

# AVON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

## PARENT HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR 2011 - 2012

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**FEDERAL ID: 20-0938709**

## INFORMATION REQUIRED BY OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

The facility is licensed to operate legally by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This license is posted in a conspicuous place for review.

A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the facility upon request.

The center director and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, ORC to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Any parent, custodian, or guardian of a child enrolled in the facility shall be permitted unlimited access to the facility during all hours of operation for the purpose of contacting their children, evaluating the care provided by the facility or evaluating the premises. Upon entering the premises, the parent, or guardian shall notify the Center director of his/her presence.

Rosters of the names and telephone numbers of the parents or guardians of the children attending the facility are available upon request. The parent roster will not include the name or telephone number of any parent who requests that his/her name or telephone number not be included.

The licensing inspection reports and complaint investigation reports, for the current licensing period, are posted in a conspicuous place in the facility for review.

The licensing record including compliance report forms, complaint investigation reports, and evaluation forms from the building and fire departments are available for review upon request from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The department's website is: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc>.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children upon the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or disability in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 104 Stat. 32, 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.

**\*THIS INFORMATION MUST BE GIVEN IN WRITING TO ALL PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND EMPLOYEES AS REQUIRED IN 5101:2-12-30 OF THE OHIO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE.**

JFS 01237 (9/2006)

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## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Avon Montessori School (AMS). We are honored that you have chosen our school for your child/children's early educational experience. Our program is a three-year preschool and private Kindergarten program for children ages three to six years of age. These three years of a child's life constitute one of the most critical periods for his/her self-development.

## **OUR PROGRAM**

The preprimary classroom at AMS is a three-year program for a child turning three-years-old and concluding when the same child turns five-years-old with an Ohio State approved kindergarten year. In a Montessori classroom, we find the blending of three, four and five-years-olds brings different levels of development and learning that cultivates a cooperative and constructive working classroom.

At AMS we strongly urge the preprimary student completes the three-year preprimary program. During these years, the child is given the opportunity to explore and learn from materials specifically designed and sequenced by Dr. Montessori that leads from concrete to the abstract in Language, Mathematics, Geography and other areas of the classroom.

## **LICENSING STATEMENT**

Avon Montessori School is licensed as a full day center with a license to serve 1 toddler, 24 Preschool, and 12 School Age (kindergarten) children. All children are considered full time. Since our program is under 7 hours, we will not require a formal nap time.

Avon Montessori School is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. AMS's license is posted on the bulletin board outside the Office. The laws and rules governing child day care are available at the school upon request.

AMS's licensing record is available upon request from The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The ODJFS's phone number is located on the front of the License, and may be used to report a suspected violation by the school.

## **AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP**

- ◆ *American Montessori Society – Full Membership*
- ◆ *North Coast Regional Chamber of Commerce – Avon*
- ◆ *National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC) Ohio, and Lorain County*
- ◆ *NAMTA - North American Montessori Teachers Association*

## **ENROLLMENT**

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Enrollment at AMS is open to children from three to six years of age who are toilet trained. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability; and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, or disability.

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION AND TOURS**

A classroom observation and tour by a parent or guardian is the first step in the application process. This initial visit will include a tour of the school, and the opportunity for the parent/guardian to experience a typical Montessori classroom.

### **APPLICATION**

Parents can apply for admission by completing the Enrollment Application and paying a \$50 Application Fee. A meeting between the teacher, child, and parent/guardian will be scheduled when the application has been received.

### **INTERVIEW**

The "interview" during the application process is designed to assist the teacher in evaluating a child's readiness for school, their developmental placement, and to determine if the parent/guardian's educational philosophy is compatible with the Montessori Philosophy. This will be an informal meeting in the classroom setting. It is not designed to be a stressful or intimidating experience for either child or parent.

## REGISTRATION

A registration deposit of \$300 is due upon acceptance of your child into AMS. This non-refundable fee will serve as an initial tuition payment and will hold your child's placement for the coming school year. Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed enrollment application packet, signed tuition contract, registration deposit, immunization records and signed Parent Handbook receipt.

Continued enrollment at AMS is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of AMS as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition. Parents are required to notify AMS immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change.

## ENROLLMENT PACKET

The parent of the enrolled child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. **This packet contains State of Ohio mandated forms that must be returned to the school's office prior to the child's first day of attendance. If AMS does not receive this information, your child cannot attend class.** The Enrollment Packet contains the following:

- ◆ ***Child Medical Statement (JFS 01305)*** – This form must be completed by your child's physician and on file at the school within thirty days of the child's first day of school, and every thirteen months thereafter until the child is attending a grade of kindergarten or above.
- ◆ ***Child Enrollment and Health Information (JFS 01234)*** - This form must be completed and on file at the school no later than the first day of attendance
- ◆ **Emergency/Alternate Pick up Form/Media Release Form**
- ◆ **AMS Parent Handbook**
- ◆ **Tuition Contract/Enrollment in FACTS Management**

## TUITION

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a tuition contract prior to enrollment of their child in AMS. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed. All tuition is collected through FACTS Management Company.

### TUITION AMOUNT

Tuition for the 2009 - 2010 (Aug – June) school year is as follows:

Preprimary and Kindergarten Half-Day Programs	\$4,700.
Extended Day Kindergarten Program	\$1,300
Lunch Fee for half day kindergarten	\$600

The \$300 registration deposit is deducted from your tuition amount. The balance of tuition is payable under three different payment contracts:

1. One payment in full due August 15, 2011 at no cost through FACTS Management Company.
2. Two equal payments due August 15, 2011 and January 15, 2012 at no cost through FACTS Management Company.
3. Monthly payment plan – 10 equal payments made through the FACTS Management Company\*

\*includes a FACTS enrollment fee of \$60.

Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at AMS. Failure to make payments within these guidelines will result in your account being turned over to a collection agency and/or immediate dismissal from the program. However, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the school administrator immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved you will be notified by the school administrator. There is no credit given for vacations, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

## TUITION CONTINUED....

### **WITHDRAWAL**

In the event an admitted student has not adjusted to the school within 30 days of attending classes, the student may be withdrawn. There is no refund of registration fee. A determination that the student has not adjusted to the school must be reached by concurrence of the teacher, the Director of the School and the parent. A refund of prepaid tuition will be returned minus days the child has attended.

The School reserves the right to recommend withdrawal of a student who cannot benefit from the Montessori Program at AMS. A conference will be arranged with the parent before any such action will be considered.

There is no refund, credit or reduction for withdrawal from AMS with the exception of a move more than 25 miles from the center, or a doctor's prescribed note of an illness or condition of the child that deems them unable to attend school. In the event of a job loss or any unforeseeable circumstance, refunds will be considered by the AMS School Board on an individual basis.

### **DISMISSAL**

AMS reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause. Tuition will be reimbursed less amount used based on a prorated per day rate that your child was in the program.

## **DAILY PROGRAMING**

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

AMS hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m. Administrator's hours are from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. All guests must report to the front desk schedule appointments, or before entering the classroom environment (other than scheduled drop off or pick up).

### **DAILY PROGRAMMING**

AMS will provide a well-balanced program of indoor and outdoor activities and opportunities for both quiet and active play suitable to the developmental levels and abilities of each student.

Each classroom teacher will post a copy of the day's schedule and information regarding the current curriculum theme on the Parent Information Bulletin Board.

## DAILY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED...

AMS follows the traditional Montessori theory of work cycles. Music, Second Languages, Art, Gross Motor Play/Movement, and Reading/library time are seamlessly integrated into the daily curriculum rather than interrupting a child's natural work cycle.

### A.M. PREPRIMARY PROGRAM:

- ◆ **8:20 – 8:30 a.m. *Arrival***
- ◆ **8:30 – 8:45 a.m. *Community Time*** - including but not limited to helper of the day, calendar, group lesson, attendance, and special announcements.
- ◆ **8:45 – 9:45 a.m. *First Work Cycle*** – may be shorter or longer in length and usually involves “familiar” or well-practiced works.
- ◆ **Approx. 9:45 – 10:15 a.m. *False Fatigue*** – just as adults might need a “coffee break”, false fatigue is a short period of time that serves as a mental break for children. Social visiting, noise and movement will increase in the classroom. This is a natural occurrence sensed by classroom staff and is not a precise scheduled time.
- ◆ **10:15 – 11:00 a.m. *Second Work Cycle*** - This is the time period when children do their most earnest work, and are receptive to new and difficult work.
- ◆ **11:00 - 11:15 a.m. *Community Time (End of day)*** – children put their works away, and transition back to community time. At community time the class may reflect on their day, read literature, enjoy music, and say goodbye.

### P.M. PREPRIMARY PROGRAM:

- ◆ **12:20 – 12:30 p.m. *Arrival***
- ◆ **12:30 – 12:45 p.m. *Community Time*** - including but not limited to helper of the day, calendar, group lesson, attendance, and special announcements.
- ◆ **12:45 – 1:45 p.m. *First Work Cycle*** – may be shorter or longer in length and usually involves “familiar” or well-practiced works.
- ◆ **Approx. 1:45 – 2:15 p.m. *False Fatigue*** – just as adults might need a “coffee break”, false fatigue is a short period of time that serves as a mental smash for children. Social visiting, noise and movement will increase in the classroom. This is a natural occurrence sensed by classroom staff and is not a precise scheduled time.
- ◆ **2:15 – 3:00 p.m. *Second Work Cycle*** - This is the time period when children do their most earnest work, and are receptive to new and difficult work.
- ◆ **3:00 - 3:15 p.m. *Community Time (End of day)*** – children put their works away, and transition back to community time. At community time the class may reflect on their day, read literature, enjoy music, and say goodbye.

## **KINDERGARTEN EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM:**

- ◆ **11:30 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.** Lunch and Recess/Rest
- ◆ **12:30 – 12:45 p.m. *Community Time*** - including but not limited to introduction of group lesson, attendance, and special announcements.
- ◆ **12:45 – 2:00 p.m. *Kindergarten Curriculum*** – children will be working individually and with their peer group on special projects and curriculum.
- ◆ **2:15 p.m. – 2:30 *Community Time (End of day)*** – children put their works away, and transition back to community time. At community time the class may reflect on their day, read literature, enjoy music, and say goodbye.

## **DAILY PROGRAMMING CONTINUED...**

The programming schedule is fluid with the exception of community times. While recess or free play is always an option as long as weather permits, the teacher may use her discretion as to when an outdoor break is necessitated or desired. It is not, however, a daily scheduled event.

## **THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM**

The outdoor classroom will be open whenever weather permits, and ratio will be maintained as in the indoor classroom.

All rules of the indoor classroom apply to The Outdoor Classroom: no running, replace work when finished, respect others and their work, respect all living thing, tools and rakes must remain below a child's waist at all times, etc.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Free outdoor play time will be utilized at the teacher's discretion. Equipment such as balls, hoops, parachute, etc. are available for the class's use.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The Outdoor Classroom will be closed, and outdoor play will not occur when the weather is below 30 degrees F (including wind chill), or when Ozone Alerts, High Pollen Advisories and Weather Alerts or Warnings are present.

## **KINDERGARTEN OUTINGS**

During the school year, kindergarteners will be taking parent sponsored outings. Parents are required to attend these trips with their child.

# ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

## DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

As flexible as the staff at AMS try to be in all areas, there are three reasons we cannot be flexible in drop off and pick up procedures:

- The ODJFS requires that we establish and adhere to set classroom times and transitions, and that proper staff to student ratios be maintained at all times. We have four separate classrooms (as defined by the state) – AM, Lunch Buddies, PM, and After Care.
- The City of Avon requires that we not block traffic on Ridgeland Drive for any significant time.
- The Staff at AMS needs time to prepare for and transition to the next class.

Drop off and pick up must move quickly and efficiently. The following rules have been established by AMS to assure this occurs:

Drop off:

- Parents should remain in their vehicle and allow the AMS staff to assist children out of their seats.
- If possible, student's car seats/boosters should be moved to the passenger's side of the automobile for easier entry/exit and safety of the students.
- Student's school bag should be with the child and ready to go.
- Verbal communication between parent and staff during this time should be brief. Written notes are an excellent way to communicate necessary information we may need about your child for that day.
- Parents who wish to assist their child out of the car must park in the parking lot and walk their child to the student entrance.

Pick up:

- Parents should remain in their vehicle and allow the AMS staff to assist children into their seats.
- Parents who need to assist children with safety buckles are asked to move forward out of the carpool line and park before buckling your child. Buckling your child from inside the vehicle whenever possible will help keep the carpool line moving. Parents who need extra time to assist child are asked to park and meet child at the student entrance.
- Verbal communication between parent and staff during this time should be brief. Written notes from the staff will communicate any necessary information we may need share with you about your child for that day.
- AMS staff cannot assist a child in buckling into a car seat or booster.

## **ARRIVAL**

Morning arrival will be between **8:20 and 8:30 a.m.** Afternoon arrival will be between **12:20 and 12:30 p.m.** A staff person will greet each child at his/her automobile. Parents are asked to unbuckle car seats. A child will be assisted out of the car, and then directed up the ramp where the school administrator or assistant will be waiting. As the children arrive in the school, they will be directed by another staff member to go to their cubbies, change shoes, hang up personal items, and quietly take a seat in community.

Parents may park and walk children to the front door on occasion, or if late, but are asked to utilize the car pool line as often as possible. This teaches children independence, and helps in the transition from home to school.

## **DEPARTURE**

Departure will be between **11:20 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.** for the morning class, and between **3:20 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.** for the afternoon class. Kindergarten departure is between **2:30 p.m. and 2:40 p.m.** on Tuesday through Thursday. Parents are asked to enter the carpool line. If a parent needs extra time to buckle a child, or communicate with staff, they are asked to pull in and park. AMS staff are not permitted to buckle a child into a car seat during departure.

Photo identification is required by anyone picking up a child other than the parent or guardian. Employees of AMS have the right and responsibility to ask for photo identification from anyone entering AMS campus including parents and guardians if that person is not recognized, or if child shows confusion about the person picking them up.

## **NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES**

Please inform the school thirty minutes prior to class time if a child will not be attending school that day, or will be more than 15 minutes late. This will help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day. Any change in bus routine must be communicated to AMS prior to the typical bus arrival time. We are required to locate the whereabouts of a child if they do not arrive when they are typically expected.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a "need to know" basis.

If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the School administrator, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared, not the child's name. AMS will take all measures necessary to protect your child's confidentiality.

## **CHILDREN ARRIVING FROM OTHER PROGRAMS**

At times it may be necessary for a child to arrive at the school from another program. If a child is scheduled to arrive and does not, the School administrator will first contact the parent to confirm that the child is scheduled to be at school that day, and then contact the program that they are to have arrived from. The School administrator will then consult with the parents to determine further action. For this reason it is very important that parents contact the school when their child is not going to be attending.

## **LATE PICK-UP**

Always call the school if you are going to be late picking up your child/ren. It's understandable that an occasional event might delay your arrival at the end of your child's day. Repeated or excessive tardiness (more than 15 minutes) will result in a charge of \$1 per minute.

## **RELEASE OF A CHILD**

In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on the Child Enrollment and Health Information form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency or Alternate Pick-up form. Parents do not need to be listed on the Alternate Pick-up Form.

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from AMS.

All changes and/or additions to the Alternate Pick-up form must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

In the event that a child is being picked up by a person not listed on the Alternate Pick up form, (i.e. carpool, visiting grandparent, play date), the child's parent must give a written note to a staff member stating to whom, the time and date the child will be released. Photo identification will be required.

If for any reason the staff is concerned that the safety of a child may be in jeopardy, we reserve the right to delay release of the child until safety of the child can be assured.

## **CUSTODY AGREEMENTS**

If there are any custody issues involving your child, you must provide AMS with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. AMS may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Parent, teacher, child, and school relationships are very important in a student's life. Active communication between parents and teachers is necessary for a successful school experience. All concerns, questions, and comments are important and appreciated. The school administrator and staff will communicate regularly with parents by:

- ◆ **FRIDAY FOLDER:** Announcements, notices, reminders, newsletters, etc. will be included with your child's weekly work. Please check the folder when it's brought home at the end of each week.
- ◆ **CONFERENCES:** Parent/Teacher conferences will be offered in late autumn, and again by request in late spring. However, a conference with your child's teacher can be scheduled anytime during the year. Please contact the school administrator to set up the meeting.
- ◆ **INFORMATION/NEWSLETTER:** A school information letter or news letter will be published regularly to share school news, coming events, and classroom highlights.
- ◆ **CALENDAR:** AMS will provide a yearly school calendar which is provided below, and will be posted on the Parent Information Bulletin Board.
- ◆ **PARENT INFORMATION BULLETIN BOARD:** AMS will provide a bulletin board for parents where calendars, Montessori articles, school flyers, newsletters, etc. can be found. We will also provide a space for parents to post flyers, business cards, etc. to help promote a strong community and communication among the parents of AMS. Please submit postings to the School administrator for approval. No outside solicitations will be permitted.
- ◆ **OBSERVATIONS:** AMS asks each family to attend two classroom observations throughout the year, the first by November 15, and the second by May 1. Observations can be scheduled by calling the office. This will give parents the opportunity to see their child in the classroom setting. This also allows parents an opportunity to prepare questions they may have for upcoming conferences.

## **PARENT/ADMINISTRATOR COMMUNICATION**

The school administrator is available by appointment to discuss any concerns, questions, and comments. Please call the school or stop in to schedule an appointment. Please note that the school administrator is also an active child care staff member, and may be engaged in a classroom when you stop by. In this case, her primary obligation at that time is the children in the classroom. The Owner/Administrative assistant will be available during office hours to answer any questions you may have, or to schedule appointments and observations.

## **SCHOOL ROSTER**

AMS will publish a school parent roster at the beginning of the school year. The roster will include the parent or guardians names and telephone numbers. Each family will receive a copy and updates. The roster will not include the telephone number or name of any parent/guardian who requests this information to be omitted.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Within AMS, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of AMS who have a "need to know" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as AMS strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, and HIV/AIDS status or other health related information of anyone associated with AMS.

Outside of AMS, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of AMS, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Communicating concerns about your child or his/her environment with your child's teacher or the Administrator is both appropriate and encouraged. You may observe children at our school who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of AMS are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

AMS takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the school. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with AMS. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

Due to severe weather conditions or other emergency situations, there may be times when the AMS facilities may be closed. Emergency closing is at the discretion of the school administrator. **If the decision to close is different from the City of Avon Public Schools, parents will be contacted by phone or written correspondence.**

### SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

In the event of severe weather conditions, AMS will generally follow Avon City Schools in determining whether or not to close. Parents may tune into the following local radio and television stations for emergency closing information in these circumstances.

- ◆ **Television** – tune in to **Channels: WJW FOX 8, WEWS 5 or WKYC 3**
- ◆ **Radio** – tune in to **WEOL - 930 AM**
- ◆ **[www.avon.k12.oh.us](http://www.avon.k12.oh.us)**

The City of Avon must make the decision by 5:45 a.m. so that television and radio stations can be notified. Cancellations should be available by 6 a.m.

### OTHER EMERGENCIES

Other situations, including but not limited to, electrical power failure, lack of water, lack of heat or air conditioning, hazardous road conditions, or other situations which may endanger the safety or health of children and employees, may result in AMS facilities being closed at the discretion of the School administrator. Parents will be contacted by a member of the AMS Staff by 8 a.m. when the School must be closed for one of the above reasons.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call where the pick-up location will be should the children need to be evacuated from the school. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Should the school need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than 15 consecutive school days. If the closure extends beyond 15 consecutive school days, parents will have their tuition refunded or reduced accordingly.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS CONTINUED...**

### **ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION**

Should the administration of AMS or any emergency services personnel determine the school building to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to Avon Bi-Rite located north on Colorado Avenue toward I-90. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact person for pick up.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the school. Parents may volunteer to read in the classroom, assist teachers, garden in the outdoor classroom, and/or coordinate special events.

Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may assist teachers in materials preparation (an endless job in a Montessori classroom), perform maintenance work, or assist in the outdoor classroom. These volunteer opportunities are ongoing. Speak to your child's classroom teacher, or check for opportunities posted on the parent bulletin board.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis (more than 5 hours/month) will need to secure a criminal background check, and receive volunteer orientation as required by our licensing regulations. Please ask the School administrator for more information and locations to complete the background check and set up a time for volunteer orientation. The cost for the fingerprinting may be reimbursed upon request.

How Parents can give support to AMS:

- ◆ **Be involved**, volunteer , join the Parent Club
- ◆ **Be informed**, attend parent/teacher conferences & observations
- ◆ **Be knowledgeable**, attend Parent Education meetings
- ◆ **Share** any of you or your child's **concerns** with AMS staff promptly and keep communication open

### **AMS PARENT CLUB**

AMS has a very active Parent Club. The Parent Club promotes community through monthly activities, and outings. This gives parents an informal opportunity to get to know one another spend quality time with their children. Some examples of AMS Parent Club outings are: apple/pumpkin picking, LENS nature class, Valentines Party, Teacher appreciation week, etc.

# THE MONTESSORI APPROACH AND CURRICULUM

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that no human being is educated by another person, but must teach him or herself. The goal of early childhood education is to cultivate the child's natural desire to learn. This in turn will help foster a natural curiosity and a love for knowledge, which will follow that child the rest of their life.

Children are born with a natural curiosity about their surroundings and themselves and a natural drive to discover as much as they can about their surroundings. They attempt to understand their surroundings through discovery and investigation. They master parts of their world through practice and repetition such as walking, talking, feeding themselves etc. Other aspects are shown, demonstrated, and explored.

To develop the higher order thought processes, children need to learn how to observe, predict, and ask **WHY?**

## THE MONTESSORI APPROACH TO LEARNING:

- ◆ Children are competent beings capable of self-directed learning.
- ◆ Children learn in a distinctly different way from adults.
- ◆ Children possess an "absorbent mind" from birth to around age 6, and have a limitless **motivation** to achieve competence within their environment and to perfect skills and understandings. In other words, children naturally love to practice.
- ◆ Children can become masters of their environment when the environment has been specifically prepared for them to be academic, comfortable, and designed to allow a maximum amount of independence. Montessori materials that are self-correcting are used as much as possible.

## THE MONTESSORI APPROACH TO TEACHING:

- ◆ The teacher observes each child as he or she interacts with the classroom environment, noting the child's skill development and mastery of current exercises. The teacher directs and presents new exercises to the child when the child is ready.
- ◆ The teacher watches for and notes "sensitive periods" of development, directing a child into further study in this area of development.
- ◆ The teacher guides and affirms the child's effort and mastery of his/her work.
- ◆ The teacher promotes an environment where practice and repetition lead to mastery.
- ◆ There are six defined areas in a traditional Montessori classroom: Practical Life, Language, Mathematics, Geography, Sensorial and Science/Botany.

## PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life activities provide the groundwork for physical, cognitive, and social development, and establish work habits that lead to future success in academic work.

Practical Life activities teach:

- ◆ **Care of One's Environment** – cleaning, sweeping, washing clothes, gardening, folding, etc.
- ◆ **Care of One's Person** – dressing, setting the table, washing hands, preparing food, etc.
- ◆ **Grace and Courtesy** – walking carefully, moving gracefully, carrying things, sharing, helping, saying “please” and “thank you”, etc.

The child is attracted to activities that give him/her independence and control of his/her own environment. The purpose of these exercises is to develop concentration and the ability to pay attention to detail as the child follows a regular sequence of actions. This teaches good work habits.

Practical life activities also help the young child develop fine and gross motor movement. These activities provide the very foundation on which the child approaches more intricate academic exercises.

## SENSORIAL

The Sensorial Materials are designed to sharpen the senses of the young child and to enable the child to understand the many impressions he receives through them. Each Sensorial Material isolates one defining quality such as color, weight, shape, texture, size, sound or smell. Sound boxes, for example, are all the same size, shape, color and texture; they differ only in the sounds which are made when the child shakes them.

The Sensorial Materials help the child distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what he already knows.

## LANGUAGE

The child learns oral language naturally. He automatically absorbs it from his environment. The work of the teacher is to expose the child to the equivalent forms of written language, which he learns through the same general pattern of development.

One of the first Montessori materials a child is introduced to are the sandpaper letters, which provide a phonetic basis for reading. The child's desire and sensitivity to touch are utilized by these letters. A child then begins to use cut out letters known as the movable alphabet. These letters are used by the child to sound out and build his own words.

Montessori Language materials are designed to free the child from the fatigue that goes with early developing writing skills, and still gives the child the opportunity to pursue an interest in words. These activities soon lead to writing and reading.

## MATHEMATICS

Children at the preschool level have innate mathematical minds. They are very aware of quantity, and love to count. The math materials designed by Montessori – the golden beads, the linear counting chains, cubes, red and blue rods and counters - permit children to manipulate Mathematical concepts. They experience the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in a concrete way which leads to a clearer understanding of mathematics.

## GEOGRAPHY

The Geography curriculum introduces the child to the world through the use of globes and puzzle maps detailing the seven continents. This introduction helps the child position him or herself in relation to the totality of the world. The children learn about people from other cultures and the many animals that inhabit our world.

## SCIENCES

Science concepts and principles will be explored throughout the year to help satisfy the innate curiosity that children have with their world and to give them ever increasing knowledge about their world.

Science is everywhere and in everything. Exploration will begin with the simple concept of living vs. non-living things, and plant and animal distinctions. The class will also explore:

- ◆ **Earth Science** - seasons, weather, air, land and water, rocks and minerals, the solar system, etc.
- ◆ **Plant Science** – seeds, plants, flowers, leaves, trees, gardening, etc.
- ◆ **Animal Science** – Invertebrates, Vertebrates, animal husbandry, the human body, etc.
- ◆ **Physical Science** – air, water, magnets, mixtures, electricity, etc.

## THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Here, at AMS, the child's participation in the outdoor classroom as caretaker of gardens and animals is an essential philosophy to the education of the whole child. Throughout the school year, children will be introduced to various, engaging activities involving the planting, growth and care of plants. In the outdoor classroom children will plant, water, weed and hoe gardens. The children will maintain compost piles and worm gardens. By sweeping paths, washing windows, filling birdfeeders and executing other various activities, the children have the responsibility to maintain a tranquil, outdoor environment.

Additionally, our outdoor classroom, by use of sturdy fence pens, will house different animals - ducks, pig, goats, chickens, etc. Students will be taught and given the opportunity to feed, brush and care for our animals; or they may simply sit outside the pen and be thoughtful observers. We believe a life-long connection or bond is created between child and nature (his surrounding environment) when given the uninhibited opportunity to learn and care for plants and animals.

*"Many a time when the children are tranquilly occupied in tasks, each at the work he prefers, one, two, or three, get up silently, and go out to cast a glance at the animals to see if they need care."*

(The Montessori Method, p158)

## **ANIMAL CARE**

Animal Care is an ongoing part of the Indoor/Outdoor Classroom and the Science and Botany curriculum at AMS. The “in house” animals that will be used in our program are under the care of the Wellington Animal Hospital (farm), and the Avon Lake Animal Clinic (exotic, and domestic pets). Health records for the animals are kept on file at the school, and can be viewed at any time by parents/guardians, and staff.

Care will be taken in choosing the animals that will be in contact with the children. Only gentle, non-aggressive breeds, and animals will be used. Children will always be accompanied when working with the animals. Part of the child’s experience will involve feeding (fresh fruits and vegetables only), watering, and brushing a variety of animals. **At NO TIME, will children be required to perform “chores”, or clean stalls or cages.**

Children will be required to wash their hands after handling the animals, after gardening, and/or upon re-entering the indoor classroom.

Visiting animals may include:

- ◆ Goats and sheep
- ◆ Chicken/Ducks
- ◆ Pot Bellied Pigs
- ◆ Pony, or Miniature Horses
- ◆ Turtles, Tortoises, guinea pigs, fish, lizards, frogs, dogs, etc.
- ◆ Visiting animals from Lake Erie Nature and Science School.

## **ART, MUSIC AND SECOND LANGUAGE**

Children are introduced to a variety of art activities, which they may explore freely. Art, music, and a second language are included in the daily curriculum in many areas of the classroom. For example:

- ◆ When a child is learning the seven continents of the world, he will trace, paint, and label the different continents.
- ◆ Music and songs are often used to reinforce concepts learned in Mathematics, Language, Geography, etc. There is a formal music curriculum in the Sensorial area.
- ◆ Second language is introduced through books, songs, and vocabulary throughout the classroom. American Sign Language and Spanish are two of the languages introduced.

# SUPERVISION AND SAFETY POLICIES

## SUPERVISION

Supervision of children is the function of actively observing and guiding a child or group of children. This includes awareness of and responsibility for the activity of each child and being physically present and near enough to intervene if needed. Supervision means teachers and assistants have knowledge of children's needs, accountability for their care, and knowledge of which children they are responsible for at all times.

**No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.**

## TEACHER TO STUDENT RATIO

AMS is licensed for 1 toddler, 24 preschool age children and 12 school age children. The staff to child ratio required by the state is 1 to 12, or 1 staff member for every 12 children. It is the Policy of AMS to, whenever possible, maintain a maximum of 1 to 9 ratio or 1 staff member for every 9 children.

The "**Required Staff/Child Ratios for Child Care Schools**" form is posted on the parent bulletin board, and at the entrance of each classroom, alongside the AMS licensing information. Maximum group size per classroom is 24 children.

## CHILD GUIDANCE AND MANAGEMENT

**Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-12-22**

Employees of AMS will use guidance and management techniques appropriate for pre-school aged children and that are relevant to the circumstances where discipline is needed. These rules apply to all staff members and volunteers.

The following techniques are trained and encouraged for use in AMS classrooms:

- ◆ Setting clear limits
- ◆ Redirecting the child to appropriate activity
- ◆ Showing the child positive alternatives
- ◆ Modeling the desired behavior
- ◆ Reinforcing appropriate behavior
- ◆ Teaching self-control, cooperation, and self-management of feelings
- ◆ Re-thinking time (time-out) \* see guidelines below
- ◆ Intervention, when needed - should be as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of all children

## **SUPERVISION AND SAFETY CONTINUED...**

Separation time shall last no more than one minute for each year of age of the child. A timer will be set and used to assure a child is not separated from the group for longer than the allowed time. When a child is to return to activity, the teacher/assistant must review the reason for the separation and what is expected.

If a specific behavior plan is required for a child, the plan should be discussed with the School administrator, teacher and assistant responsible for the child, and parents. This plan will be put in writing to be signed by the parent.

## **MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

### **Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-12-30**

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of AMS are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of AMS are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the

Non-reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at AMS take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of AMS cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

## **NON-SMOKING POLICY**

For the health of all AMS employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of AMS. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

## **PEANUT/TREE NUT FREE SCHOOL**

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to peanuts/tree nuts and products containing peanuts/tree nuts in some children, AMS prohibits foods containing peanuts/tree nut products on AMS property. Acorns, nutmeg, and seeds are used in the classroom. Please contact AMS if your child has an allergy to these items.

Parents are responsible for providing foods that are peanut/tree nut free for their child's snack. We have included for your reference a list of acceptable foods in the SNACK section.

## **FIREARMS AND WEAPONS POLICY**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on AMS School Campus for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in your child's immediate dismissal from AMS.

## **PARENT'S RIGHT TO IMMEDIATE ACCESS**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at AMS, as provided by law. In the event that your child may not be released to certain persons and/or relatives, legal documentation must be on file at the school (i.e. Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order).

## **SCHOOL BUILDING SECURITY**

Safety and security of our children is our highest concern. Parents and family are welcome and encouraged to volunteer their time on the campus of AMS. To maintain a safe environment for our children the following rules must be followed.

- ◆ All parents and guests must report to the front desk upon entering the campus for any reason other than scheduled drop off or pick up.
- ◆ Volunteers who plan to spend 5 hours per week or more on campus will be required to attend a volunteer orientation, and have a BCII and FBI background check.
- ◆ Driver's License or other photo identification will be required for any one other than custodial parents upon entering campus.
- ◆ Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the school administrator, and are allowed on campus only at the discretion of the school administrator. An employee of AMS will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the school.

Please remember that these policies are for our children's safety. When and if you are approached by a staff member who might not recognize you, kindly show your identification and take pride in knowing your children are being kept safe.

## **ACCIDENTS OR UNUSUAL INCIDENTS**

Should your child be involved in an unusual incident or accident during the course of the school day, a staff member is required to complete an Incident/injury Report. At the same time, the AMS School administrator will contact the parent or guardian, describing the incident or accident. The Incident/Injury Report will be presented to the child's parent or guardian by the teacher or assistant responsible for that child on the day of the Incident/Accident.

The Incident/Injury report must be signed and returned the following day. The AMS School administrator will be available if there is a need for further discussion.

## **EMERGENCY TRANSPORTATION**

In case of emergency, 911 will be called. AMS will utilize the EMC/Ambulance service for emergency transportation. Staff members will not transport children at any time.

## **SAFETY DRILLS**

AMS conducts regular safety drills (fire/tornado, evacuation/lockdown). Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times until after the drill has been completed, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill, parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to drop off or pick up their child. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

Parents will receive a copy of the AMS School Safety Plan which describes the Safety Policies and Procedure in greater detail.

# MANAGEMENT OF ILLNESSES

Ohio Administrative Code 5101-2-12-33

AMS provides children with a clean and healthy environment. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child's first school or group care experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illnesses at the beginning before the immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the school to quickly assess their general health. We ask that you not bring a sick child to the school.

## ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Due to the short duration of the class time, medication will not be administered to a child by an AMS employee unless that child has a life threatening allergy and requires an epi-pen, and has a current "Medical/Physical Care Plan" and "Request for Administration of Medication" form on file. The parent or guardian must be present to dispense any other required medication during school hours.

No medication can be transported by or kept with the child. All medication must be checked in at the office by a parent or guardian, and will be kept in the adult bathroom cabinet next to the first aid kit.

## MEDICAL/PHYSICAL CARE PLAN

Children with life threatening health conditions (such as severe Asthma, or Allergies that may result in anaphylactic shock), which may require medication during the course of the school day, must fill out a Medical/Physical Care Plan form. This form will allow AMS staff to dispense medication to your child if needed. Parents are responsible for training AMS staff in the proper procedure of administering your child's medication.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

AMS follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the School administrator and is available upon request for review. Additionally, copies can be purchased, for a nominal fee, from the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC). AMS is a member of the local Lorain County AEYC chapter.

A staff member with currently valid training in the management of communicable diseases will observe each child daily upon arrival at the school. Parents will be notified immediately of a child's condition when a child has been observed with the signs or symptoms of illness.

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness will be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian or person designated by the parent on the Emergency/Alternate Pick up form:

- ◆ Temperature of 100 degrees F – in combination with any other signs of illness
- ◆ Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period)
- ◆ Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or to make a whooping sound)

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONT....

- ◆ Difficulty or rapid breathing
- ◆ Yellowish skin or eyes
- ◆ Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- ◆ Untreated skin patches, unusual spots or rashes
- ◆ Unusually dark urine or grey or white stool
- ◆ Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- ◆ Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations
- ◆ Vomiting more than once or when accompanied by any other sign of illness
- ◆ Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 45 minutes of notification by phone. If a parent is reached, but cannot pick their child up within 45 minutes, the parent must arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child's emergency/alternate pick up form. If a parent can not be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency/alternate pick up form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children may return to school after at least 24 hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If they are not symptom free, a doctor's note is required stating that the child is no longer contagious.

## GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES

### CLASSROOM/CUBBY SUPPLIES LIST

All items should be permanently labeled with child's first and last name.

- ◆ Complete change of clothes (please see "Clothing" section below)
- ◆ Indoor shoes –slip-on or velcro canvas closed heel shoe (no flip flops)
- ◆ Extra pair of socks for days your child wears sandals to school.
- ◆ "back-up" snack (factory sealed, dry storable, individual sized packets)
- ◆ Water bottle – will be sent home daily for cleaning
- ◆ Extra hat and gloves (winter)
- ◆ Mud/rain shoes/winter boots for the Outdoor Classroom
- ◆ Sun or Garden Hat and sunglasses (if your child is sensitive to the sun)

**\*\*\*Sun screen should be applied on your child before school. The staff is not permitted to apply sun screen to your child.**

### KINDERGARTEN SUPPLIES LIST

- ◆ Un-ruled(blank) index cards (100 pack)
- ◆ super tip/ fine tip markers (traditional colors)
- ◆ box of crayons (24 pack)
- ◆ art/supply box
- ◆ rain boots
- ◆ waterproof jacket or poncho, \*optional rain pants
- ◆ snow pants, waterproof gloves, hat, \*snow boots

\*Suggest looking for snow pants and extra boots at used kid's stores. You can find them cheap in the summer.

### CLOTHING

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day that may require a change of clothing. Due to indoor and outdoor activities, children are to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing. We strongly recommend cotton pants with elastic waist-bands.

Children should have the following:

- ◆ a comfortable pair of slip-on shoes with a closed heel for indoor work, which they will change into upon entering the classroom. This creates a routine for the children. Routine activities comfort children and provide a natural transition upon entering and leaving the classroom. Socks must be worn at all times.

## CLOTHING CONTINUED....

- ◆ “gardening” boots for the outdoor classroom. These must be boots that can get muddy and sandy and will help keep the feet dry. These will be replaced with winter boots in late fall.
- ◆ Coats, hats, gloves, scarves and winter boots must be provided in the winter months. It is not necessary for the children to wear their winter boots to school. Teachers will change the children into their winter boots when they go outdoors. Teachers will request snowsuits be sent to school when outdoor snow play is planned.
- ◆ Kindergarteners are required to have a snowsuit for daily outside play beginning in November.

Certain types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting. Please avoid dressing children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures.

Children need to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the school at all times. A complete change of clothing includes; shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child’s first and last name.

## SNACKS (PEANUT/TREE NUT FREE)

At this time, AMS has a Food License exemption from the Lorain County Board of Health. Employees are not permitted to prepare or serve food to students. This includes washing, slicing, peeling, refrigeration, storing food for children.

Parents will provide peanut free snack for their child/children each day. “Back-up” snacks can be provided by parents and stored in each child’s cubby.

All snacks should come to school washed and ready for consumption. Snack should contain at least one food from two of the four basic food groups; meat/meat alternative, bread/grains, fruit/vegetable, milk. A staff member can help the child open a package, container, but will not be able to wash or prepare food. Water will always be available at the snack table. **Please, no juice drinks or sugary dessert snacks (i.e. cookies, rice crispy treats, cupcakes).**

Snack time, and food preparation by the child (i.e. slicing, spreading, chopping) is an important part of Practical Life in a Montessori classroom. We will provide appropriate utensils for these activities.

Please remember that snack time is NOT a meal time. Two 5 oz. servings is plenty. Sample snack: 5 crackers and 3 strawberries.

### SNACK IDEAS:

Sliced Veggies	Nutri-Grain Fruit Bars
Fresh or dried fruit	Yogurt
Plain Cherrios	Whole wheat or Graham Crackers
Hard Cheese	Popcorn
Soft Cheese or Jam for spreading	Goldfish Crackers

## LUNCH BUDDIES FOOD GUIDELINES

All lunches **must** contain the following:

- One serving of fluid Milk.
- One serving of Meat, Meat alternative.
- Two servings of vegetables or fruits.
- One serving of grain.

Parents will need to provide each of the above items in every lunch. This is a requirement from the ODJFS. Fluid milk (not yogurt) can be sent in a thermos or can be purchased that does not need to be refrigerated (Horizon). **The above items must be included in your child's lunch regardless of whether they will eat or drink them.** If you occasionally forget one of the above items, AMS will provide your child with the missing item, and an appropriate charge will be added to your monthly LB bill. Your child will not be able to attend Lunch Buddies if these items are consistently not provided daily.

### Healthy food choices:

The food guide pyramid is a guideline to help you and your child eat a healthy diet. The food guide pyramid can help you and your child eat a variety of foods while encouraging the right amount of calories and fat. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Department of Health and Human Services have prepared the following food pyramid to guide parents in selecting foods for children 2 years and older.



The Food Pyramid is divided into six colored bands representing the five food groups plus oils:

**Orange** represents grains: Make half the grains consumed each day whole grains. Whole-grain foods include oatmeal, whole-wheat flour, whole cornmeal, brown rice, and whole-wheat bread. Check the food label on processed foods - the words "whole" or "whole grain" should be listed before the specific grain in the product.

**Green** represents vegetables: Vary your vegetables. Choose a variety of vegetables, including dark green- and orange-colored kinds, legumes (peas and beans), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables.

**Red** represents fruits: Focus on fruits. Any fruit or 100 percent fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

**Yellow** represents oils: Know the limits on fats, sugars, and salt (sodium). Make most of your fat sources from fish, nuts, and vegetable oils. Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.

**Blue** represents milk: Get your calcium-rich foods. Milk and milk products contain calcium and vitamin D, both important ingredients in building and maintaining bone tissue. Use low-fat or fat-free milk after the age of two years. However, during the first year of life, infants should be fed breast milk or iron-fortified formula. Whole

cow's milk may be introduced after an infant's first birthday, but lower-fat or skim milk should not be used until the child is at least two years old.

**Purple** represents meat and beans: Go lean on protein. Choose low fat or lean meats and poultry. Vary your protein routine - choose more fish, nuts, seeds, peas, and beans.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthdays are a special time for children, and are announced to the class during community time (unless otherwise noted by parents). It is the policy of AMS, however, that like other "specials", birthday celebrations will be seamlessly included in the daily curriculum. **Please save party bags and treats for home celebrations.** With our birthday celebration, your child will feel special and celebrated.

For your child's birthday, please provide the following:

1. A filled out Life History Form located in the front pocket of the parent handbook. Please include your child's birth weight and length on the form.
2. A string or piece of yarn measured to the length of your child at birth. Please label the string with your child's name and inches at birth (masking tape works great!)

It is a common Montessori tradition that children bring a gift for the classroom to celebrate their birthday or other special day. This can be as simple as a plant for the garden (perhaps even from the parent's garden), or a book or work for his/her classroom. If parents would like to participate in this tradition and need ideas, a classroom wish list is available in the office.

## **GIFTS TO STAFF**

Frequently, families wish to show their appreciation to staff members on holidays or other occasions. AMS considers these gifts personal items belonging to the staff member given. Consider having your child make something, or bring something from the garden.

Traditionally, the AMS Parent Club takes up a collection for classroom gifts. Participation in contributing to a classroom gift is at the family's discretion. Gifts given to a classroom (Montessori materials, books, etc.) are always appreciated. Please ask the teachers for a classroom wish list.

AMS does not allow outside solicitation and does not have fund raisers. Students may occasionally collect funds for a classroom project.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are **not permitted to bring in toys from home**, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy.

## STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

**Jessica Gerhardt Sackett** received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Michigan State University in 1984. Ms. Sackett attended the Early Childhood Program at Columbus Montessori Education Center in 2003-2004 with the completion of her Early Childhood Credential in September, 2005. From May 1999 to November 2000, Jessica was an employee in the Children's Department of the Lakewood Public Library. In addition to working with the public, she was responsible for creating and conducting weekend and after school story programs.

In November, 2000, Ms. Sackett was employed by Montessori Children's School, formerly known as Bay Village Montessori School, as a classroom assistant and substitute. In 2003, while studying at Columbus Montessori Education Center, Ms. Sackett became the Directress of a Pre-primary - morning and afternoon classroom. In July, 2007 Ms. Sackett began teaching at Avon Montessori School, Avon, Ohio. Jessica is our Director of Education and our lead preprimary teacher. She has played an integral role in the founding of Avon Montessori School.

Jessica has been married to Peter Sackett for twenty-four years and is raising two, young men – Lee and Wilson.

**Jennifer Lukacs** graduated from Ohio State University with a Masters in Elementary Education in 1997. She taught for two years in the Columbus City School District and for four years in the Cleveland Municipal School System. Her favorite teaching experiences were in kindergarten and in Reading Recovery. She received Reading Recovery training during the 1998-1999 school year and also received beginning reading instruction training through The American Federation of Teachers Educational Research and Dissemination Program in 2000-2002. Jennifer is very interested in pursuing her Montessori Primary (Elementary) Education Certification. Jennifer has played an integral part in developing our kindergarten curriculum, and will be continuing to evaluate our students' early reading levels and skills. She will also be assisting in the indoor and outdoor classrooms. Jennifer and her husband Edward are the proud parents of their daughter Zoe.

**Alana Spitzer** - Alana Spitzer earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Jacksonville University in 2007. As a firm believer in learning through experience as a way of life, Alana loves to travel and to try any opportunity presented to her. While continuing to create her artwork, Alana returned to Lorain County Community College to pursue her teaching certification, and graduated in 2011, receiving the Outstanding Student of the Year in academic excellence and leadership for the department of Early Childhood Education.

Alana's passion in teaching is deeply rooted in Montessori philosophy. She studied Montessori Education and completed Montessori preprimary and toddler training simultaneously. She volunteered at the Firelands Montessori Academy regularly and began substituting with them in 2009. She spent the 2010-2011 academic year student teaching at FMA.

In addition to teaching in the classroom, Alana worked with the all of the preprimary classes to create works of art for the fall art auction. In the spring she helped to design and create a peace pole with the entire school. She is very excited to be joining her fellow Montessorians at AMS.

**Karen Stewart** graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1987 with a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, and over the years was employed as an Accountant and Human Resource Administrator. In 2004, Karen became the Administration Director of Governance Automation Services Inc. a firm specializing in governmental compliance documentation and risk management related services. Simultaneously, Karen became involved in Montessori Education through the enrollment of her two children. Based on her administrative credentials and motivated by personal experiences, her enthusiasm for Montessori and the Avon Community, Karen and husband Arthur Stewart founded Avon Montessori School in June 2007. Karen is our School Administrator. Karen will be completing her CDA Early Childhood Credential this fall, and will be pursuing her Masters of Education and Preprimary Montessori Certification beginning in the fall of 2011. Karen and Arthur are proud parents of two children – Brenna (1<sup>st</sup> grader) and Daniel who will be continuing his second preprimary year at AMS in the 2009 – 2010 school year.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Avon Montessori School board of directors provides an effective balance of experience, effective business administration, local, state and federal governmental compliance, and current Educational expertise.

The Avon Montessori School Board of Directors sole purpose is to provide strategic planning and the long-term stewardship of the School. The board as a whole and each of its members individually, provide the credentials and experience required to operate the school effectively with a strong belief in and commitment to Montessori education and the families it serves.

William Gallagher

Arthur W. Stewart Jr.

Karen E. Stewart

Heather Petruccelli

Julie Felder