

Thank you for your interest in our school. The Parent Handbook that you have received was designed to answer your questions concerning your child's experience and Small Planet Montessori School policies. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Small Planet Montessori School

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS SHEET

I have read and understand the information contained in the Parent Handbook. I am also aware that this handbook may be revised at any time to ensure the health and safety of the children in the facility.

Signature _____ Date _____

Welcome to Small Planet Montessori School

We offer a Montessori education with trained teachers in fully equipped classrooms. The fundamental aim of the Montessori Method is self-education of the children through special emphasis on the training of the senses.

Small Planet offers an environment designed to allow the total child to develop. Every child experiences success as they are skillfully directed toward a mastery of the world around them. They will be constantly challenged as they move from the physical world--where they can develop their motor skills and all their senses with self-teaching/self-correcting, materials--into the abstract world of ideas and concepts, all of their own pace.

All this takes place in a learning environment that integrates the outdoor atmosphere with the classroom. Your child will develop the skills and acquire the knowledge to be successful through out life.

This handbook contains important information concerning your child and our procedures, so please read the entire handbook and notify us if there are any questions.

I. ARRIVAL: Please sign your child in and out everyday

1. Students arrive for Montessori Classes between 8:20 and 8:40. Parents must see that their child has entered the building and has been seen by their teacher.
2. It is much easier on your child to have a short good-bye, then leave promptly.
3. Medication, medication forms and permission forms should be left with the teacher, not in the child's bag..
4. **Children not registered for child care should not be brought more than 10 minutes before their scheduled class time of 8:30.** Please try not to bring them into the classroom late because the child may feel uncomfortable about arriving after everyone else has become involved in activities.
5. Children need to arrive ready to begin their morning. Should you have a very young child who needs to be changed and/or cleaned upon arriving, please make use of the changing table that is in their classroom. Older children like to look their best as well. Clean face and hands and brushed hair give them a ready

start.

6. It is important that students arrive on time for class so that they do not miss the first circle. In an effort to keep the children and their class routine, we must minimize the amount of disruptions. We urge parents to have their children at school no later than 9:30a.m. Children will not be allowed to come to school after 09:30 a.m. unless they have had a doctor's appointment or there has been a family emergency. We are required to do a classroom count at this time. Children arriving later due to an appointment will need to bring a return to school note from their physician.

II. DEPARTURE:

1. Children enrolled only in the morning Montessori class must be picked up promptly at the close of class. If you know you are going to be detained, please notify the school immediately so we can reassure your child. The late pick up fee is \$1.00 per minute for the first 5 minutes and \$5.00 for each minute thereafter.

2. Child care students must be picked up from their classrooms or playground. Please make sure the teacher is aware of the student's departure. Please enter through the front door at all times. Please sign your child in/out via the computer located in the front foyer. Small Planet closes at 7 p.m. Any student remaining after this time will be charged \$1.00 per minute from 7:00-7:05, then \$5.00 per minute for every minute after 7:05.

3. Identification will be required in the following circumstances:

A regularly authorized person is picking up a child for the first time.

Special arrangements have been made for a different person to pick the child up.

A staff member or substitute in charge who does not know the parent.

4. No child will be released to a person not authorized by a parent to pick up the child. We must have a **written** authorization for changes. We will need a faxed authorization if you call in a change.

5. Be sure that any child you have taken from the class is properly supervised all the way to his car seat belt. Accidents could occur from running from the building or leaving the building unescorted.

6. Allow a few minutes of quality time to catch up on your child's day. Be aware of the "theme" for the week and let your child share his knowledge and skill.

III. FORMS:

We are **REQUIRED** by the laws of the STATE OF TEXAS to have certain completed forms on file for every student enrolled. These forms are for the health and safety of all students. Please take note that if we **DO NOT** have these forms on file your child **CANNOT** attend this facility.

The forms that the state require are:

ENROLLMENT CONTRACT - Registration in programs and contract for the method of fee payment. Registration will be on a first come basis without regard to race, color or creed.

MEDICAL - **MUST** be signed by your child's physician within 5 days of admittance..

PUBLIC SCHOOL - Statement that health and immunization records are on file at his school.

EMERGENCY CARD - Emergency telephone numbers which **MUST BE KEPT UPDATED!**

HOSPITAL FORM - This gives The Country Kingdom authorization for treatment should your child require medical aid.

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT - This cover sheet is state required and is required by TCK to be on file.

FAMILY-SOCIAL HISTORY FORM - This form is not state required, but allows the teacher to know your child and give him the best education and care possible.

IV. THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD:

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Upon enrollment, the state health laws require that you file with us a statement from your physician indicating that your child is physically able to participate in our program AND is current with the following required immunizations:

This is the immunization plan we received by the state as of August, 2005. Please be aware that we are also governed by the county. Their plan may be different than the state and it is the county that we acknowledge. Your physician may also have a different plan. Once again, it is the county that we must follow.

By 2 months: 1st dose DTaP, HibCV, IPV, HBV, Prevnar (Pneumococcal conjugate)

By 4 months: 2nd dose DTaP, HibCV, IPV, HBV, Prevnar

By 6 months: 3rd dose DTaP, HibCV, Prevnar

At 12 months: Varivax (Chickenpox)

By 16 months: 1st dose MMR, 3rd dose HBV, 4th dose Prevnar

By 18 months: 3rd dose IPV, 4th dose DTaP

Beginning at age 2 years: 1st dose of Hepatitis A

At age 2yrs 6 mths: 2nd dose of Hepatitis A

At the age of 4 years: 2nd dose Measles Vaccine and Varivax

4th dose IPV, 5th dose DTaP

This form **MUST** be returned within **ONE WEEK** of enrollment. If this information is not received and **KEPT UPDATED**, your child will be subject to dismissal. Should there be a reason why your child is not to receive a certain or any, immunization, we must have a notarized affidavit that must be obtained from Austin, TX.

Parents of public school students are required to provide a signed and dated statement that their child's immunization record is current and is on file at the school the child attends. The parent must include the name and phone number of the school in the statement. We also need on file the date your child had the Varivax/Varicella vaccine or date of chickenpox onset.

Vision and audio screenings are **REQUIRED** by the state for all children age 4 years and older who are not attending a public school. New enrollees must have had the screenings within the past 12 months or will have them within 120 days after enrollment.

We will administer the vision and audio screening by an outside professional. The screening is performed in the fall at a nominal cost.

Tests that are administered are primarily for screening purposes. You will be referred to persons who provide special services if we feel that your child needs further evaluation.

ILLNESS:

Your child will be sent home if he appears to have symptoms of an illness. In such cases, he is immediately isolated from the others and a parent contacted.

YOU MAY NOT BRING YOUR CHILD:

If your child has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours.

If your child has a heavy nasal discharge.

If your child has a constant cough.

If your child has had vomiting or diarrhea during the previous 24 hours.

If your child has symptoms of a possible communicable disease, (these are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, rash, headache, abdominal pain, or a fever).

Please notify the school at once if the child does have a communicable disease.

YOUR CHILD MAY COME:

If his cold is over but he is left with a minor nasal drip (clear discharge).

If he has been exposed to a communicable disease, but the school has been notified so that the incubation period can be discussed and it can be determined on what dates he should stay home.

V. MEDICATIONS:

No medication will be given to any student without a signed medication form provided by the school with complete written instructions signed by the parent. MEDICATIONS WILL BE GIVEN AT NOON AND AT 4:00 p.m. ONLY! If medication must be refrigerated there is a special shelf in the kitchen refrigerator door. Other medication must be placed in the office closet. **Please do not put any medications in lunch boxes or book bags.**

PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

Medications will be given to a child when the medication is provided in the original pharmacy container with the following information: child's name, physician's name, medication name, and the instructions for administering. Please ask for and fill out a medication form.

NONPRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Must be labeled with the child's name and the date the medication was brought to the center.

Nonprescription medication must be in the original container. If it is in a very small container, the container may be put in a sealed plastic bag with the information on the bag. **Medication must be age appropriate.**

EMERGENCIES

In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we can't reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance. Until the arrival of a parent, the physician, or an ambulance, the Director or an assistant will be in charge and make decisions about the care of the child. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.

VI. COMMUNICATING CHANGES:

In the event that a significant change occurs in the home, the facility needs to be notified immediately. All information given will be treated with strict confidentiality. Children often respond to marital upsets, death, sickness of a family member, etc. in different ways. In order for us to handle the situation in the best possible way, we need to be aware of any changes.

VII. VOLUNTEERS:

We need and urge your voluntary assistance in organizing classroom parties, chaperone on field trips, plan program, recruitment of students and other activities. When volunteering, it is recommended that other arrangements be made for younger siblings.

We also have an occasional need for part-time workers and substitute teachers. If you are interested or if you know someone who is, please let us know.

VIII. CONFERENCES:

1. Conferences in relation to your child's progress can be scheduled throughout the year. Those conferences will be arranged upon request. Please do not try to confer with a staff member upon arrival or departure.

2. Your own child will be given maximum consideration as an individual. We will look after his health and safety while he is at school and present a planned program geared to what we believe to be developmentally sound and educationally beneficial.

IX. CLOTHING:

Your child should wear clothing, which is:

- >Free of complicated fastenings
- >Washable and sturdy
- >Appropriate for the weather
- >Appropriate shoes for running and climbing No "OPEN TOE" Shoes
- >LABELED with the students name (including ALL WINTER COVERINGS!!)

If your child is prone to having toilet accidents it is recommended that a complete extra set of clothing be sent to school with him.

When your child has an accident at school and it is necessary to send him home in borrowed clothing from Small Planet, please launder them and return them as soon as possible.

Donations of outgrown clothing (including underwear in good condition) are always welcomed for our extra clothes closet.

X. LUNCH:

Our lunchtime is 11:30.

XII. BIRTHDAYS:

On your child's birthday (or the day closest) your child is invited to bring snack for his class. We discourage iced cakes, and very sweet snacks. Nutritious snacks such as nut breads, fruits, sandwiches, crackers and cheeses, puddings, vegetable sticks and dip, etc. are always enjoyed by the students. Birthday party invitations cannot be handed out in class unless every child gets one. You may ask for a list of names and addresses of those children your child would like to selectively invite and mail an

invitation. Note: Some of our families have requested that their information not be given out.

XIII. TOYS FROM HOME:

We ask that you leave your child's toys at home or in your car. If an item is brought we cannot be responsible for it. It must be shared and it must have the child's name on it. We welcome books, tapes, or VCR tapes to share with the class. Items which are of the same subject as the current "theme" are of particular interest to all the children. Some classes will have assigned show and tell days set up for the students to bring educational items from home to share with their class.

XIV. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS, REGISTRATION FEES:

A registration fee of \$45.00 per family and school supply fee of \$40 per child is payable when you enroll a child. These fees are due for each succeeding year the child or children are enrolled. These fees are non refundable.

TUITION AND CHILD CARE FEES

All accounts are to be paid week. Payment is due on Monday and late on Wednesday morning. All accounts not paid by Tuesday afternoon will be charged \$30 every Wednesday a balance is carried.

RETURNED CHECKS

All returned checks will be charged a \$30 NSF fee, in addition to the face value of the check. If we receive 2 NSF checks, the account will then have to be paid in cash.

WEATHER RELATED ABSENCE

Please be aware that tuition and child care fees are still due even though Small Planet may be closed due to bad weather and mandatory evacuations.

CREDIT FOR ABSENCE

Should your child be out for a full week (Monday thru Friday), you will receive a half week credit.

PAST DUE ACCOUNTS

Any account more than two months delinquent may be asked to make other arrangements for their care. Any account more than 60 days late is subject to being turned over to a collection agency and/or taken to civil court.

VACATION CREDIT

Students enrolled in full time Child Care (5 day basis), on a continual yearly basis, will receive a 1-week vacation credit after attending Small Planet for 1 year. There will be only one week of vacation time per school year.

MAKE-UP DAYS FOR ABSENCES

We are licensed to handle a certain number of children per day, distributed between the various classrooms in specific numbers. Therefore, we cannot grant opportunities to make up days lost as a result of absences in the Montessori classrooms whether due from an illness or a holiday.

Childcare rooms also have a limited capacity. Your child's enrollment in childcare assures you of this place. Therefore, you are responsible for these even during an absence. If your child is absent 2 weeks or more, without notice or payment other than scheduled vacation time, he will be considered withdrawn. To reenter your child, it will be necessary to repeat the registration process, including the \$45.00 registration fee on a space availability basis. Please see section Enrollment - *Withdrawal*.

REQUEST OF PARENTS

Should your child be absent, for any reason, please call Small Planet and let us know what is happening. Our staff, as well as our students, are concerned when another student is out. In the event that we have not heard from you, you will be contacted just to make sure all is well. This is very important if your child is one of our "School Agers". Please call their public school also so that the teacher on "bus duty" will know of their absence.

EARLY DROP-OFF/ LATE PICK UP FEE

There will be an early drop-off fee for those students who are not enrolled in childcare and arrive before 8:20 a.m. There will be a late pick up fee charge for children not picked up at their regular dismissal time. Our toddler classes are over at 11:00 a.m.. Accounts for students dropped off early and/or picked up after normal dismissal time will be billed a late pick up fee. This is the same as those after 7:00 p.m.

Small Planet is licensed to operate 12.5 hours a day, 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Families who have not picked up their child/children by 7:00 will be charged \$1.00 per minute per child during the time frame of 7:00-7:05 p.m. A charge of \$5.00 per minute per child will be charged for the time frame of 7:06 p.m. and later. Should your child still be here at 6:15p.m., and Small Planet has not been called to be told you are running late, Child Protective Services will be called. We ask parents to plan this in their schedule. Parents who repeatedly arrive late will be asked to locate a facility with a night care that can better meet their needs.

ENROLLMENT - WITHDRAWAL

The Registration Form is a contract between the family and the school to provide age appropriate education and/or childcare for each child. There are specific child/staff ratios that must be maintained. Small Planet meets these standards at all times. Therefore, to keep tuition as low as possible, we maintain full enrollment. To withdraw a child we require a two weeks written notice. You will be billed for the two weeks for early withdrawal.

Updates for Small Planet Parent Handbook:

Please know that any time it is necessary to make a policy change, it is to ensure that each child continues to receive the highest quality learning and care available.

Hotline Phone Numbers and Web Sites Pertaining to Child Care:

Child Abuse Hotline: 800-252-5400

Protective Regulatory Service: web site: www.tdprs.state.tx.us
Childcare Information line: 1-800-862-5252
Childcare Licensing Office: 713-940-3009

Parent Notification:

Parents will be notified under the following circumstances:

1. If your child is ill and needs to be picked up.
2. If your child has had an accident.
3. If your child is in need of a parent for personal reasons.
4. If you need to be called due to your child's behavior.
5. If we are under a weather alert and need to evacuate.
6. Notification of communicable diseases will be posted on the foyer bulletin board.
7. Off campus activities will be posted on the foyer bulletin board.

Discipline and Guidance Practices:

1. Discipline and guidance shall be consistent, shall be based on an understanding of the individual needs and development, and shall promote self-discipline and acceptable behavior.
2. There shall be no cruel, harsh or unusual punishment.
3. No child of any age shall ever be shaken or hit and no child shall ever be spanked.
4. Brief, supervised separation from the group may be used if necessary (1 minute per age in years).
5. Children shall not be humiliated or subjected to abusive or profane language. Punishment shall not be associated with food or naps or toilet training. Children who wet themselves shall not be shamed or punished.

TB Requirement:

There are certain counties in the state that require TB testing. At the moment, we are not among those listed.

Procedures for Parents to Discuss or Review School Procedures and Policies:

If a parent wants to discuss policy and procedures they may either speak with the Assistant Director or call the Director and make an appointment. The school has an open door policy. Parents do not have to schedule an appointment to observe their child or the school's operations.

Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in the school's operations and activities. As long as, this does not cause a disruption to the learning environment.

The most recent license inspection report is available for viewing. It will be posted for 3 months after inspection. After this time it will be filed. The Minimum Standards is also available for viewing. You would need to ask the Director to view these items. The files are not to be removed from the school.

Arrival Update:

Effective October 3, 2005, all children attending Small Planet must arrive before 9:30 a.m. When your child is not here for the beginning of the 8:30 classes, he/she is missing out on the early circle time that covers a wide range of learning issues. Also, we need a final classroom count of all children in the building at 9:30. This is to ensure the correct count for snack time, lunch time and staff for children in attendance.

Should your child be arriving late due to a doctor's appointment, please bring a return slip from the physician. Please call Small Planet before 9:00 a.m., should your child have an appointment or that you know that your child will be arriving late.

To our After School Parents:

We realize that you have very busy schedules and we want to do our best to continue to provide exceptional service. We need your help. **Please call Small Planet before 1 PM** when your child will not be

attending. This is very important because the schedule that we try to maintain to provide care is compromised when we get to a school and wait for a student that has already been picked up. Effective November 14, 2005, if this situation persists then there will be a \$10 fee added to your account.

Transportation Information:

Small Planet Montessori transports to and from the following elementary schools: Deer Park, Learning Center, Parkwood, Matthis, Carpenter, Parks and San Jacinto.

Field Trip Information:

Scheduled field trips will be posted on the entry board at least 48 hrs before planned trip. Transportation will be by school van or bus.

Water Play:

Water play will consist of sprinkler type items. Water play will only be on the grounds of Small Planet. There will be NO away water activities planned.

Please note: This handbook may be revised at any time to ensure the health and safety of all children in the facility.