



# HERMOSA MONTESSORI

*Kindergarten Parent's  
Contract Handbook*



**Hermosa Montessori Charter School**

12051 E. ft. Lowell

Tucson, Arizona 85749

749-5518

[www.HermosaSchool.org](http://www.HermosaSchool.org)



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Hermosa Montessori Charter School. At Hermosa Montessori we believe that a child's development during the early years of life is very important. We are also convinced that the family is of utmost importance in providing the love and guidance necessary for a child's natural development. We realize that you, as parents, are especially sensitive to your child's needs, and that you are trusting us to provide a positive school experience. Our goal at Hermosa Montessori is to enhance your relationship with your child by providing an experience that will respect her as a total person: emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

You can play an important role in this Montessori experience. We hope that the following information and suggestions will help us provide a responsive and supportive environment for your children. Please read this thoroughly and keep it for further reference.

### SCHOOL HOURS:

Morning session Monday - Friday 8:30 - 11:30  
Full Day session Monday-Friday 8:30 - 3:00

Hermosa is a Montessori School. I hope that the following excerpts from *A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom* by Aline D. Wolf will enrich your understanding of our Montessori classroom.

"In the Absorbent Mind," Dr. Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed. But not only his intelligence, the full totality of his psychic powers...At no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and an obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person. He must do it himself or it will never be done. A truly educated individual continues learning long after the hours and years he spends in the classroom because he is motivated from within by a natural curiosity and love for knowledge. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his own natural desire to learn.

**Pictured to the right is Dr. Maria Montessori**

In the Montessori classroom this objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced; and second, by helping him to perfect all his natural tools for learning, so that his ability will be at a maximum in future learning situations.



Another observation of Dr. Montessori, which has been reinforced by modern research, is the importance of the sensitive periods for early learning. These are periods of intense fascination for learning a particular characteristic or skill, such as going up and down steps, putting things in order, counting, or reading. It's easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive periods than at any other time in his life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities which correspond to his own periods of interest.

Parents should understand that a Montessori school is neither a baby-sitting service nor a play-school that prepares a child for traditional education. Rather, it is a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between three and six, when he can absorb information from an enriched environment. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning his education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. By pursuing his individual interests in a Montessori classroom, he gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to his becoming a truly educated person.

Because the children work individually with the materials, there is no competition in the Montessori classroom. Each child relates only to his own previous work, and his progress is not compared to the achievements of other youngsters. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills. "Never let a child risk failure," she wrote, "until he has a reasonable chance of success."

It is a well established fact that young children mature at very different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary a great deal. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some youngsters in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an unusually early age. However, very early learning is not the norm, nor was it ever Dr. Montessori's objective. Her ideal was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child. "It is true we cannot make a genius, we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being ."

## **PHASE-IN**

We would like your child's introduction to school to be a positive, joyful experience. The phase-in program provides for a gradual introduction to Hermosa Montessori School and the school staff. This procedure encompasses shortening school hours over a period of several days. This allows the teachers to work with very small groups of children, giving each child personal, individual attention. The phase-in begins with the first day of school. You will be notified of your child's specific starting day and time. Although it may be inconvenient for you to follow this phase-in program, please try. It will benefit your child. Our intention is to make the first days of school as pleasant as possible for all!

## **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

When your child begins the Montessori experience, it is a big step in her and her family's life. It is best to talk about the opening of school only a day or two before the actual starting date. Generally explain the situation. Talking about specific activities could lead to disappointments.

On the first day, accompany your child to the classroom entrance, give her a loving goodbye and leave the child in the care of the teacher. It is best to make your goodbye brief. Then exit and do not return even if you hear tearful cries. The teachers will comfort a disappointed student and their success is dependent upon no interruptions. If your child discovers that you will return when he cries, a habit may develop that will become more difficult in time. Experience has shown us that it works best for the child when the parents do not linger. Your child will sense your confidence in her teachers, and her fears should be dispelled.

Do not be discouraged if your child does not relate many specifics about her school experience. Usually the child has been working with many different activities throughout the day and remembering them can be difficult. Also remember that we are concerned with process rather than product, so much of what a child accomplishes is being internalized. You may notice that your child will bring home very few papers and other "product" evidence of her work. Please be patient as your child gradually reveals her newly acquired skills and knowledge.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Admission**

Hermosa Montessori School provides equal employment opportunity and equal participation opportunity to all its employees and or students without regard to ethnicity, national origin, creed, gender, physical ability or disability, age, proficiency in the English language, or athletic ability, who submit a timely application based on space or position available.

Children must be 5 years old by September 1 of the school year to be admitted into Kindergarten.

**Enrollment procedures**

A signed and dated enrollment contract must be submitted for enrollment.

**Head of School**

The Head of School handles personnel matters, admissions, financial aspects, dismissal, observations, classroom needs, and curriculum development. Parents should feel free to discuss any questions they might have. Call for an appointment.

**Hermosa Montessori Family-School Commitment  
Parent Responsibilities:**

To read the entire Parent Contract Handbook

To familiarize himself-herself with the basic Montessori philosophy

To support their child's academic progress

To keep abreast of current activities by reading: the Hermosa Newsletters, the notices sent home, and notices posted on the school bulletin boards

To observe the School Calendar

To be familiar with and abide by all school policies

The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) accept responsibility for participation in:

Parent Orientation Program

Parent-Teacher Conferences- twice a year

Parent Volunteer Time of 10 hours per year ; opportunities available from HOPE (Hermosa's Organization of Parents for education)

Providing effective and continuing cooperation and communication

**Clothing**

We suggest that you send your child in clothing that is comfortable and easily cleaned.

**Food**

Full day children should bring a lunch with their names marked on their bag or box. Please include "blue ice" to keep food cool. To make a child's lunch time enjoyable, her lunch should be manageable for her and should be nutritionally balanced. Please do not send a lunch box filled with sweets. Uneaten food will be returned home as an indication of the child's appetite.

**SNACKS**

We ask that you help by providing a simple snack for your child's class. All foods served at school must comply with Arizona Health Department regulations. A detailed snack guide is available on Hermosa's web site or in the office.

**Health**

The health of all children is of prime importance to us. Please safeguard your child and others by keeping him/her home if signs of illness are present. Children with the following symptoms

must remain at home: cough, sore throat, sneezing, green nasal discharge, above normal temperature, discharge from eyes, rash, or vomiting the day before or in the morning before school. Should a child become ill at school, he/she will be isolated from other children. The parent will be notified and is expected to make arrangements to take the child home. A child should be free from fever for 24 hours before coming back to school. Strep throat, pinworms, conjunctivitis, impetigo, head lice, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, etc. are among those conditions categorized as "highly contagious." Notifications will be made should any of these conditions arise.

Contagious diseases must be reported to the office immediately so that notice of exposure can be sent home to the parents of the child's classmates. Please notify the school whenever your child is on medication of any kind. The complete Health Policy is available by request from the office.

### **Medication**

Never send medication with the child to keep in his lunch box or cubby. There is serious danger that another child might take the medicine or that the child himself will take an overdose. Many antibiotics and other medications can be prescribed to be taken in two doses daily, rather than three, thus eliminating the need for the school dose. Please request this from your pediatrician. Otherwise, a physician's explanation of why the school dose is necessary will be required. If it is necessary for a child to take medication, a medication administration form must be completed. Prescriptions must be in their original containers.

### **Accidents - Emergency Care**

In case of a life threatening situation, the school will call 911. It is imperative that parents keep the school up to date on phone numbers where parents or other contacts can be reached. If a bump on the head occurs, parents will be called and informed. If an injury occurs, and a parent cannot be reached, we will call the names listed on your emergency form in the order of your preference. An accident report will be sent home with any child involved in even a minor accident. A duplicate report will be on file in the office.

### **Arrival**

Children may arrive from 8:20-8:30. Arrive at school on time! Children who come late may miss the opening lesson and feel awkward about their tardiness. The concentration of other classmates is interrupted when someone arrives late. Enter the driveway at the farthest east entry. Pull forward as much as possible, have doors unlocked and student belongings ready and easily accessible. A staff member will meet your vehicle and assist your child getting out of the car, and accompany her into the classroom. After your child is safely out of your vehicle, proceed through the parking lot to the western exit.

### **Half day Dismissal**

Half day dismissal is from 11:15-11:30. At this time,

park in either a designated spot or angle park along the front of the building, and walk in to get your child.

#### **Afternoon Dismissal**

All vehicles will park. Parents will walk to the front gates, and then accompany their child to their parked vehicles. Your child has an assigned time for dismissal. Plan to arrive within your child's dismissal time. Since parking is limited, we ask for your cooperation by closely adhering to your assigned time. Please refer to the detailed handout to determine your student's dismissal time.

#### **Early Dismissal**

If you need to take your child earlier than your designated time, plan an extra ten minutes to go to the classroom and then sign out in the office.

#### **Vehicle Identification**

Each family will be given two vehicle identification tags. **Please keep one visible to assist staff in recognizing your vehicle.**

#### **Release Authorization**

Children will not be released to any person other than a parent, legal guardian, or someone duly authorized to pick up their children. If it becomes necessary to have someone not so listed pick up a child, a written release must be provided. Regulations do not allow phone authorizations. When an authorized person not recognized by school personnel arrives, he/she must go to the office with identification (driver's license or other picture ID) to receive authorization before the child will be released.

#### **Official Custody**

If one parent has official custody of the child, the legal documents to this effect must be on file in the office. Without the legal documentation, the school cannot refuse to release a child to either parent. Please work out clear visitation arrangements between mother and father and/or grandparents without putting the school or the child in a difficult position.

#### **Items to bring**

Each child is requested to bring general supplies each year and a supply list is distributed prior to the beginning of the school year.

#### **Lost and Found**

A lost and found container is located on the school grounds. Please check with a staff member for the current location of the lost and found container. Items not recovered at year's end will be donated to charity.

#### **Transportation**

The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) assume full responsibility for the manner, safety, and protection of the student in traveling to and from school. Car pools are recommended. Student directories will be available to facilitate car pooling. Parents must provide written notification if someone with whom we are not familiar will pick up their child.

### **Toys**

We ask that toys, candy, gum, perfume, money, and nail polish stay at home. Special items such as flowers, seeds, insects, rocks, shells, books, and tapes are encouraged. Please mark your child's possessions with his/her name.

## **SPECIAL DAYS**

### **Birthdays**

Each child's birthday will be celebrated simply during group time. Further celebration will take place at snack time and parents often send a special treat for the occasion. (Please refer to the special section on snacks.)

If you would like to commemorate the day in a special way, we would recommend the donation of a children's book for the classroom with the child's name and occasion inscribed on the inside for children and teachers to recall for years to come.

### **Celebrations**

There will be celebration of some holidays. Parents with special ethnic traditions are encouraged to share their culture with the children. Please speak to the classroom teachers if you would like to help cook a special dish, or share any cultural items.

## **FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE**

Freedom, as it is defined by Dr. Montessori, does not mean license to do just anything, or to be disorderly, or to interfere with others. In the classroom, freedom takes a variety of aspects: the choice of work, the liberty to talk, the liberty of time, and the freedom of movement. We do not allow children to hurt one another, to damage materials in the environment or to act in a manner that is abusive or disrespectful to one's teachers or peers. Serious offenses (aggressive behavior) are not tolerated. The child will be informed of the seriousness of the action and that a repeat of the mistake may mean calling her family.

Hermosa Montessori staff does not use corporal punishment. The staff does use natural and logical consequences to support the children in maintaining the classroom ground rules.

### **Discipline Policy**

For optimal learning to occur, the classroom atmosphere must be physically and psychologically safe. To ensure this safety, a set of baseline ground rules and their consequences have been established.

The first time a student violates the ground rules, the student receives a verbal reminder of the rule, and the appropriate behavior or consequences. The initial consequence could be either "time out-apart from the classroom" or a "work job."

If unacceptable behavior is repeated and persists or

the child refuses to comply with the “time out” or work job consequence, parents are called. The teacher and/ or Head of School will confer with parents. Parents are notified that if the behavior continues to persist, they may be expected to pick up the child from school. If the parent is asked to pick up their child because the behavior is persisting, the child will be removed from the classroom while waiting.

In some situations a parent may be asked to stay with his child in the classroom throughout the day, or during a portion of the day.

When the child returns the day following “behavioral removal”, the teacher confers with the child before she or he re-enters the class. Any limitations for the child will be discussed at that time. (A verbal or written behavior contract is established, or privileges will be suspended, etc).

For serious infractions such as a child physically harming a teacher or other students, leaving campus unauthorized, or bringing a weapon or other dangerous object to school, suspension is possible and the child cannot return to school until a conference with parent, teacher, and administrative personnel takes place.

## **Behaviors and Consequences**

### **Inappropriate Behaviors Which Still Allow Others To Be Safe**

#### **Inappropriate language not directed at a person**

*Consequence:*

- Child given verbal reminder
- Continued inappropriate language results in parents called for conference, family action plan developed

#### **Distracting behavior during group or personal work time**

*Consequence:*

- Child given verbal reminder
- Continued distracting behavior results in parents called for conference and an action plan in which adult comes to stay with student to monitor behavior

#### **Classroom Work Is Not Completed In A Timely Or Appropriate Manner**

*Consequence:*

- First Offense: Child is given verbal reminder
- Repeated problems not remedied by normal teacher incentives and action; parents are called, and teacher-student-family action contract developed and signed by parent

#### **Teacher-student-family action contract not honored**

*Consequence:*

- Parent conference, contract re-evaluated, possible “outside professional help” added to teacher-student-family action contract.

Expulsion of a student from school is a discretionary power of the Governing Board under the Provision of ARS 15-341, 15-342, and 15-843. The school will assure due process rights for students involved in disciplinary action before he or she may be suspended or expelled.

### **Inappropriate Behaviors That Make The Classroom Unsafe**

#### **Physically striking another in anger**

#### **Verbal abuse directed toward an individual**

#### **Any weapon or dangerous object brought to school**

##### *Consequence:*

- First offense: Removal from class that day and the following day. Conference with parents before reentry to classroom.
- Second offense: Removal from class that day and the next two days. Conference with parents before reentry to classroom.
- Third offense: Removal from class that day and the next three days. Conference with parents before reentry to classroom.
- Fourth Offense: Removal from class that day and suspended from school. Conference with parents and school director and teacher-student-family action plan developed before reentry to school. Discipline record forwarded to Governing Board for consideration of suspension duration and/or expulsion.

### **Observations**

One of the best ways to learn about a Montessori classroom is to see one in action. Your child will most likely be very excited about your presence in his classroom. Try not to be disappointed if your child's behavior is unusual. This sometimes happens on a first visit. With further visits you will find a more normal reaction. In order to see a normal, working environment, we ask your cooperation in these ways:

Avoid distracting the children, and observe passively. You can respond to a child's interest in you by explaining you are here to see how they work.

Please do not interrupt the teachers during the class sessions. The teacher's first responsibility is to the children.

If you have any questions, save them until after your observation time or set up a time with the teacher or director to discuss your observations.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Hermosa Montessori encourages active parent participation. Participation shows your child that you are interested in his school and that it has an important place in your lives.

#### **Parent Nights**

There will be meetings throughout the year to acquaint parents with our program. These meetings are also designed to answer

your specific questions and provide enrichment ideas in the area of child-rearing. Sometimes there will be guest speakers. Unless otherwise stated, plan to have your children stay home since these meetings are adult oriented. If child-care is a problem, please let us know and we will try to help you.

### **Communication**

We cannot over-emphasize the importance of open communication between parents and staff. Changes in your child's life-style (house-guest, new baby, parent(s) on vacation, separation of parents, death in family, etc.) are unsettling. If we are aware of this situation, we can be more responsive and more understanding of his behavior at school.

Sometimes your child may voice a concern over something that happened at school, for example, a broken friendship. Try not to over-react. Let a staff member know what is happening so it can be handled at school. Sometimes trivial things can build up, so don't hesitate to talk it over with us if something is becoming a problem.

We welcome your suggestions. The most effective communication is *directly to your child's teacher and to the Head of School*. Parent "grapevines" tend to distort your original message beyond recognition, so please voice your concerns to the appropriate staff member.

You can visit Hermosa on the web to read items of interest about Montessori philosophy, upcoming school events, various class programs, and links to other Montessori sites at [www.hermosaschool.org](http://www.hermosaschool.org).

Periodically your child's teacher or the school will send a notice regarding an upcoming field trip or classroom announcement. Most letters and notices are sent via email.

### **Conferences**

Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. These formal conferences will describe activities and social associations your child has been involved in. Hopefully, conferences will give you further insights into Montessori education. **If you wish to speak to the teachers at any time, please make an appointment.** Teachers appreciate at least 24 hours notice so they can schedule their time appropriately. To schedule an appointment please call the office during regular office hours. Tell the office person your area of concern and time that you would be available to speak with the classroom teacher. This will help the teachers be prepared to address your concerns. **If you need to discuss a situation you feel needs immediate attention, please call during office hours, discuss the situation with administration, and you will be contacted as soon as possible.**

### **Office**

Messages regarding illness, a change in schedule, appointments etc. should be communicated by telephone before 10:00 a.m. or by written message. Also, notify us if your child needs to be picked up from school either early or late. **Please notify us immediately of change of address, phone number, or transportation arrangements.**

## SUGGESTED READING

### **Maria Montessori:**

The Absorbent Mind*	A Child in the Family*
Discovery of the Child*	Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook
Education For A New World	To Educate the Human Potential
From Childhood to Adolescence	The Montessori Method
Peace and Education*	Reconstruction in Education
The Secret of Childhood*	Spontaneous Activity in Education
The Montessori Elementary Material	

### **Mario Montessori**

Education For Human Development

### **Dorothy Canfield Fisher**

Montessori For Parents

### **Alfie Kahn**

Punished by Rewards\*

### **Paula Lillard**

Montessori - A Modern Approach

Montessori Today

### **Terry Malloy**

Montessori And Your Child

Wendy Mogel, Ph.D

The Blessing of a Skinned Knee

### **E.M. Standing**

Maria Montessori - Her Life and Work

The Montessori Method - A Revolution in Education

### **David Walsh, Ph.D**

No-Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It and Ways Parents Can Say It

### **Aline D. Wolf**

Peaceful Children, Peaceful World\*

\*suggested books to read first

### **Non Promotion**

Promotion is a team-based assessment including the following:

Portfolio assessment

Teacher observation of classroom behavior by current and prospective teacher

Social-Emotional maturity

Standardized test scores

Recommendation of current teacher, prospective teacher, principal, and parent

The team's decision will be made by a majority vote.

The complete non promotion policy as adopted by the governing board is available in the office.

### **Excessive Absence**

HMCS requires regular attendance. Attendance is the primary responsibility of the parents. Each student is expected to attend classes every day except when illness, injury or conditions beyond the student's control prevent attending classes. Frequent absences for any reason are certain to have a negative effect on a student's performance in school.

Specific presentations are ongoing and some cannot be repeated due to the nature of the program. Excessive absence is defined as when the number of absent days exceeds ten per cent of the required days, or five percent by January 1<sup>st</sup>, or more than 6 consecutive days. The complete absence policy as adopted by the governing board is available in the school office.

**FERPA  
PUBLIC NOTICE  
(Confidentiality Notice)**

Under the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (F.E.R.P.A.), parents or legal guardians having custody of students shall be informed of their rights regarding student records and shall be permitted to inspect and review education records as appropriate under the law. Personally identifiable information shall not be disclosed without written consent. A record of disclosures shall be maintained. Parents, legal guardians, and eligible students shall be provided an opportunity to seek the correction of education records where appropriate. The district superintendent shall develop and maintain such procedures as are necessary to assure compliance with the provisions of the statute as well as to ensure that school staff receive periodic instruction and training regarding the privacy rights of students and parents and the confidential handling of student records. Copies of the district policy and procedures concerning the inspection and review of student records shall be on file in the superintendent's office, the curriculum office, and the principal's office at each school in the district. Complaints regarding alleged failures of the district to comply with F.E.R.P.A. requirements may be filed in the superintendent's office.



**CHILD FIND**

Hermosa Montessori ensures that all students, school age, attending its school who have a disability, and who are in need of special education and related services will be identified, located and evaluated. All newly enrolled students and those transferring in without sufficient records will be screened for consideration of academic, cognitive, vision, hearing, communication, emotional and psychomotor domains within 45 days of enrollment

**Insurance**

Hermosa Montessori carries an insurance policy that complies with the requirements of the State of Arizona.



