

# Little Hands Montessori Family Handbook 2024-2025



*Little Hands  
Montessori*



## **Program Philosophy**

### **Our Mission:**

To thrive as a warm bilingual environment that fosters children's natural development; sustains children for three years; prepares them for first grade; forms a love of learning; and lays a foundation for life.

-Providing warmth - Guiding Learning- Connecting Love

### **Philosophy:**

Montessori is a three-year education that cultivates children's independence with self directed, hands- on, and collaborative work. The Montessori philosophy fosters a love of learning because children progress at their own pace and time. The Montessori classroom is set up deliberately to engage each child and meet each child at their level and interest. The Montessori guide (teacher) is highly trained in observation and child development along with the Montessori curriculum. The Montessori guide creates an individual plan that is specific to each child and their abilities.

## Little Hands Montessori Schedule of Operation

Little Hands Montessori follows a 10-month school year calendar. We will be open from 8:15 am- 1:15pm Monday through Friday except for major holidays and closures posted on our school calendar. Call hours are 7:15am-2:15pm. Weather closings will follow Gull Lake's closings and will be posted on Channel 3 or texted to you (sign up here: <https://wwmt.com/weather/closings>). They will also be posted on our family Homeroom page, as with other unscheduled closures due to unforeseen events.

### Typical daily schedule

—Office Hours—7:15 am-8:15am

#### **8:15 am – Arrival**

—Hand Washing / changing shoes time—

8:30am-8:45am – Gathering/ Spanish music time

8:45am – 11:45am - Montessori 3-hour uninterrupted work cycle

11:45am-12:25 pm – Lunch

—Outdoor clothing change time—

12:30pm – 1:15pm – Recess

#### **1:15pm – Pick up**

—Office Hours— 1:15 pm-2:15 pm

- Drop off is at 8:15 am and pick up is at 1:15pm. We ask that drop off not occur after 8:30am or pick up not occur before 1pm unless arrangements prior to the start of school have been made. Children should not be dropped off after 8:30 am or picked up after 1:15pm. Please call the lead guide/director at 269-967-5024 or email at [littlehandsrichland@gmail.com](mailto:littlehandsrichland@gmail.com) if needed.

- At 1:15 p.m. a rate of \$5 per 5 minutes will be charged for late pickup. If late pick up occurs three times or more, the director reserves the right to temporarily suspend the child's attendance.

## Admissions and Withdrawal Criteria

Little Hands Montessori accepts children between the ages of 2 years 9 months and 3 years 6 months and potty trained. Little Hands Montessori will aim to retain these children for the 3-year cycle until they are ready to enter 1st grade. Little Hands Montessori will offer rolling admission throughout the year as space allows. All children are welcome and Little Hands Montessori does not discriminate based on nationality, race, color, mother tongue, socioeconomic status, religion, gender; or gender identity. We are committed to maintaining a peaceful and educational environment for all students. If we are unable to meet a child's needs, or a child jeopardizes the safety or learning of other children, the lead guide/director reserves the right to request professional assistance or withdraw any child from the school. In such rare cases, prorated tuition will be given or future payments will cease. No refund will be given on the deposit or months attended. All reasons for withdrawal or removal from Little Hands Montessori will be dealt with on a case by case basis and at the discretion of the director.

### Fees and Tuition

**Tuition:** \$6,800 for a full year one-time payment (by August 15<sup>th</sup>) or \$700 monthly (September 1<sup>st</sup> -June 1<sup>st</sup>). Payment plans and scholarships can be discussed with the administrator or the director upon request and will be based on needs and availability.

**Late Pick-up Fees:** Hours of operation are from 8:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Please do not arrive before pick up or after these designated times. At 1:15 p.m. a rate of \$5 per 5 minutes will be applied to your account. If late pick-up occurs three or more times, the director will reserve the right to suspend your child's attendance at Little Hands Montessori.

**Late Payment Fees:** If a payment is late, a late fee of 2% is added to the unpaid balance or carried over to the following month. If a late fee is not paid by the date that the school's administration has requested, your child may be suspended until the payment is received.

## Discipline policy

Montessori sets children up for success. The space is designed to give children freedom within limits. In cases where a child is not respecting themselves, peers, teacher or the environment, limitations will be set and certain privileges will be lost until the child is able to respect their surroundings. An example would be, a child distracting others or misusing materials will be given lessons on the materials and possibly given a specific space to sit until he or she is able to demonstrate their ability to work in the classroom without distracting others or misusing materials. In more severe cases where a child shows harmful or extreme disrespectful behavior, children will be removed from class or sent home. Documentation will be kept and an incident report will be written along with communication to the parent. If severe behavior continues, the lead guide/director reserves the right to request professional assistance for the child or withdraw the child from the school.

## Accidents, Incidents and Injuries

**Accidents, Incidents and Injuries:** Any accident, incident or injury will be documented on a Little Hands Montessori accident or incident form. Parents will be notified either in person at pick-up, by phone call, or text promptly depending on the severity of the accident or incident. This decision is up to the discretion of the lead guide/director.

## Health and Illness Policies/ Exclusion for Child Illness Policy

**Illness Policy:** At the ONSET of any new illness/virus symptoms, such as a runny nose that requires nose blowing, other cold like symptoms, nausea, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, fever of 100 degrees or more etc., children are to stay home 24 hours. If symptoms have improved or have not worsened after 24 hours, they may return. Additionally, Children who exhibit any signs of a communicable (infectious) illness are required to stay home for 24 hours AFTER symptoms have stopped. This includes, but is not limited to a fever of 100 degrees or more (they must be without a fever without the use of medicine), diarrhea, vomiting, exposed open sores, or rash.

- The director reserves the right to decide on a case by case basis whether or not a child will be allowed at school, including the possibility of requiring a doctor's note.
  - Please call the school and ask for Lee or Beata with any questions or concerns when your child is sick or showing symptoms.
  - Please keep your children home if they seem tired, ill, or not themselves.
  - If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease, please contact the school with the name and symptoms of the illness.

### **Exclusion for Child Illness Policy:**

- Children that come down with any of the above named symptoms at school will be sent home. Parents will be called or texted immediately; if they are not reachable, emergency contacts will be called. While waiting to be picked up, the child will be quarantined in a predetermined section of the hallway or class with a staff member.
- All children are required to have an updated health record on file prior to attending school. Little Hands Montessori requires and follows all Michigan laws according to vaccinations. School attendance will not be permitted until these requirements are met. A reminder of needed health documents will be sent out at least three weeks prior to your child's start date.

### **Food Service and Sanitizing Policy**

**Snacks:** Children will have a snack and water available to them throughout the morning.

These snacks will be purchased by children's families and will be prepared by staff and supervised children. Any foods that contain a known allergen of a child enrolled in Little Hands Montessori will not be served and returned to the family that purchased it. Snacks will be healthy and part of the major food groups recommended by the American Pediatrics Association.

**Lunch:** Families will send children with healthy lunches in containers that the children can easily use by themselves. Lunches should have their own ice packs or thermoses because refrigeration is not provided. Lunch containers will be labeled every day with the child's name and date written by the child and his/her family.

- Little Hands Montessori strives to teach children how to be the best they can be in all areas. This includes setting up healthy eating and drinking habits. No sweets, chocolates, or candies will be allowed in lunches at Little Hands Montessori. Children that have unhealthy food in their lunch containers will have these foods returned and will not be allowed to eat them at school.
- Water is offered throughout the day, so it is not necessary to send in additional drinks.
- We strive to send home excess lunch food that is not eaten as well, so that you are aware.

**Hand Washing/ Hand Sanitizer:** Multiple hand washing stations are available. Children and staff are required to wash their hands at least 20 seconds, as outlined by the CDC, frequently. This happens at least upon entry, after bathroom use, before eating, after blowing their nose, and after touching their face.

- Hand Sanitizer is available in the room as a secondary precaution (although hand washing instead is always encouraged). Parents must give permission for their child to use provided sanitizer, and all sanitizer use is monitored by an adult.
  - Using sanitizer provided by LHM is encouraged over personal sanitizers. This will help keep accidental sharing, losing, or spills from occurring in the classroom. The use of personal sanitizer will require a formal medication sheet filled out properly by the parents.

**Sanitizing and Food Precautions:** Housekeeping at LHM happens full time. Cleaning and sanitizing occurs throughout the day according to CDC recommendations and requirements. Germicidal bleach and white vinegar are two key products used. Staff has easy access to cleaning supplies, so that if something needs to be sanitized immediately, there will be no delay. Staff continuously monitors to make sure areas are clean and sanitized. All food consumption is monitored closely by staff. Snack and lunch tables are sanitized by staff immediately after use.

## **Licensing Notebook**

Little Hands Montessori maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans. The notebook will be available upon request to families for review during regular business hours. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

## Extended Closer Plan

In the event that Little Hands Montessori needs to be closed for unexpected reasons (excluding weather related reasons), this is the plan we will use during that time. It is a modest, doable plan, as was requested by the majority parents who kindly completed our survey in 2020, "What did you enjoy this Stay at Home season?" I found that most young children did not enjoy long Zoom meetings during the first Covid-19 closure, yet most families shared that missing out on social interactions was difficult for their children. Safety and emotional stress needs do trump education in such a phase, but Little Hands Montessori is happy to support any needs as best as we can during difficult times. More details of this plan will arise when the circumstances require.

### Extended School Closer Plan

A. **Homeroom** is an app that we use even before this phase. We post photos mainly here!

B. **Zoom:** 10-15 minutes of songs or activities lead by a LHM staff member 4 mornings a week (optional)

C. **YouTube Video:** 1 short video a week will be created and shared.

D. Office hours: 7am-8am/1 pm-2pm. We will continue to have the same office hours as we have during the school year (times in which we are not teaching that families may call or receive a returned call). During a closure, families may call anytime during these hours! Support for anything from daily structure, educational tasks, or social-emotional advice could be requested then and I will use those times to prepare any such requests. Consider it a homeschool or general support hotline!

E. **Small outdoor gatherings:** (optional) If schools are still closed, but options to gather outside remain possible, a small outdoor gathering could become a once a week option for Little Hands Montessori. Activities such as hikes and nature hunts are options. If this becomes a possibility, more information will be shared.

F. **Tuition and Staff:** It is our every hope to continue paying our staff through such a closure if one were to happen. At our size, that is only possible through the continuation of tuition. All staff members will be involved in executing the closure plan in one way or another.

- If a school closure takes place for an extended period of time (greater than 6 weeks), we will look into what further options might become available to us to support staff and families.
- Please note that the school is currently only able to discount families up to 1 month off of tuition if needed in extenuating circumstances.
- Families may withdraw their child (from class and online participation) at any time and receive a prorated return on tuition. Future re-enrollment, however, is conditional on our mission statement (the child's age, length of time absent and the director's discretion).