



montpelier
children's house

Family Handbook

2022-23

Welcome to Montpelier Children's House.

Montpelier Children's House was founded in 1984 by Larry Parker, with the goal of providing high-quality, accessible early education to the children of Central Vermont. In 2010 Larry's daughter, Samara Parker Mays, assumed the directorship of this family-owned and operated program.

Montpelier Children's House is based on the philosophy that children are entitled to the following:

- A safe, nurturing environment in which to grow and learn.
- A predictable daily routine and a high-quality prepared learning environment in which the children can function independently
- Qualified staff that are knowledgeable about developmental stages
- The opportunity to learn about the world in a way that recognizes and embraces differences and similarities.

Children's House is licensed by the State of Vermont Child Development Division. Copies of licensing regulations are available to anyone interested and can be found at the school entryway and [here](#). Reports and notices regarding licensing will be posted on the bulletin board in the hall.

Thank you for choosing Montpelier Children's House. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to Montpelier Children’s House.	3
Philosophy	6
Enrollment Requirements	6
Inclusion	6
Non-Discrimination	6
Responsibility & Accountability	6
Program Services, Arrivals and Pick-ups	7
Arrivals	7
Dismissal	8
Emergency Closings	9
Food and Nutrition	10
Afternoon snack	10
Special snack	10
Infant Feedings	11
Children 24 Months and Older	11
Food Allergies	11
Safety	11
Clothing	11
Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play	12
Communal Water-Play	12
Injuries	12
Biting	12
Personal Belongings	13
What to Bring	13
Cubbies	13
Lost & Found	13
Other Required Items	13
Behavior Guidance	14
Field Trips	14
Holiday Celebrations	14
Parent/ Guardian Involvement	14
Parent/ Teacher Communication	15
Conferences	15
A Typical Day at Children's House	15
Pre-School	15
Curriculum	15
Nap/ Rest Time	16
Safe Sleep Procedures	16

Toilet-Learning	17
Administration	17
Confidentiality	17
Reporting of Abuse and Neglect	18
Tuition Policy	18
Illness	18
Program Changes	18
Drop-in Days	18
Withdrawal	18
Health	18
Immunizations	18
Physicals	19
Illness	19
Guidelines to keep your child home	19
Policy for returning after an illness	19
Hand washing	20
Medication	20
Emergencies	20
Family Handbook Acknowledgement	21
Appendix A - Safe Sleep Procedure -- Infant Sleep	22
Appendix B - Infant Supply List	23
Appendix C - Toddler Supply List	24
Appendix D - Preschool Supply List	25
Appendix E: Emergency Preparedness	26

Philosophy

Montpelier Children's House provides an environment that promotes a play-based, child-lead, and inquiry-driven experience for our preschoolers. We do this through a careful arrangement of the learning environment and a combination of child-directed and teacher-lead experiences.

Play is at the center of the curriculum and occurs in a structured, purposeful environment, where activities are presented in a way that encourages children to actively participate. Our methodology gives educators the opportunity to support young people in all aspects of their growth, with a special focus on social and emotional skills, creative problem solving and material exploration.

Enrollment Requirements

We maintain a complete and up-to-date enrollment file on-site for your child. Prior to enrollment and annually upon re-enrollment we must have:

- A completed and signed enrollment contract
- A completed Child and Family Profile
- A completed Emergency Contact Sheet which includes names, addresses and telephone numbers for parents, emergency contacts and all persons authorized to pick-up your child
- Record of an annual physical (General Health Examination Form)
- Your child's immunization record

Inclusion

Montpelier Children's House believes that children of all developmental levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

Non-Discrimination

At Montpelier Children's House equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Responsibility & Accountability

To ensure we can effectively meet your child's needs, open communication between Parent and Program Staff is essential. Sharing relevant information, observations and wondering questions will allow us to develop understandings with strategies that can help. As early childhood professionals, we are committed to implementing what is considered best practice in the field of early care and education by providing nurturing and responsive relationships within a supportive

environment for all children. The goal is to provide the best care for all enrolled children. At times, we may need to contact local resources to help in problem-solving and developing strategies to support all of us working through a developmental need.

Procedure

- Staff of the program are adequately supported and prepared to help all enrolled children fully participate.
- Parents are aware of all policies of the program, have received and have read the family handbook.
- Parents and staff will communicate regularly, as well as participate in individual parent conferences two times per year or when requested by either party.
- Parents and staff agree that should a situation arise where a need is identified community resources, such as Children's Integrated Services (CIS), will be accessed.
- Exclusionary measures will be used as a last resort where there is a determination that Montpelier Children's House is not the appropriate setting for a specific child.
- In the case that the program cannot meet the needs of a child, parents and staff will work together to develop a seamless transition plan and will use the plan to implement a smooth transition.

Program Services, Arrivals and Pick-ups

Children's House serves children ages birth to 5 and is a year-round program. We are a Pre-Qualified Pre-K program under Act 166 and our Pre-K year runs from September through the end of June. During this time, eligible students may receive tuition for 10 hours of school for 35 weeks (350 hours over 10 months.) It is the responsibility of families to ensure that all proper paperwork is filed with your school district.

Arrivals

Montpelier Children's House is open from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. In order to be a part of our daily routine, **your child should arrive no later than 9:00 am**. Please call or post a message on Brightwheel if your child will be late or will be out for the day.

Montpelier Children's House has a "rolling" arrival. Between the times of 8:30 and 9:00, children arrive, get settled, and become engaged in the morning's work. We ask for your assistance in fostering smooth transitions into the school environment. Children arriving before 9 am can choose from a variety of morning activities, eat breakfast brought from home, or find a quiet area to settle in if needed.

Please plan to say goodbye to your child at the door or at the gate to the playground (depending on an indoor or outdoor drop-off). Many visitors and comings and goings within the children's space can disrupt the flow of the morning's activities, and we find that drop-offs are much less stressful for children when they occur outside of the children's space. A brief goodbye is often

much easier for children. Pick-up time is a good time to have your child show you around or to spend time with your child at school.

It can be helpful to develop a regular routine for drop off with your child. This predictability can be reassuring during a time of separation. After saying final goodbyes, a teacher will then assist older children in putting away her lunchbox, changing into indoor shoes, washing her hands and joining in the day's activities; or for younger children in washing hands and beginning the day.

Morning Meeting - for Pre-School Groups

Older groups will have an age-appropriate morning meeting at about 9:15 am. At morning meeting time we talk about the day's schedule and the special announcements for the day. This is also when we'll have class meetings or problem-solve as a group as the need arises. It is ideal for your child to be at school by morning meeting time each day.

Sign-In / Sign-Out

When you drop-off your child in the morning, a teacher will sign-in and record your child's arrival and at the end of the day will record their departure. **Please be sure that a teacher is aware that your child has arrived or will be departing.** This involves making direct contact with a teacher. Please do not drop your child off without ensuring a teacher is fully aware of their presence in the classroom. Accurate attendance is critical for safety.

Please notify teachers of any issues that may affect your child during the day (health, mood, sleep). Notes to teachers regarding pick-up or temporary or attendance changes can be sent via Brightwheel or by phone.

Dismissal

The staff can release a child only to persons authorized by the parent/guardian(s). We must release a child to either parent/guardian unless a court order prohibits the release. We must receive a copy of this court order. If your child will be picked up by someone other than those specified on your registration form, we will need a written note or phone call. If your child will be picked up by someone unknown to the teaching staff they will need to have a photo ID to pick up.

Open Door Policy

We are delighted to have family members participate in our program. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the program any time during regular program hours. The infant room welcomes parents/guardians to nurse and feed their infants. Please speak with your child's teacher to determine if during-the-day-visits (that do not involve bringing your child home) may be upsetting for your child.

Our team will always do their best to speak with families. Since staff days are devoted to caring for children, it is usually not feasible to have a long discussion during regular program hours. If a

situation requires a longer discussion, kindly arrange for an appointment. Additionally parents can request access to their child's records at any time.

Late Pick-up Policy

Montpelier Children's House closes at 4:00. Please make sure to leave sufficient time to check in with teachers and gather belongings. At the end of the program day, we ask that you arrive promptly to pick up your child. If you are delayed in picking up your child, please call the staff so we know where you are and when to expect you.

If a child is picked up late, the parent/guardian(s) will be required to pay \$15 per 15 minute increment past dismissal if they are late. Continued lateness may result in the removal of your child from the program.

Please be mindful that your child's teachers have many end-of-day duties - we wear many hats from cleaning duties to planning and preparation for the next day. Late pick-ups make it challenging for teachers to complete their day's work within their daily schedule. Your punctuality is appreciated and necessary for the smooth operation of our classrooms.

Attendance

Regular attendance provides a sense of consistency and continuity and is directly related to school success. It is expected that children will attend school every day unless he or she is ill. Pre-K students are expected to be in attendance for our Pre-K hours each day (9:00-12:00) and we are required to report attendance to your child's Supervisory Union. Excessive tardiness or absences (not due to illness) may result in the SU withdrawing Pre-K funding for your child.

Absences

Please let us know if your child will be absent by 9:00 am the day he or she is scheduled to attend. If you do not contact the school, we will verify the absence by a telephone call or Brightwheel message that morning. Be aware that per your enrollment agreement, payment is required for all scheduled days, regardless of absence. Excessive absences will be discussed with parents and the Director to make a plan to return to school and improve attendance.

Annual Calendar

Montpelier Children's House is a year-round program. Please see the attached calendar for school closings.

Emergency Closings

Montpelier Children's House will be closed or delayed when Montpelier Roxbury School District is closed or delayed because of bad weather. You will be notified via email and Brightwheel of any school delays or cancellations. You can also call Samara at 279-1609.

In the event that Children's House needs to close early due to bad weather, parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their children as soon as possible.

Food and Nutrition

We believe that good nutrition is absolutely essential for proper health and learning in young children. Montpelier Children's House provides a healthy afternoon snack. Please supply your child with a hearty morning snack and full lunch. You are welcome to send in a breakfast with your child for them to eat upon arrival.

When packing a lunch for your child, please include nutritious and low-sugar foods. Sandwiches, rolled-up deli or cooked meats, vegetables with dip, hard-cooked eggs, yogurt, sliced fruit and cheese are all good options. We are unable to reheat food for your child. An insulated thermos is an excellent choice if you wish to send warm food. Lunchboxes will be refrigerated, so please leave any thermoses with warm foods in cubbies (and a note in the lunchbox)

Please send your child's lunch in a well-marked lunch box or bag. Because lunch boxes are refrigerated, please make sure they are stored in a compact container - To minimize waste and maximize space in our limited refrigerator, your child should have a bento-style lunchbox - some examples are the Yumbox or Bentogo. Capitol Kitchen in Montpelier has a variety to choose from. Please do not put insulated lunch bags in the refrigerator.

Lunchtime is a time for teachers and children to enjoy good food and the company of one another. To maintain a positive atmosphere, we will not dictate the order in which your child's lunch is to be eaten. Questions of "what should I eat first?" are met with "What do you think?" We strive to foster independence and self-confidence and this continues into mealtime. Pack a lunch that you feel good about your child eating in any order (and be aware that desert-type items are often eaten first).

Candy is not allowed at school. There are many school lunch foods that are essentially candy. Please do not send these items with your child. Children will typically eat their "desert" items first may not always be hungry for the main course of their lunch. Give them fuel for learning!

Afternoon snack

In the toddler and preschool rooms, we ask that parents sign up once each month to bring in afternoon snack. If you are able, please sign up to bring in the snack assigned (this may be a bag of apples and cheese or whole-grain breads and apple butter, for example). Snack calendars will be shared with classrooms each month.

Special snack

Children enjoy bringing in snack for a special occasion, such as birthdays or holidays. It is a wonderful experience for a child to help prepare or select something to share with their friends.

Some suggestions are fresh cut fruit with whipped cream (this is very popular), or cookies or muffins. Please, no cakes, cupcakes, doughnuts or brownies.

*** Please make sure that all snacks to be shared are NUT FREE ****

Infant Feedings

Infant feedings follow these procedures:

- Infants will be held for bottle-feeding until able to hold his or her own bottle. Bottles will never be propped.
- Infants are fed “on cue” to the extent possible (at least every 4 hours and usually not more than hourly) and by a consistent caregiver/teacher.
- Breastfeeding is supported by providing a place for nursing mothers to feed their babies. Expressed breast milk may be brought from home if frozen or kept cold during transit. All breast milk and formula shall be returned to the child’s home or discarded at the end of each day. Previously frozen, thawed breast milk must be used within 24 hours. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date the milk was expressed. Frozen breast milk must be dated and may be kept in the freezer for up to days.
- Breast milk and formula brought from home must be dated and labeled with the child’s name.
- Labels on all milk/formula containers should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling.
- Solid foods will only be introduced after a consultation with the child’s family.

Children 24 Months and Older

- No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided.
- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- **Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 3 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter, whole nuts and dried fruit.**

Food Allergies

Please let us know of any and all food allergies your child has, as well as the severity. If your child has an allergen to a common ingredient such as gluten, dairy or eggs, it is helpful to provide us with a “special snack” to keep on hand so he or she is not left out on a special snack day. Children’s House is not peanut-free, but we will accommodate children with nut allergies when the need arises.

Safety

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits. All outdoor clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution. Sandals that come off easily and flip-flops are not appropriate for vigorous play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

We will play outdoors in all but extreme weather. Please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing for each season.

Winter: Full snowsuit or snow pants and jacket, hat and insulated mittens and insulated boots.

Spring and Fall: Warm layers, rain boots, rain pants and jacket.

Summer: Sun hat and light layers to protect from the sun.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 98°F or less than 0°F degrees, though pre-school groups may spend short periods of time outdoors in colder temperatures

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease. Children wearing diapers will not use wading pools.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report via Brighwheel outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact. **Please be sure that you or one of your emergency contacts are reachable for all the hours your child is in care.**

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the child who bit learn a more appropriate way to communicate. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Personal Belongings

What to Bring

- Infants: enough clean bottles for a day's use, at least 6 diapers per day, and at least 2 changes of clothes per day. All pre-prepared bottles must be labeled and dated.
- Toddlers: enough clean bottles for a day's use (if applicable), six diapers and at least two changes of clothes per day. All bottles must be labeled and dated.
- Older Toddlers: at least two changes of clothes should be maintained on-site
- Preschoolers: at least one change of clothes, socks and shoes.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e., clothes, bottles, diapers, pacifiers, crib sheet, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the center.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you **do not allow your child to bring toys from home** into the center unless they are part of a pre-arranged show-and-tell activity. These precious items are often lost or

misplaced which can be very upsetting. If you have a book or game your child would like to share with the group, please let your child's teacher know these items are coming in.

Other Required Items

Please make sure your child has the following items at school:

- Full change of clothing, including underwear and socks. These items should be kept in your child's bin. Please periodically check to make sure clothing is seasonally appropriate.
- Rest-time items: MCH will supply your child with a rest mat.
- If your child naps: Please bring a crib-sized sheet, small blanket and/or pillow, or an all in-one nap roll. A stuffed animal, doll or comfort item is sometimes helpful at naptime. **Please make sure all nap items are appropriately sized and will easily fit inside a standard-sized handled reusable shopping bag.** Please be sure that your child's name is on their nap bag.
- Nap items should go home each Friday for laundering.
- Please label everything with your child's name!

Behavior Guidance

We recognize a safe and respectful environment is the foundation for growth and learning. Gaining tools to effectively and safely settle disputes and a key goal of the early education experience. We recognize that most children are having their first experiences in conflict resolution and self-management. The goal is for children to gain the skills to resolve conflict independently.

To achieve this goal, we teach emotion coaching and communication skills that enable children to successfully navigate a variety of social situations. Loss of control is often a sign of an inability to communicate. If a child is dysregulated and there is a concern about the safety of others, They may be given space from the group and given time and support that will enable them to rejoin the group as quickly as possible.

We view ourselves as in partnership with you - your child's parents and caregivers - in supporting your child in their social and emotional development. Montpelier Children's House has become a S.E.E.D. Certified Program (Schools Excelling in Emotional Development) and believes that Emotion Coaching and responsive caregiving is one of the most powerful things we can do for children. As a S.E.E.D. Certified Program, families are able to access the "Tiny Humans, Big Emotions" class **free of cost**. You can find the link [HERE](#). The coupon code is: MONTPELIERFAMILY2022. I cannot recommend this class highly enough. It will teach you the same language and approach to Emotion Coaching that we use at MCH.

Field Trips

We take advantage of our location and may take short walking trips to various locations. We are always mindful to choose routes that provide the greatest safety for the children.

For preschool classrooms, we also widen our field trip range by taking advantage of the GMTA Montpelier Circulator Bus to transport us into town. For your child to take part in these trips, we must have your written permission for bus transportation.

Holiday Celebrations

Montpelier Children's House is built on the foundation of respect for diversity -- of ability, talents and values. We also believe in the importance of traditions to build a sense of shared community experience. Holidays are special times when families and cultures celebrate and pass on traditions. While Montpelier Children's House does not endorse any particular holiday practice, we do believe in honoring a variety of traditional and religious holidays through the use of stories, food and related projects, as well as encouraging children and families to share their own experiences and traditions. We have found this to be tremendously enriching for our community.

Parent/ Guardian Involvement

We encourage parents to come in on a regular basis or every once in a while to help out, have lunch, share a special skill or holiday tradition, or simply to observe what is happening. Parents are also encouraged to accompany us on field trips. Grandparents or extended family members are also encouraged to become involved.

Parent/ Teacher Communication

Clear and open communication between parents and teachers is essential to a high-quality early education experience for your child. You are the expert on your child and the more we can be in communication the better we can serve your child and family.

Each day

From Parents: If there is anything out-of-the ordinary happening for your child or family, please let us know either in person at drop off or via a message in Brightwheel. This includes anything ranging from changes in your child's sleep or eating, a new pet, an injury that occurred at home or issues around constipation. The more we know the better we can support your child.

From Teachers:

You can expect to hear from us via the Brightwheel App with general notes - items your child may need at school, minor injury or notes on napping or eating. We will also use Brightwheel first to attempt to contact you for non-emergency illness and injury, and will follow up with a phone call if we do not receive a response through Brightwheel.

We also use Brightwheel to send photos of our daily activities and notes about what we are doing during the day. Viewing these photos with your child at the end of the day can be a wonderful way to have them share about their experience.

Responses via Brightwheel: You can expect a response to a question on Brightwheel within two hours. If you need immediate attention, please call the school phone. We respond to messages on Brightwheel between 7am and 5pm. If you need to speak to someone immediately after hours please contact Samara at 802-279-1609.

Conferences

Parent Conferences are offered in both the Fall and Spring and are an opportunity to discuss your child's development. However, a conference can be arranged at any time to address issues that must be addressed immediately.

If you have any concerns about any aspects of your child's development, please be in touch with us. Screening and evaluation are available to you free-of-cost through your school district.

A Typical Day at Children's House

You can see the daily schedule for your child's group posted in each classroom. Indoor and Outdoor times will change with the seasons and as the temperatures allow. Our daily schedules are created to maximize free play, particularly outdoors, and to minimize transitions. This is an approximate daily schedule for the preschool classroom. We may adapt the schedule to meet the needs of the group.

Curriculum

Children's House provides an environment that promotes play-based, hands-on experience and self-direction. We do this through a careful arrangement of the learning environment, play invitations and a combination of child-directed and teacher-lead experiences. Play is at the center of the curriculum and occurs in a structured, purposeful environment, where activities are presented in a way that encourages children to actively participate.

Materials and activities are thoughtfully planned and selected based on developmental appropriateness, aesthetic and play value.

Activity centers such as blocks, dramatic play, art and sensory tables are presented to stimulate play that reinforces the goals of the Vermont Early Learning Standards. We use a

child-centered approach when planning the curriculum that focuses on the natural world and local community.

Nap/ Rest Time

A busy day of playing and being physically and socially active takes a lot of energy. Rest-time is essential for all children to take a break and recharge for the afternoon. Children's needs for naps vary, particularly once children turn 2 ½-3 years of age. Please be in communication with your child's teacher about your child's sleep habits as they change. All children are expected to rest quietly, though not all will sleep.

Children's House provides a rest-mat for your child. Please make sure your child has a sheet or blanket to cover the mat, as well as any additional bedding he or she might need (light blanket for covering, small pillow). Please keep in mind that all nap items need to be able to fit in a standard-sized reusable shopping bag. Nap items should go home at the end of the week to be laundered. Please label all belongings!

At naptime, teachers support children as they settle down and fall asleep. Please communicate with us how your child falls asleep at home so we might best replicate this at school (for example, likes a back rub or likes to be left alone). Children should be able to fall asleep independently, though we recognize that many still need support.

Children that are not likely to sleep will be expected to spend a short time resting quietly on their mats (about 30 minutes) and then they may have books, drawing materials and small toys on their mats (as is age appropriate) . All children benefit from a period of rest during the day.

If your child is transitioning out of napping, please let teachers know if you prefer your child to be in the brighter part of the classroom. We cannot forcibly keep children awake, and prefer to allow children to wake on their own (when we turn on the lights and open the shades). By not interrupting children's natural sleep cycles we find they awake more refreshed and ready to join the group than if awakened before they are ready.

Safe Sleep Procedures

Montpelier Children's House follows safe sleep procedures.

For Infants under (12) months of age:

In accordance with safe sleep practices, infants shall be allowed to nap when tired and shall always be placed on their backs to sleep. Infants that fall asleep on a soft surface (such as a couch or swing) shall be gently transferred to a crib as soon as feasible.

Toilet-Learning

It is expected that most children enrolled in preschool classrooms will either be using the toilet or will be actively engaged in toilet-learning (unless there is a developmental reason that would

prevent your child from doing so at this age). If your child is still in the process of learning to use the toilet, open and constant communication between parents and teachers greatly facilitates the process. Please let us know what you are doing at home, so we can provide consistency for your child.

We believe that learning toileting is an opportunity for young children to learn to care for themselves. Children are never made to feel ashamed or embarrassed for soiling themselves, but are gently encouraged to participate in cleaning themselves (as is age-appropriate) and changing clothing with the help of a teacher.

To facilitate toilet learning, please send your child in underwear or training pants. Please do not send your child in a diaper. If your child still requires regular changing or pull-ups at rest time, please make sure you maintain a supply.

Administration & Teaching Staff

Montpelier Children's House is owned by Samara Parker Mays. The teaching staff is as follows:

Maple Group (4-year-olds): Samara Mays & Laura Franske

Oak Group (3-year-olds): Amy Kilton & Emily Montague

Willow Group (Under 3 years old): Valerie Ouimet & Paige Montague

All-Program Assistant: Charlotte Foster-Fell

Our staff participate in orientation and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

Confidentiality

Montpelier Children's House respects the privacy of a child's and family's life. We will at no time discuss the personal information of your child to anyone at any time without your permission.

All information in our records of your child is not available to anyone but the authorized staff of Children's House and to the parent or guardian of the child.

If you have concerns or need to discuss information that is of a confidential nature, please contact Samara, and she will gladly set up a time to discuss the issue in private.

Reporting of Abuse and Neglect

It is the responsibility of Montpelier Children's House to inform you of our policy on child abuse and neglect. The State of Vermont's Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations require all staff, as mandated reporters, to report suspected instances of abuse or neglect to the appropriate state agency.

The regulations require that all staff, parent/guardian(s) and volunteers sign a form that acknowledges that abuse and/or neglect of children is against the law and prohibited at the preschool.

Tuition Policy

Tuition is due monthly. Vacation, holidays and absences due to illness has been figured into the overall tuition charges and does not change the tuition rate.

Tuition is due by the 5th of each month, and must be paid by Automatic payment via Brightwheel. Late payments must be accompanied by a \$15.00 late charge. A late fee of \$15 per week will be assessed on accounts past due. Accounts two weeks in arrears may result in immediate disenrollment. If you need to make payment arrangements, please contact Samara.

Illness

No credit will be given for absences due to illness.

Withdrawal

Thirty day written notice is required for withdrawal – for any reason. You are responsible for tuition during this period.

Health

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every year, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

All caregivers, teachers, and staff are required to be current with all immunizations routinely recommended for adults by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This includes full COVID vaccination, including recommended boosters.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A General Health Examination Form should be received before but must be received no later than 45 days after your child begins the program. Families

are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

Illness

Despite all of our best efforts, illness spreads easily in the early childhood education setting. To keep the spread of illness to a minimum, you must notify us if your child has a contagious illness. Parents will be notified if a child in our school has been confirmed to have a contagious illness.

Please see the COVID Addendum for our most up-to date guidelines regarding illness exclusion as it relates to COVID-19.

Guidelines to keep your child home

- Diarrhea – Three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Eyes – Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye
- Fever – Temperature of 100.3 degrees or higher
- Rash – Contagious body rash, especially with fever or itching.
- Sore throat – Especially with fever or swollen glands
- Vomiting – Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Severe coughing – Child gets red or blue in the face, croupy or whooping sound after coughing

You are the best judge of your child's health. If your child appears to be too ill to participate in the daily activities, he or she should stay home.

Policy for returning after an illness

***** Children must be free of vomiting and diarrhea without medication for 24 hours and free of fever for 48 hours without medication before returning to school. This is crucial to maintaining the health of our school community*****

Hand washing

Hand washing is our first defense against illness. Children are required to wash their hands upon arrival at school, before eating, after using the toilet and after playing outside. Hand washing is monitored by teachers to ensure that it is done thoroughly. This includes soaping, scrubbing hands for at least 20 seconds, rinsing and drying. Please encourage your children's good hand washing habits at home. **Please help your child learn and practice good hand hygiene at home.**

Medication

If your child needs medication administered during the school day, you must fill out a medication permission form to be kept on file. Any prescription medications must be in their original

containers and be clearly labeled with your child's name, dosage, medication name, and schedule.

Written permission is also required for non-prescription medications and products, ointments and creams, sunscreens, insect repellants and other topically applied ointments and lotions.

Emergencies

Montpelier Children's House maintains an emergency preparedness plan. Please see Appendix E.

Community Resource Information
Child Care Consumer Concern Line
1-800-540-7992

Parent/guardian Assistance Line
1-800-727-3687

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
1-800-639-4014

Family Center of Washington County
802-828-8765

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and read the Montpelier Children's House Family Handbook. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask center management for clarification of any policy, procedure or information contained in the Montpelier Children's House Family Handbook that I do not understand.

_____ Date: _____
Parent/guardian Signature

_____ Date: _____
Parent/ guardian Signature

Appendix A - Safe Sleep Procedure -- Infant Sleep

Policy

Infants will be put to sleep in separate, clean, sanitized cribs that meet Federal Crib Safety Standards denoted in the US Product Safety Commission Full-Size Baby Crib and Non Full-Size Baby Crib Regulation, following the method recommended by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

Responsibility & Accountability

1. All staff who care for infants must attend Infant Sleep Training.
2. The Director and Infant Team Leader are responsible for enforcing this policy.
3. Administrators, trainers and quality rating personnel visit the infant room(s) regularly to observe and ensure proper crib safety and sleeping procedures.

Procedure

1. The Infant Team Leader checks the safety of each crib daily before the center opens.
2. Staff members who care for infants attend Infant Sleep Training before being permitted to put infants to sleep.
3. Signs are posted in the infant room explaining proper Infant Sleep procedures.
4. Cribs, including linens are thoroughly cleaned weekly (when used by only one child)
5. If during the day, an infant will occupy a crib previously used by another infant, the crib, including linens, will be cleaned and sanitized first.

Appendix B - Infant Supply List

To be kept at Children's House:

- Supply of spare clothing (at least 3-4 complete changes). This will be kept in a labeled bin in the classroom.
- Supply of diapers. Cloth diapers can be brought for each day. If using cloth diapers, please supply us with a sealable bag for soiled diapers (which must be brought home each day). Cloth diapers must have a new waterproof cover for each diaper change. Covers can not be reused during the day.
- Infant sleep sack or blankets for children over 12 months
- Frozen breast milk may be stored in the kitchen freezer for up to two (2) weeks. It must be labeled with your child's name and the date it was frozen.

To be brought each day:

- Prepared bottles for each day - all bottles should be clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Emergency extra supply of formula and/or breastmilk (breastmilk must be kept frozen).
- Any supplemental solid food - pre-prepared and stored in the room's refrigerator. Please clearly label all food.
- Water cup or bottle
- Outdoor clothes - we strive to get all children outside twice each day, and do so in all but severe weather. Please make sure your child has clothing to be dry and comfortable outdoors in all weather. This includes:
 - A head-covering - warm cap in cool weather and sunhat for the warmer months.
 - Warm layers, including snowsuits and jackets
 - Booties and mittens
 - Waterproof pants or "muddy buddy" to allow children to comfortably be on the ground in damp weather.

Appendix C - Toddler Supply List

To be kept at Children's House:

- Supply of spare clothing (at least 3-4 complete changes). This will be kept in a labeled bin in the classroom.
- Supply of diapers or pull-ups, if needed. Cloth diapers can be brought for each day. If using cloth diapers, please supply us with a sealable bag for soiled diapers (which must be brought home each day). Cloth diapers must have a new waterproof cover for each diaper change. Covers can not be reused during the day.
- Blankets and comfort items for rest time. We will supply your child with a rest mat and sheet. All rest items must fit securely inside a handled bag.

To bring each day:

- A morning snack and full lunch. Please bring lunches in a compact, reusable bento-style lunch box since we have limited space in the refrigerator. Please make sure all containers are clearly labeled with your child's name. Upon arrival, please place lunches into the lunch basket.
- Full water bottle or no-spill cup
- Outdoor gear to be dry and comfortable in all weather. This includes:
 - A head covering - warm cap for cooler weather and sun hat for warmer months
 - Warm layers including jackets
 - Footwear appropriate for the weather - warm boots in the winter, waterproof boots or shoes for wet weather
 - Rain pants or bibs or "muddy buddy" for rainy or wet weather.

Appendix D - Preschool Supply List

To be kept at Children's House:

- Supply of spare clothing (at least 2 complete changes, including socks). This will be kept in a labeled bin at school
- Nap roll or sheet and blanket for rest time. We will supply your child with a rest mat. All rest items must fit securely inside a handled or zippered bag.

To be brought each day:

- A morning snack and full lunch. Please bring lunches in a compact, reusable bento-style lunch box since we have limited space in the refrigerator. Please make sure all containers are **clearly labeled** with your child's name. Upon arrival, please place labeled lunches into the lunch basket.
- A backpack containing a full no-leak water bottle and hearty morning snack
- Outdoor gear to be dry and comfortable in all weather. This includes:
 - A head covering - warm cap for cooler weather and sun hat for warmer months
 - Warm layers including jackets and snow pants/ snowsuits for cold weather
 - Footwear appropriate for the weather - warm boots in the winter, waterproof boots or shoes for wet weather. Please no flip-flops in summer - children should be able to run and move without footwear coming off easily.
 - Rain pants or bibs or "muddy buddy" for rainy or wet weather.

Appendix E: Emergency Preparedness

Our full Emergency Preparedness Plan is kept on file in the office at MCH.

Please note that MCH practices safety drills on a monthly basis. In the event of an emergency, we will evacuate to the main lobby of National Life and will notify parents via Brightwheel and email.

In case of emergencies of any kind, it is essential that a parent or caregiver is reachable at all times during the time your child is in care. If you will not be available, please let us know who the first point of contact should be on a given day.

In the event of loss of electricity, heat or water, families will be notified via Brightwheel and email.

Appendix F - COVID Specific Guidelines (as of 8/1/22):

We recognize that the COVID-19 Pandemic is on-going, with transmission levels and the introduction of new variants is a constant state of flux, and is not always predictable. COVID-19 can result in significant illness and disruption within our school community. As we begin a new school year our priorities are as follows:

1. Minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 (and other illness) in the school community. We do this through a layered approach:
 - a. **Children must stay home when sick.** Mild illness at school (mild cold symptoms) are permitted when community transmission levels are low. This means we have no active cases within the MCH community. When there is transmission within our community (this includes the entire building) children with *any* symptoms of illness must stay home.
 - b. **Ventilation and air exchange is optimized.** We leave open windows whenever possible and are exploring the use of indoor air purifiers.
 - c. **High-Quality masks are required indoors for children in the Oak and Maple groups.** Children over the age of 2 in the Willow group will practice wearing masks but will likely only wear them for a small portion of indoortime.
2. Minimize the disruption in care for both affected children and their classmates
 - a. Children who have a positive case of COVID *in their household* should quarantine for 10 Days after their last contact with the affected member.
 - b. Children who have been in close contact with a positive case either at school or in the community must rapid-test daily for 10 days after their initial contact and wear a high-quality mask to school. If they continue to test negative and have no symptoms they may attend.
 - c. Children who test positive for COVID-19 should quarantine. Children who are symptom free may test on day 5 of their illness and again 24 hours later. If both tests are negative and they are symptom free they may return to school. They should mask until day 10 (as they are able) and rapid test each day through day 10. Children may not return until they test negative twice in 24-hours on a rapid antigen test.
 - d. Children who have a positive case in their classroom: Parents will be notified and children should have a negative rapid antigen test each day through day 10 after exposure and wear a mask in school.
3. Minimize the disruption in care due to Teacher Absences
 - a. Teachers testing positive for COVID-19 must quarantine and may begin testing on day 5 of their illness (if no longer symptomatic). They may return after 2 negative rapid tests 24 hours apart and will wear a high-quality mask indoors and out until day 10. Teachers will not return to work if they continue to test positive, as this indicates the ability to transmit virus.
 - b. MCH will make every effort to cover classrooms and keep classrooms open when teachers are absent. Challenges arise when multiple teachers become ill at one

time. We hope to minimize the likelihood of this happening by implementing strong health and safety practices and continuously staying up-to-date with best practices.

High quality Masks are a KN95 or N95 mask. There are many different sources but you can find them online at [HERE](#).