not be allowed to interrupt other children who are concentrating. Rules at school are always in place, so, for example, since shoes are required on the playground that is true when the parent is there as well.

Children are expected to “use their words” and to listen when others use theirs. Children may be moved from a situation, but strict “time out” is not very successful. We follow Jane Nelson (Positive Discipline)’s adage that we “can’t expect children to do better when we make them feel worse”. Children who are disruptive (either because they seem to need to run and jump, or because they are upset or angry) are often taken outside as it is the most “therapeutic” environment we have. Children are not forced to apologize, as this is best when it comes from genuine empathy, a skill young children are just beginning to learn. We give the child choices, and focus on the consequences of their actions: “See how sad she looks?”

A child may be asked to leave an area or activity. We do not dwell on events once they are over, and try not to “over talk”, as children do not learn much from this, or may find it reinforcing. One phrase I learned in training was, “Water the flowers, not the weeds.”, so we tend to ignore behavior we want to discourage. Continuing issues will be called to the attention of the parents, with a focus on serving the child together. Most other rules are related to safety. We report some behavior to you for your information, about an ongoing situation, an apparent inconsistency between expectations at home and at school, but do not expect you to control your child’s school behavior from home.

Along with physical independence, Montessori had a goal of emotional independence. Learning to control one’s emotions is perhaps the most valuable skill a person can learn. To this end, we expect children to begin to learn to “self-regulate”, also known as “self-soothing”: if a child is angry, or sad or tired, we expect that they can learn what they need to do to recover. This is true for the very youngest children, and is a wonderful skill to perfect.

Because we believe that children can and must learn these skills, we always try to discover what helps the child without taking over the “work” itself. We will ask that from you as well, at least at school. If a child is crying or expressing concern at drop-off that is not illness, we will ask you to trust us and the child and leave. Your leaving shows your child that you have faith in us, and, much more importantly, in them, which is the greatest gift you can give your child.

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When children are allowed to self-regulate on their own, with adult empathy but not direction, they seem to move through big waves of emotion sooner. We do not try to distract children from their feelings, or minimize them, but neither do we let them control the group. We (teachers and other children) are nearby and available for a lap or conversation when it is wanted, but it is often not! A child may choose to be mad; that is a choice; eventually I expect that they will choose something else. Another phrase we use a lot at school is: “‘No’ is also an answer.”

We intend to, as much as we can, observe what support each child needs at any time, with more, of course, needed for new children. We observe when, over time, less support is required. The children also learn to rely on the other children for help, with the oldest ones often offering the most support. The asking for and giving of help are both skills to be learned, as well as knowing when you can do things for yourself.

Children are given the right to choose with whom they do work, or to do work alone. “Watching work” is always allowed, however, and a child cannot tell another child where (or where not) to sit, or where, with whom or how to play when outside. Children are not expected to “share”. When something is in use, it is “not available” until it is put back on the shelf. A child is allowed to use a material as long as he/she wishes, except in the case of art projects/lessons that are being demonstrated to everyone.

Again, following the Positive Discipline guidelines, we encourage the children to problem-solve as much as possible, so that they take ownership of both problems and solutions.

In order to allow this much freedom to children, I must be able to trust them to function within these limits. There are some children (*very* few, in my experience) who, because of background, maturity, temperament or some other unknown issue, do not handle this much freedom well, and persist in attempting to hurt others, or disrupt the group. **I cannot allow** children to do either of these things, or to stay in the environment if either of these types of behaviors persists.

All people experience challenges in life. I believe that allowing your child to begin to trust their abilities, and to learn skills to deal with challenges in a safe, nurturing place, is one of the best gifts you can give your child. This is a large goal of our school.

Arrival and Departure

School runs for 4 hours in the morning. Early drop off may be an option; you can ask us. Children are to be brought inside, to the cubby area. You, or whomever drops off/picks up your child is expected to sign them in and out. The sign out form is generally on the playground with us.

Children separate much easier when they walk in and are not carried, and carry at least some of their belongings. They are then helped by a teacher or another child, and then

taught how to put away their own belongings. Very soon the children are comfortable doing their morning routines on their own; this does wonders for their self-esteem.

Adults are trained (and rightly so) to greet people and “check in”, unfortunately, we are working and modeling concentration for your children in the classroom, and do not want to interrupt concentration that is happening; we will not be able to chat while we are working with children. A brief: “good morning” will be all we can offer in most cases.

(This is an explanation of the above policy, if you need it.) Separation is a continuing issue, cycling through different developmental levels. I have observed that brief drop-offs are easier on children; an adult who stays, once information has been given to a teacher and goodbyes have been exchanged, seems to erode confidence. “Mary’s School is a school for children, not adults.” I am not supportive of lingering separations because they do not serve children’s independence. It is the adults’ responsibility to acquire enough information about your choice of placement to feel comfortable before your child starts school. If you are confident, your child will know this, and separation will be easier. We will not try to distract him/her from the fact that you are leaving.

Seeing a parent linger in a parking lot can be painful, too. Please do not stay and chat if your child is having trouble separating. If you are concerned about your child, feel free to call and check in (297-5045); if we are on the playground, we will call you back. If you have forgotten belongings or a lunch, let us know. We generally can provide substitutes so that you do not have to return. Also, as these are the child’s belongings, and not yours, they should, from the begin to learn from a very young age to feel responsible for their being brought from home, and returned there. Again, good lifelong learning!

When you enter the school grounds at pick up time, you are responsible for supervising your children or any siblings.

Please write in our “morning book” when another adult will pick up your child, or anything else we need to know about their day. We check it every morning at 9:00. This assures that all staff know what is important about your day.

Confidentiality

Boone is a small town, and we will often bump into each other around and about. You may even be friends with me or my staff, or at least “Friends” on Facebook. To assure clear communication as much as possible, please come to me with concerns or questions about your child at school, not to other parents or to my staff. Even just an inquiry about your child or another at school can put them in an awkward position. My staff are trained not to answer, which may make you feel uncomfortable. Remember, this is for your child’s protection and safety, as well as that of the other children.

Health Policy

We are only prepared to care for well children. Please keep your child at home if he/she has symptoms of untreated illness. Any child, who is not feeling well, has diarrhea, fever vomiting, deep coughing or **cannot go outside**, should stay at home. A child's temperature should be normal for 24 hours before returning to school.

I am trying to stay out of vaccine conversation, but my thought is to require/ask that each child have a primary care doctor, somewhere, as Boone peds AND the Health Department both are not seeing unvaccinated children, as I understand. Please let me know who is your child's doctor, and I would love a record of a checkup. As a half-day program, I am not required to keep track of immunizations, although I encourage all children/adults to be fully immunized. To this end, adults who are with children need to have the TDAP booster.

If your child is not fully vaccinated now, or will not be by the next school year, will you please check in with me. Equally, if your child has any immune deficiencies that you are aware of, please let me know so that I can communicate with you around illness.

I retain the right to send home a child who seems to me to be a) ill and/ or b) contagious. There are many things which I have seen in children (I am so old) which you may not have. I do not want to get in a Google debate over incubation times/viral v. bacterial issues, etc. If a child has something that has a strong chance of being contagious to others, I will send them home and expect that they be seen by a doctor. This is often inconvenient, but is for the well-being of the majority of us who hug and roll around together. The standard rule of thumb is 24 hours after the start of an antibiotic, or 24 hours fever/vomit/diarrhea free. Of course, a child will often not feel well for longer than that, which should be taken into account. No one wants to be at school ill.

Please report any communicable or contagious illnesses to me, via email, so that other parents may be informed. Please do *not* end out a group email about illness, as this often causes unnecessary concern; i.e. a vomiting child may not be a stomach virus, but fact a food issue. In lice infestations, we require treatment with a pesticide product *and* that the child is "nit free."

Many parents prefer to use "alternative" methods to deal with communicable issues including impetigo, pink eye, lice or upper respiratory issues or allergies. While I support your choice to use whatever treatments you wish for your children, *they may not come to school with these conditions or if they are obviously ill until they have been treated by a doctor*. Alternative remedies may alleviate symptoms, but it is not fair to expose the community to children who could be contagious.

Bumps and scrapes sustained and observed at school will be treated with soap, water, Band-Aids and ice. We will make every attempt to tell the caregiver who picks up your

child about severe bumps, stings, cuts, falls, or suspected illness; we cannot be held responsible for information not passed on to a parent! Injuries that seem more serious (falls from heights, injuries that involve long crying) are documented, for my protection and yours.

In case of real emergency, we will notify the Boone Rescue Squad which is little more than two miles away.

Please note doctor-documented allergies on the application form.

No medication may be given orally by any teacher to any child. The one exception to this is that we have an Epi-pen in case of severe (life-threatening) allergic reactions. We will not treat your child with an Epi-pen in less you have agreed to this on a release form.

Clothing/Things from Home

We have paint out, and all Montessori programs go outside every day. In our goal to foster exploration and independence, we will not discourage your child from getting wet, muddy and paint-spattered. Shoes without slippery soles (cowboy boots do not work well!) are encouraged. Children are expected to be able to put on and take off **all** clothing and shoes themselves. This means that you are expected to select clothing for school which the children can handle alone. Specifically, belts, overalls, tights, onesies, buttons, snaps on pants and zippers can make life difficult for young children. Remember, we expect all children at school to be dressing themselves independently.

We have not found pull-ups to be helpful in independent toileting; when you and the child are ready to take on independent toileting, please make sure to communicate clearly to Mary, and send in extra clothing.

“Accidents” do not bother us. Children who are wearing underwear will be expected to be able and willing to toilet independently and/or to change independently. **Please give them a lot of opportunity and time to practice dressing at home, from well before aged 2 on.** We have seen literally hundreds of 2 year old children who can dress completely; your child can, too, but it can be a long process.

We do not “take” children to the toilet”, or “put them” on it; it is always accessible, inside or out, nor do we remind them, unless they seem visibly uncomfortable. What we have observed is that *all* typically developing children are able and willing to *independently* decide to stop being wet/soiled as there are more interesting things to do in the classroom. This is one area in which “every unnecessary help is a hindrance” is *always* true. We are committed to avoiding power struggles and encouraging independent learning about toileting, as about everything else. If a young child has several accidents in a morning, we may ask them if they would prefer to wear diapers for the rest of the morning, and try again another day.

Re diapers: we only make a point of changing soiled diapers (as detected), not wet ones, during our morning, in an attempt to save resources. We change everyone at least one time every day, usually right after lunch. If you tell us that there is a rash problem, we will attempt to check more often.

Every child needs at least one change of clothing every day, including socks. For children experiencing “accidents”, extra shoes are also a good idea. As we go outside every day, hats and mittens are a must in winter, although I have extras available. Raingear is a necessity, in Boone.

Toys brought from home are either ignored or cause a problem. *Please leave them at home*; it is upsetting to take it from a child once they are in school, even to be sent home with a parent... We are often happy to see books or photographs, or “real” (natural) objects: rocks, snake skins, flowers, and (sometimes, if you check ahead) pets. We cannot promise that what is brought will necessarily be shown (as in “show and tell”), or read, depending on the day.

Costumes do not help in concentration at school. Feel free to tell children that “they are not allowed at school”. After years of trying them, they are best left at home for Halloween as well.

We do not refrigerate juice or milk in sippy cups, so they are better left at home. Water is always available, and the children ask for help when getting it from the child-sized sink. In warm weather we have water outside as well.

We would prefer that breakfast to be eaten at home.

Special Events

It is always fine to send snack, although it is not required. It is fine for birthdays, as well. I suggest you ask your child what they would like for their birthday snack; it is often something very simple, something perhaps that we can make. We share the birthday snack with everyone during the regular snack time, so it needs to arrive with the child in the morning. It is good to check for allergies ahead of time. Occasional cookies are alright, but candy is really never welcome; it creates lots of concerns for children and parents, even when “left in a cubby for later.” *Please do not send candy*, even for holidays like Halloween and Valentine’s Day.

You may think you are sending a small amount, but if three people do it...

Children like to give things, but a card is preferred.

Near birthday times, we can have a “Montessori” celebration that involves a caregiver coming at the end of the morning to tell the child’s story: some things about the child’s birth/adoption, and a story or two about each year of life. This can include pictures. The children all enjoy this, and your child will feel special. A special snack is **not** shared as part of this celebration, which usually happens right before pick-up (around 11:30). We have found that the special snack at this time detracts from attention paid to the child. Schedule this, if you like, with Mary.

Weather

If weather conditions are iffy, check posted cancellations on the Ray’s weather site: <http://ncweatherclosings.com/>. By 7:50, someone is usually at school (297-5045). We generally *are* open more than the public schools, except in cases when driving is considered (by me) hazardous. Siblings are often welcome on days when the public schools are out; check with me about this.

Snacks

At least one snack is provided each morning. The children help to prepare it. Water is always available. We offer a fruit or vegetable (fresh or dried fruit, cooked or raw vegetables), various grains like rice cakes, often a nut butter. We also bake gluten free snacks, or make nut butter balls. So far, we have had no children with nut allergies at school! If you want us to limit your child’s snack choices, you might need to send extra food in their lunch for snack. Please discuss any food issues with me before your child begins school.

Tax ID Number

My federal tax ID number is #52-2368303. Please remember that this is available in this document (always on the website).

From *Bottom Line Magazine*, “be sure to claim child tax credits when preparing your taxes. You may be eligible for thousands of dollars of tax credits and/or refunds. The federal Child and Dependent Care Credit can be worth \$1000 per child per year. Families earning less than \$35,458 annually also may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit. This credit is worth up to \$4,300 this year (2005). For more Information and to find free tax preparation assistance, call 800-TAX-1040.” (From the National Women’s Law Center)

