

Toad Hill Children's House

2020-2022

Policy and Procedure Handbook for Parents

This handbook contains information about the philosophy and policies of Toad Hill. Reading it thoroughly will give you a better understanding of your child's experiences with us. Toad Hill Children's House does not discriminate in the admission, retention and dismissal of children or families on the basis of sex, race, color, class, national or ethnic origin, ability or disability, or the marital status, religious beliefs, sexual preference, political persuasion or disabling conditions of parents. All children will be considered for enrollment based on space available and licensing requirements.

Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy of Toad Hill is rooted in the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori. She discovered that children possess an active love of learning and an eagerness to explore their environment. By working with a child's natural inclinations towards discovery, a learning environment can be created which will foster independence, self discipline and motivation. Children attending Toad Hill will have opportunities to develop creative, social, intellectual, cognitive, and large and small motor skills, all within a Montessori environment.

Dr. Montessori believed that learning is more an individual than a group activity. In a Montessori classroom each child works without being pushed ahead or held back by the needs of the others in the classroom. Cooperation, rather than competition, is encouraged. In the classroom children interact continuously, choosing to work on their own or with a friend. The older children help the younger ones and the younger ones observe with fascination the work they will soon be able to do. A child goes through stages of development when certain types of knowledge are more easily acquired. Dr. Montessori referred to these as "sensitive periods", a term finding a new life in the recent research on brain development. This research is another validation of Dr. Montessori's work. Moving freely allows children to learn with all their senses. "Nothing can be in the intellect which is not first in the senses." Sensory-motor activities help build the neural connections in the child's growing brain.

Between infancy and 3.5 years, children are especially responsive to order and routine in their environment. They are also very receptive to language. During the latter part of this period they love to repeat exercises, easily learning to carry out complicated tasks. From 3-6 years, children are very aware of written language and numbers. If they are given proper preparation through a concrete, sensorial approach they are often able to learn to read, write and successfully complete mathematical operations.

Toad Hill programs are based on the goals that children should:

Discover their inherent love of order.

Experience the profound concentration of which they are capable.

Enjoy work firmly grounded in reality.

Expand their independence with the self-confidence found through accomplishment.

Learn to share with and appreciate each other.

Listen willingly and experience the strength and support of community.

Find real joy in their work.

One aspect of Montessori Education that's recently come to the forefront is Peace Education. The essentials of education for peace are built into the Montessori curriculum at every level. Perhaps having lived in an era buffeted by wars caused Dr. Montessori to become a tireless worker for peace. She was proposed as a candidate for the Nobel Prize in 1949 and 1950, and 1952. Dr. Montessori's curriculum was designed to help develop a respect for our planet and its inhabitants. By learning to respect and care for themselves and the environment of their classroom, the

children are learning to take care of the larger world. The Montessori classroom is designed with respect for children. Furniture and equipment are sized for them. Classroom materials are designed to encourage the children in their drive for discovery. The materials are arranged in such a way that children can follow the logical transition from one activity to another. A Montessori classroom invites children into an environment carefully designed to stimulate sensory perception, foster readiness for reading and writing and help the child gain self-reliance in learning.

The Montessori Method of education has been in practice since 1906 in many parts of the world. Montessori is not a static or closed system of education. It is as much an attitude about education and children as it is a specific method.

Areas of Our Classrooms

Practical Life

The first experiences your child will have at Toad Hill will be in the Practical Life area of the classroom. This area is full of activities that your child is already familiar with, such as pouring, sorting, and simple domestic tasks. By offering these activities to new students we are able to ease the transition from home to school, and they begin to take ownership of our house.

Sensorial

Sensorial activities heighten your child's senses of touch, sight, taste, smell and sound, using materials designed according to Dr. Montessori's careful observations of children.

Art and Music

Art supplies are freely available in our classroom. Music sessions include performing, dancing, singing and experimenting while learning about a variety of cultures.

Literacy

Writing often comes before reading in a Montessori classroom with children building up their first words phonetically using letters of the Large Moveable Alphabet. After this, reading is accomplished with great ease.

Mathematics

By handling number rods, counting out beads, counting spindles into boxes and arranging colored counters in patterns, children gain a physical impression of size and quantity long before they begin to manipulate numbers. This provides a solid foundation for the abstract.

Library Spaces

Our library spaces feature new titles and old favorites. In addition to story books, we offer a rotating selection of nonfiction books. These reflect other areas of the classroom, including: science, nature, the arts, cultural subjects and more.

Cultural Subjects

Your child will be introduced to botany, geography, history, science and the many cultures of the world as they handle and examine artifacts from around the world – a Japanese fan, chopsticks, a Ecuadorian textiles, or a drum from Cyprus.

Outdoor Classroom

Montessori believed strongly that children should be in touch with the substance of their world. Activities in the Outdoor Classroom and our nature walks allow children to develop gross motor skills as they climb trees, garden, and scrub during the warmer months, and shovel, climb and build in the snow during

winter. The children also learn about the natural world as they observe nature including our orchards, prairies, wooded areas, flower gardens, and visiting birds, insects and small animals.

Our Staff

*Rebecca Katzenmeyer,
Head of School*

Rebecca Katzenmeyer has been the Head of School of Toad Hill Montessori since 2005, and opened Blooming Grove Montessori in 2015. Miss Beckie received her Montessori Certification in 2004 from the Montessori Center International of London. She also serves on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Montessori Association.

*Kathleen McHugh,
Director, Lead Teacher*

Kathleen McHugh has been teaching at Toad Hill Children's House since 2007. She has been lead teaching since 2012 and has served as Director since 2015. Kathleen is also a licensed social worker having worked with at risk youth of the middle school age. Kathleen has her Bachelor's of Social Work and received her AMS (American Montessori Society) certificate of training from Heartland Teacher Training Center in Moline, IL.

Jenny Sholar, and Hilary Mitchell
Paraprofessional Montessori Staff

The Paraprofessional Montessori staff support Lead Teacher and the children through presentations of materials, answering questions and serving as resources in the classroom. They help children progress from one activity to the next while monitoring their development. The Montessori staff supervise children participating in classroom activities, carefully prepare the environment, and carry out daily activities. The Montessori staff are trained to assist each child, allowing choices among activities and ability levels. There is freedom with limits in the Montessori classroom. Children are allowed to work freely as long as they do not disturb others. Montessori staff report to the Toad Hill Director; the Director reports to our Head of School.

General Information

Toad Hill Children's House was opened to serve the East Madison community with a Montessori program dedicated to providing high quality educare for children from 2.5 years to 6 years of age. The program is staffed with a qualified Head of School, Montessori Teachers, and Assistants who have been hired for their specific abilities and skills. The center's license, a book of WI regulations, "Your Guide to Licensed Child Care," and any notices of rule violations are posted in the south entry way.

Programs

The Toad Hill programs are Monday - Friday year round and are divided into the School Year - from September through mid June - and Summer Program - from mid-June through August. The maximum licensed capacity is currently 28 children for care between the hours of 7:30 am and 5:00 pm. Please refer to the website: toad-hill.com for tuition rates. Minimum scheduled attendance is Monday through Thursday from 8-12.

Before School Program with Early Arrival- 7:15-8:00;

Families who need to begin their day early may enroll in the Early Arrival Program for an additional fee. Children enrolled arrive between 7:30 and 8:00.

Montessori Daily Activities 8:00 am -2:45 pm

Preschool and Kindergarten students arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 am and begin their day outside. Once all children have arrived we move to the running space or on a nature walk, depending on the temperature. Children are then welcome to continue to participate in outdoor activities or may choose to be inside choosing activities on their own, based on their interests, abilities, and lessons previously given by the Montessori Directress. Children bring a lunch from home and eat together between 11:00 am and 12 noon, followed by departure or a rest period and extended work period for older children. All primary students must be picked up by 3:00 pm unless enrolled in the Extended Day program.

Extended Day- 3:00-5:00 pm

Families who need children to stay after 3:00 pm may enroll in the Extended Day Program. Children enrolled are picked up at Toad Hill.

Arrival

Please write in your child's arrival time on the attendance log in the entryway or on the fence. The attendance will be checked by staff, and a phone call, text or e-mail is required if your child will not be attending for any reason. Please call, text or e-mail at least 30 minutes before your child's scheduled start time. Children are expected to arrive between 8:00 and 8:30, unless enrolled in the Early Arrival Program. Children enrolled in Early Arrival may arrive between 7:30 and 8:00 am for an additional fee. If a child who is scheduled to arrive does not arrive within 30 minutes of the specified arrival time, and we have not been notified in advance of the child's absence, staff will attempt to contact the parent or guardian to determine the child's whereabouts.

Nutrition

Toad Hill Children's House offers high quality, healthy snacks that are served in a family style, sit down setting. Snack is available to children throughout the morning. Children take snack when they are ready and clean up their space afterwards. The snack schedule and offerings are posted on the sign in clip board for families to view daily. Milk and water are served with snack. Children are encouraged to chat and socialize. Adults model appropriate snack and meal time behavior.

Lunches are supplied by families and are eaten in small groups with the adult modeling proper meal time behavior and etiquette.

Specialty menus, food allergies, and special diets are to be discussed between families and staff. These items will reflect on enrollment paperwork. Any child with any of the above will have a written plan posted in the kitchen, which is accessible to staff only.

The kitchen is used by staff only. Spills are cleaned with the two step process. All other kitchen cleaning is done daily. Dishwashing is done with the three step method according to licensing standards.

Food is stored in airtight, labeled (date and time opened) containers on shelves. Any perishable foods are refrigerated.

Special treats (birthday celebrations, classroom celebrations, etc) should have ingredients labeled.

All detailed cleaning instructions, food prep instructions, handwashing guidelines, etc. are posted in the kitchen for staff reference.

Dismissal and Lateness

Dismissal are from 12:15-12:30, 2:45-3:00, and sign-out and pick-up are expected to be complete by 12:30 or 3:00. All children who stay past 3:00 must be enrolled in our Extended Stay Program and must signed out and picked up by 5:00 pm.

If for any reason you wish to pick up your child earlier or must pick up later, please call the school so the staff is advised of the unusual circumstances. Children are often distressed by the late pickups. Please make every effort to be prompt. Please let a staff person know that you are leaving with your child. There is a late pick up fee of \$10.00 for every 15 minutes *or portion thereof* that your child is at Toad Hill Children's House after scheduled pickup time. If your child's name is highlighted, you are late and will be charged accordingly.

Parents may authorize others to pick up their children in writing on their enrollment forms and emergency cards, by a written notice left on the Attendance Clipboard, a text or phone call to 608-217-9533, or an email to kathleen@toad-hill.com. You must include the name of the person who will pick up your child, the time the child will be picked up and a number where the person can be reached. They must bring a picture I.D. that will be checked by a staff member.

Law enforcement will be contacted if anyone attempts to pick up a child while appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or if a child is not picked up and no guardian or emergency contact person can be reached.

Necessary Forms

Upon acceptance into the program you will be given a set of forms that are required by the State of Wisconsin to be kept on file. Your child will not be allowed to attend programs until all necessary forms are completed, included, but not limited to:

Health Report and Immunization Record Form

A signed Health Report is due within 90 days of acceptance to any program. All Health Reports must be current within 2 years for children ages 2 and older. A complete Immunization record is due within 30 days of attendance to any program, and must be updated as new immunizations are administered.

*Child Care Enrollment Form**Health History**Intake For Children Under 2 Years**Authorization to Administer Medication*

These forms must be on file on or before your child's first day of attendance.

Fees

All fees and tuition rates are listed on the Application Form. Check the website at toad-hill.com or email kathleen@toad-hill.com if you have any questions.

Application Fee

There is one time, non-refundable, \$100 Application Fee, which is due along with the completed application.

Material Fees

There is an annual Material Fee of \$300 per school year and \$50 for the Summer Program.

School Year Tuition

Regular School Year tuition is calculated as part of a September to mid June academic year and accounts for all school closings including, In-Service days, Winter Vacation, Spring Break and all Holidays and School Closings are comparable with local area school districts. Fees are prorated into 9.5 monthly payments from September through June. School Year Tuition is prepaid and is withdrawn via ACH on the last business day of every month. A 3% discount will be offered for School Year tuition paid in full at the start of the School Year.

Summer Tuition

Summer tuition is calculated based on a weekly enrollment schedule to allow maximum flexibility for families and summer staffing. Tuition is totaled for the entire summer and fees are prorated into 3 payments due throughout the summer from May through July. School Year Tuition is prepaid and is withdrawn via ACH on the last business day of every month. A 3% discount will be offered for Summer tuition paid in full at the start of the Summer Program.

Late Payment / Returned Check Fees

Payments returned through our ACH payment system will incur a late fee of \$35. The late fee increases to \$50 if tuition is not paid within 15 days of the expected payment date. Payments more than 30 days in arrears may include withholding of service. Parents may submit a tuition check if paying for the full school year or full summer program in advance. If a check is returned by the bank for any reason, including insufficient funds (bounced check) a fee of \$35 per check that does not clear will be required. No additional late fee shall be applied; assuming proper payment is made promptly within 5 days notice. If your family is having difficulty making a payment by the due date, please contact the Administrative Assistant to set up an alternate payment plan. Tuition is not refunded for absences (illness or family vacations) or for unscheduled closings of school (i.e. snow days.)

School Policies

Enrollment

Children may be enrolled at Toad Hill Children's House as openings arise. Preference is given to siblings of children who have attended or are attending, full time students, and to children of optimal enrollment age.

Probation/Termination

For all children there is a six-week probationary period. We have this policy to ensure we can adequately serve the needs of all the children. During this time we look to identify children whose needs appear to not be met, and we seek to make changes. Areas considered: The physical environment, interactions with adults and children, appropriate learning materials to fit the child's perceived needs, schedule of the day and additional resources (information, training or materials) for the staff. As we consider these changes, a parent/staff conference is arranged.

If this process extends beyond, or arises after the original six-week probation period a parent/staff conference will be held. If it is determined the program does not meet the needs of the child, the probation period may be extended or a final day of enrollment will be determined with every effort made to give the parents time (up to 30 days) to find an alternative arrangement. When, in the opinion of the Head of School and staff, the needs of the center dictate that a child be dismissed, the center reserves the right of dismissal. Dismissal will occur only after written notice has been provided to the parent. A child may be withdrawn from the school for reasons such as, but not limited to:

The center reserves the right for dismissal for failure to promptly pay tuition.

The center reserves the right of dismissal for failure to submit required health and enrollment information.

The center reserves the right of dismissal for failure to follow center policies and inappropriate behavior.

The center reserves the right of dismissal for chronic lateness, that is defined as; failure to drop-off or pick-up within the designated arrival and departure times and more than three episodes of lateness in any one-month period. This constitutes grounds to ask a family to withdraw from the program.

Parent Termination of Enrollment:

Parents must provide written notice of intent to withdraw a child at least one month in advance of last date of attendance. Parents are financially obligated for 30 days from the date written notice is provided, whether or not the child continues to attend.

Mutual Decision Between School and Parent Termination of Enrollment:

The child's enrollment will be terminated when the center and the parents mutually agree that placement is inappropriate. Parents are responsible for any outstanding balance they may have prior to the agreed upon termination. Parents will be responsible for tuition only up to the final day of enrollment. Any disagreement between the school and parents over the termination of a child's enrollment prior to the end of the agreed time can be appealed in writing to the Head of School.

Grievance Procedure

If a parent has a grievance, the following steps should be taken:

1. Speak to the party involved (another parent or guardian, or staff member.) Resolve the problem if possible.
2. Speak to the Head of School and ask for assistance to solve the problem.
3. If the parent feels the grievance constitutes a violation of licensing rules, then, as a final resort – call the State of Wisconsin, Department of Children and Families.

Abuse/Neglect Policy

All Toad Hill Child Care Providers are required by State Law to immediately report suspected or known cases of child abuse or neglect. In accordance with this requirement, any staff person of Toad Hill with suspicion or knowledge of abuse or neglect of a student shall take responsibility to see that it is reported to law enforcement or Dane County Child Protective Services . If a parent has a suspicion of abuse or neglect on the part of any staff member, the concern should be brought to the attention of the Head of School; if, following such discussion and investigation, the parent continues to believe this is occurring, then the parent should report the concerns to Dane County's Child Protective Services office.

Health Policy

Health Precautions

A child's hands shall be washed with soap and warm running water before and after snack, after toileting or diapering, and after wiping bodily secretions with a disposable tissue. All staff shall wash their hands with soap and warm running water before handling food, and after assisting toileting and after wiping bodily secretions from a child with a disposable tissue.

Bodily secretions such as runny noses, eye drainage and coughed-up matter shall be wiped with a disposable tissue, used once, and placed in a plastic-lined container. Whoever does the wiping shall wash his or her hands immediately. Bodily secretions on surfaces shall be washed with soap and water

and disinfected with a bleach solution of one tablespoon bleach to one quart of water, made fresh daily. Hands shall be washed immediately. Single use disposable gloves shall be worn if there is contact with blood or blood containing body fluids or tissue discharges. Hands shall be washed with soap and water after removal of gloves and the gloves will be discarded in plastic bags.

For spills of vomitus, urine, feces, blood or other body fluids, center staff shall clean and disinfect the floors, walls, bathrooms, tabletops, and equipment.

Wet or soiled clothing and diapers shall be changed promptly from an available supply of clean clothing. Soiled clothing will be kept in a plastic bag, and sent home for laundering.

All staff is required to be in good health when reporting for work, and to have annual health exams. If your child has special health needs all staff will be provided with anything necessary to provide the best care possible.

Personnel Policy

All Personnel Policies are outlined in the Staff Policy Book. This document is available to families upon request.

Ill Child Procedure

Children with a sore throat, inflammation of the eyes, fever greater than 100 degrees, lice, ringworm, rash, vomiting, diarrhea or other illness or condition having the potential to affect the health of other persons shall be isolated and the parent called. When staff calls the parent of a sick child they must pick up the child within one hour. The emergency contact person will be called if the parent cannot be reached.

The ill child will be provided with a light blanket or asked to sit in a chair isolated from other children

Children are required to be absent for 24 hours after their last vomiting, diarrhea or fever. Prescription medications must be administered a full 24 hours before the child can return to the center. In the case of head lice, the child must be "nit free" before returning to the center.

If the child complains of feeling ill, the staff will watch for other symptoms. The child may continue for the day unless he/she is unable to participate in the daily routine and/or a condition listed in above develops.

The center reserves the right of exclusion when, in the opinion of the Director or staff, the child appears to be ill.

Please notify the school by phone by 8:30 am when a child will be absent. Staff are required, by law, to reach a parent or other contact person within a half hour of scheduled arrival time if a child who is expected to attend does not arrive. There are no refunds for school days missed due to illness or otherwise.

Communicable Disease

Parents are informed when a child in the center is found to have a specific communicable disease by a notice posted by the entrance to the school. Parents are to inform the center when their child has a

communicable disease so that others may be notified. The identity of the infected child **will remain confidential**. Certain diseases, however, must be reported to the Health Department.

A child may be readmitted without a statement from a doctor after having had a communicable disease only if the child has been absent for a period as specified by the Health Department.

Medications

We encourage parents to administer medications before or after our programs. However upon special requests, medications may be given if a medication authorization form is filled out and signed by the parent listing specific dates and times during which it is to be given. Medication must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, dosage and directions for administration.

All medications are stored on top of shelf of a cupboard in a locked container and are inaccessible to the children. Medication that require refrigeration will be placed in a locked container clearly labeled with the word MEDICINE.

Accidents and Injuries

Minor injuries will be washed with soap and water and covered with a bandage or treated with ice. Injuries will be recorded in the injury log book. Parents will be verbally informed of minor injuries at pick-up time or via text messaging. Medical logs and student records are maintained for staff use only.

In case of a serious injury parents will be consulted, if parents can not be contacted staff will contact the emergency contact person listed in our records. Should an ambulance be needed, parents will be responsible for any costs.

In the event of an extreme, life-threatening occurrence, with no time to consult parents or files, 911 will be called and the child would be taken to the nearest emergency room. An adult on the list of Emergency Volunteers will be contacted to assist the staff in emergency situations. All Emergency Volunteers must be available within 5 minutes.

Emergency Planning

In the event of fire, children will be evacuated through the nearest safe exit. The attendance form and list of phone numbers for parents and emergency contacts will be taken out to assure that all children are accounted for and all families notified. Children will be assembled at the bike rack in the center of the parking area. The fire department will be called by the staff. In case of tornado warning, the children will be taken to the basement for quiet games and reading. Blankets, a portable radio and flashlight with extra batteries for both are kept in the basement at all times. The attendance form and emergency contact information will be brought along.

If we are unable to return to the building after an evacuation, all parents or emergency contacts will be notified and children must be picked up within an hour.

In the event of a lost child, all areas of the property will be checked. If the child cannot be found, the child's parents and/or emergency contact and the police will be immediately notified.

Building Emergencies

If there is a threat to the building or occupants, such as a possible shooter; requiring a lockdown; shades would be drawn, all doors locked; and parents would be notified of the situation as soon as it is safe to do

so. If Toad Hill loses services, including but not limited to: no heat, no air conditioning, no water, no electricity, plumbing problems, no telephone or other occurrences that may interfere with a child's safety, parents will be contacted immediately, and made aware of the situation, and how and when the issues will be resolved. In accordance with the State of Wisconsin Child Care License, Toad Hill Children's House may not be less than 67 degrees Fahrenheit, and if inside temperatures exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit, proper air circulation will be provided.

Child Guidance and Discipline

Children who are crying, fussing, or distraught may be held and comforted by rocking or lightly rubbing the child's back. Staff will attempt to redirect the child and speak calmly and soothingly to help the child work through the situation. If a child continues to cry, fuss or be distraught for more than 30 minutes, and every effort has been made by staff to comfort the child, parents will be notified and may be asked to pick up the child within 30 minutes.

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal with Montessori education. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly, logical manner. Children typically choose work that they are capable of doing and are free to use it for as long as they wish without interference from others. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might be present in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed age group allows the younger children to emulate the older children's mature behavior.

It is our belief that discipline handled in a way that respects the dignity and the will of the child and fosters a positive self-concept, has a good chance of becoming internalized by the child. This philosophy suggests that cooperation is preferable to blind obedience because the child has input and the child participates. The child does something because it makes sense, because it is clearly needed and not simply because the Directress has made a request. We feel that boundaries are an important factor in producing an environment in which the child will feel secure. An environment in which there are no boundaries is frightening for the child.

In accordance with Wisconsin licensing rules, punishment that is humiliating or frightening, such as spanking, verbal or physical abuse, withholding or forcing of food, punishment for lapses in toilet training, or other forms of physical punishment will never be used, even at a parent's request.

Preferred Discipline Techniques

Redirection – substituting another material or suggesting another activity

Positive reinforcement and encouragement – such as using specific praise or other intrinsic rewards.
Food will never be used as a reward or punishment.

Modifying the environment to meet the needs of the child

Explaining consistent, clear rules to the children.

Maintaining realistic, developmentally appropriate expectations

Acting as a role model for acceptable and appropriate actions

Offering choices when possible and being willing to accept the choice the child makes

Offering a breather: inviting a child to sit apart from the classroom, either with a directress or alone to calm the child.

Parent involvement

By actively showing your child that you care about the school, a stronger sense of community and trust is developed. Parents may be involved by contributing to the classroom needs, building and grounds maintenance, fundraising, or social events.

In choosing our programs, you have already affirmed your support for the Montessori educational philosophy. We feel we can do the best job fulfilling your expectations if we have opportunities for sharing what goes on in the classrooms and why. One way of doing this is for parents to try to attend as many of our parent meetings as possible. Regularly scheduled Parent Workshops will be advertised through the newsletter. We make an effort to vary these presentations each year while still providing the information parents often request about the programs. Parents who attend regularly have commented that they always discover something new!

Another valued parent contribution to the class would be to volunteer to share a special interest or talent; we always enjoy learning about your own family's customs or special foods, having parents demonstrate science experiments, help with a baking project or crafts, offer to help with some classroom maintenance work, etc. You may be surprised at your own gifts!

Insurance

The premises of Toad Hill Children's House is insured by the Capitol Indemnity Corporation .

Pets

Toad Hill has fish and a rabbit in the classrooms. Children have access to the rabbit during school hours, and are required to wash their hands after handling the rabbit or its materials. Parents of currently enrolled children will be notified if other pets become part of the curriculum.

Classroom Observation

Parents and legal guardians are welcome at their child's school at any time, preferably after the first six weeks of each semester. It is especially useful to both parents and staff if you've had a chance to spend some time in the class before fall and spring conferences. When your child is initially adjusting to a new classroom, it is usually less confusing for your child if you wait until he or she is feeling independently comfortable, generally several weeks after the child begins, before observing. Here are some general guidelines we give any visitors to our program:

You'll get the most useful information from your visit if you spend time quietly observing from the front entryway.

If a situation arises during your visit in which you are unsure of the appropriate response, please ask a staff person for assistance.

Only staff are allowed, by our licensing regulations and our policy, to discipline children.

Communications/Conferences

We are constantly working on ways to ensure that we maintain processes for communication between parents and staff, which is crucially important to our partnership. We have the following processes in place to facilitate communication:

Conferences with the Parents, staff, and Head of School can be arranged anytime, as mutually convenient, by request.

Please send a text message to 608-217-9533 or verbally communicate changes or special notes about your child's day, such as a different pick-up time or person, or notes about general well-being. "Did not sleep well last night, so s/he may be tired or grumpy."

In order that they may give their full attention to the children, the staff will not be available, except for messages of great urgency or by special arrangement, to take phone calls or conduct personal conferences, during program hours. Appointments may be arranged only outside of program times. If you wish, you may leave a voicemail or text message and your call will be returned at the earliest possible opportunity.

We really value your concerns and in-depth understanding of your child. It is particularly helpful for us to know about changes in your child's life, or your family's, that may affect how she or he is responding at school, such as inability to sleep, changes in toileting or eating habits, the birth of a sibling, a death, separation or divorce, moving, or any other stressful or exciting situation occurring in the home or at school.

Confidentiality

Any information that you share with any member of the staff will be held as confidential.

Items Parents Need to Provide

All Students - A pair of slippers, 2 sets of extra clothing for accidents or other mess. Please replace clothing as it is sent home, and make sure to label all clothes to make sure it comes back to you!

Students who are toilet training - Check regularly with Kathleen and other staff to make sure wipes, pull-ups (for rest time) and pants/underpants are available to help your child to be successful during their time at school.

Students who stay for rest - You may choose to send a cot cover, a blanket, and a stuffie - depending on what your child needs to be comfortable during rest time.

Our goal is for children to be able to participate comfortably in any available activity of their choice. This is easier if their clothes are comfortable and easily laundered. Long pants are recommended for outdoor play. Children who are still working on dressing and toileting skills are greatly helped in this process by wearing clothes that are easy for them to manage independently, like those with stretchy waists without buttons or zippers.

We strongly discourage the wearing of costumes/superhero clothing (even t-shirts) at school. Children often take on the more aggressive persona of the character. And if their character is the "good guy", then another unwilling child is cast in the opposing role. Even costumes of a non-aggressive nature cause the children to focus on the image of their friend's outfit, rather than their friend, him/herself. We find that our classrooms are much more peaceful if the child's true self can shine through.

During cold/snowy weather, children will need snow pants, hats, boots (insulated) and mittens.

We also strongly encourage rain suits or a raincoat and pants with boots on rainy, wet days.

Please be sure to label ALL your child's clothing and personal items. This makes the inevitable process of tracking down lost items much less frustrating

Things from Home to Share in Class

Items brought from home can often cause conflicts between children, or become such a focus of your own child's attention that he or she has difficulty choosing work or interacting with others. When negative emotions such as jealousy and envy occur, feelings are hurt. Therefore we ask that toys and trinkets be left at home. An item or items that inadvertently found their way to school- in spite of your best efforts!- need to be placed in the office on the top shelf for safe keeping and can be reclaimed there at the end of the day.

If you have special items that can enhance discussions being held in the classroom, such as items from nature or cultural artifacts, please notify the staff before bringing the items to school. Children should leave items in a place designated by the staff until time to show.

Thank you and we hope that you and your child have a lovely year with us at Toad Hill Children's House