

Puddletown  
School  
Family  
Handbook

2021/22

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# Family Handbook



Puddletown School

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## MISSION STATEMENT

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Our mission is to create an environment in line with Dr. Maria Montessori's teachings where children learn to trust themselves and feel the freedom to explore who they are; with curiosity and confidence, they create their individuality.

At Puddletown School we encourage children to explore learning and independence. Self-trust and confidence are important parts of developing independence, especially if that confidence is tied to a sense of self-worth rather than ability. Friendliness with error is a positive part of the learning process.

The teachers, known as guides, allow each child the freedom to make choices that feed their own developmental needs. The guides encourage, redirect, and supervise with gentle guidance. Puddletown provides a consistent classroom environment with established routines. This frees children from continually having to test and re-establish boundaries.



## MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

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The Montessori Method is named after Dr. Maria Montessori, who devoted her life to the observation and study of children and peace. From these observations, she discerned that learning is most effective when children are allowed to learn in their own way and at their own pace.

Dr. Montessori discovered that children from birth to age six are capable of absorbing information from their environment with much less effort than later in life. In this first plane of development she felt that it was important to prepare an environment tailored to the many aspects of a child's development. The Montessori preschool and kindergarten environment is designed to stimulate exploration of each child's interests. She developed a curriculum focusing on math, language, sensory exploration, art, music, and practical life skills. Abstract ideas are introduced as a hands-on exploration. Gradually this leads the child to a self-discovery of the concept. In the classroom, lessons are given individually on isolated aspects of an abstract idea that children put together on their own to form a cohesive whole. In this way each learned skill or lesson becomes a building block for the next, helping the child to experience success.

The second plane of development Maria Montessori noted includes ages six through twelve. Just as for three-to six-year-old children, there are work choices, movement with purpose, and freedom within limits. The lessons at the elementary level are given in group settings, as the social aspect of learning is becoming more and more important. The elementary structure integrates personal choice as well, where children learn to manage their time, while also managing and prioritizing their work. Each child keeps a daily record and uses this to plan their own education. Ultimately, this structure is a preparation for life. Montessori wrote, "the elementary child has reached a new level of development. Before she was interested in things: working with her hands, learning their names. Now she is interested mainly in the how and why; the problem of cause and effect."

The job of the guide is to show the world's interconnectedness and create a class that allows children to discover it for themselves. The Montessori classroom offers children opportunities to learn, develop, and succeed in a nurturing, enriching, and appropriate learning environment. The second plane child begins to explore ideals and the struggle of conflicting interests. The elementary class compares the history that brought us here and what we want the future to be. The imagination is given new possibilities and gives inspiration for learning. This is a time for seeing the world as they would have it be and find a way to be a part of it.

## **ANTI-BIAS/ANTI-RACIST (ABAR) AND INCLUSION STATEMENT**

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At Puddletown School we are working to create an inclusive environment for everyone in our school community. Our world is a challenging place when thinking about the disparity of privilege and oppression. We strive to be a place that pushes back against the biases that are all around us.

We want our school to be a safe place for all racial/ethnic backgrounds, cultures, languages, gender expression and identity, sexual orientations, religion and beliefs, family structures, cognitive or physical abilities, socioeconomic status, and thought. We are committed to making changes toward eliminating biases and racism. We are working to recognize our own bias and privilege and support each other to undo these damaging patterns. We are making renewed efforts to honor the differences in all of us. We are dedicated to bringing inclusivity into our daily relationships with everyone in our community. Anti-bias/anti-racism (ABAR) work is ongoing at Puddletown. We focus on uplifting individuals to be proud of their uniqueness while honoring other individual's differences. Puddletown is dedicated to integrating ABAR education at all levels of the school community.

Diversity and inclusion enriches learning and teaching experiences for children and adults. Alongside our children, we learn the value of mutual respect and meaningful inclusion practices. We grow through thoughtful interaction with each other and work together in an interconnected society. At Puddletown we work to build community by respecting differences. All are honored, respected, and welcome. We strive to uncover similarities in us that create potentials for rich and creative partnerships across the differences and that facilitate communication, understanding, and mutual growth.

At Puddletown we are working to:

- Create opportunities for staff and child development toward cultural intelligence and sensitivity.
- Create a climate of reflective and thoughtful understanding of the similarities and differences amongst us as ways to promote mutual respect and collaboration.
- Challenge ourselves to continually reevaluate policies, and practices to ensure that we continue to grow and welcome all voices.

## **PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

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Puddletown's preschool/kindergarten program is for children ages three through six. Our program fosters growth in independence and problem solving; the development of order, concentration and coordination; the nurturing of oral communication skills; and stimulation of the child's joy in discovery and learning.

*Puddletown's preschool/kindergarten program meets at the following times:*

- Early care 7:30–8:20am to a limited amount of children
  - Half day 8:20am–1:00pm
  - Extended day until 3:15pm
  - After care 3:15–5:30pm
- Drop-in may be available, depending on the child to staff ratio*

### **CURRICULUM**

In the preschool/kindergarten classrooms at Puddletown, the learning environment is based on the Montessori Method—an approach to learning that engages the five senses, kinetic movement, spatial refinement, and small and large motor skill coordination. Puddletown uses this method as a basis for studying language, science, mathematics, music, art, and other subjects. In addition to children's development of movement that is inherent within the activities in the classroom, children also develop gross motor skills outdoors during our daily playtime.

### **PRACTICAL LIFE**

Practical life is the area of the classroom in which the child creates, controls, changes, and cares for their physical environment and their physical well-being. Practical life is the most basic and essential area of Montessori development. There are four goals of the practical life curriculum that make it a foundation of the child's day to day life:

- Through these activities the child grows to respect and love the physical world around them, both natural and man-made.
- The child develops techniques and skills that are basic to other areas of development.
- The child unites their growing body, developing intelligence, and will.
- The child comes to discover the joy of participating and contributing in a community setting.

The success of our program depends upon this foundation. Through practical life, the child develops a work process that is freely chosen, undertaken with self-discipline, using physical skills in an intelligent way. The result is a self-aware child, creating through their work a self-created adult.



## **SENSORIAL EXERCISES**

Sensorial exercises are done with an extensive set of materials, each of which isolates one sense and expands upon it: shape, weight, texture, or pitch are matched, graded (contrasted), and named. The knowledge is then applied to the larger world outside the classroom. The sensorial work allows the child to develop their sensory awareness and organize their perceptions to form concepts and abstractions. The purpose of this work is threefold:

- The satisfaction of the work with the materials.
- The ability to perceive one's environment with increasing sensitivity and intelligence.
- The appreciation of the natural order that intelligent awareness cultivates in one's life.

## **MATH & LANGUAGE**

Cognitive work in math and language develops from concrete sensorial materials that the child uses, forming the foundation for the use of symbols. The child will first be introduced to each sound and number orally before using the written symbol that represent it. With the symbols, the child begins to communicate what they know and do. In this way we will move from concrete ways of understanding to the more abstract concepts that follow. Arithmetic, geography, reading and writing, grammar and syntax, music, art, science, algebra, and geometry are developed in gradual stages from the concrete sensorial to the abstract conceptual through sequential materials and exercises and repetition of these exercises. Each child works from their own choice at their own pace, successfully completing self-correcting materials, while the guide, through observations, works to give lessons that seamlessly provide the next step of growth.

## **EXTENDED DAY**

*Rest time & extended work time.*

The extended day provides extra time in the classroom for older children (about four-and-a-half to six years old) to explore and for younger children (about three to four-and-a-half years old) to rest.

Older children who are ready (a determination made by a child's adult and guide) are invited to participate in the extended day. By spending full days at school and by working with the guide in a smaller group setting in the afternoon, children are able to experience more of the lessons available for older children in Montessori. It is not intended that children will stay on an occasional basis. Please consult your child's guide if you are considering extended day.

If your child is between three and four-and-a-half years old, your child will be taking a rest during the extended day. Twenty-five dollars will be added to your first month's tuition so that your child may have a nap mat to rest on at school. All nap supplies should be taken home at the end of each week to be washed.

## ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

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Puddletown's elementary program is for children ages six through twelve. As in the preschool/ kindergarten classroom, a major component of Montessori elementary is the manipulation of concrete materials. However, as the child continues to progress from the physical act of addition, using beads or rods, they eventually leave the need for concrete associations through gradually increasing levels of abstraction.

At the elementary level, children receive lessons in a mixed-age grouping in an environment created to encourage exploration and research. They work with materials that emphasize reason, relationships, analysis, and abstraction. The interests that each child develops from the group experience are the basis of the individual exploration and research that is an integral part of the curriculum.

Children take ownership of their education process and cultivate personal responsibility for their learning as they keep a journal of their daily activities. The daily work journal supports children in developing a strong work ethic. It is a tool that allows students to discuss their ongoing work with their guides in regular one-to-one meetings. We use the journals and the children's meetings with the guide to ensure all children are meeting the state's standards and benchmarks. Children also attend formal conferences with their adults and guide twice a year.

*Puddletown's elementary program meets at the following times:*

- Early care 7:30–8:20am to a limited amount of children
- 8:20am–3:15pm
- After care 3:15–5:30pm  
*Drop-in may be available, depending on the child to staff ratio*

## CURRICULUM

When children reach the elementary classroom they continue with the manipulation of concrete materials. From their foundation in concrete correlations the elementary child builds the ability to think and reason in the abstract. As the child gains confidence in manipulating the concrete materials, they progress toward more abstract thinking and learning. Learning also takes place beyond the boundaries of the classroom as nature and cultural programs extend the children's exposure to the surrounding community. Classroom exploration includes:

*Language:*

- Reading and spelling
- Grammar, including parts of speech and parts and types of sentences, phonics, diphthongs and consonant combinations, sight words, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and root words
- Penmanship done in manuscript and cursive

*Mathematics:*

- Concepts of the four basic operations (+, -, x, /) and basic geometric figures, memorization, and application
- Squaring, square root, cubing, and cube root
- Operations with money
- Area and volume, fractions and decimal fractions
- Set theory

*Physical Geography:*

- Political divisions, capitals, major cities, and commerce
- Flags of countries and states

*History:*

- Theories of the formation of the earth, development of life, development of human beings and society, and contributions of various life forms
- Continental drift (plate tectonics)
- Specific historical events, including U.S. and Oregon history and current events

*Science:*

- Experiments revealing natural laws
- Basic terminology, classification, and taxonomy of the plant, animal, and mineral kingdoms
- Field trips

*Arts, language, and health/physical education:*

- Spanish curriculum incorporating concurrent activities in the classroom
- Art, music, and drama
- Health and physical education

**ADDITIONAL WAYS TO EXPLORE**

*Going Out:*

A *going out* is a carefully designed excursion supervised by the guide and children's adults. Children initiate, plan, organize, and carry out these trips to extend knowledge, information, or experience in relation to classroom studies. Giving the children the reins establishes and invigorates each child's responsibility for their own learning in the outside world. It helps ensure their ability to think clearly and make sound choices in taking care of themselves.

*Research:*

Literature and basic research tools, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, are in constant use. Children borrow books from the school library and visit our local library for their own reading. They are also read to as a group daily.

## ATTENDANCE & TARDINESS

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Be sure your child only misses school when absolutely necessary. At the elementary level, group learning and experience are vital parts of an environment created to encourage exploration and research. The children work collaboratively, forming work and study groups that change for various projects. The guide gives presentations to the children in groups. If a child is absent, they might miss a presentation or group discovery and be left to explore on their own, without the support of their classmates. This can lead to feeling left out or disconnected.

When a child arrives late it prevents them from benefiting fully from an important part of a school day and from participating in some cooperative learning experiences. Late arrivals can also be distracting to the community. Excessive or habitual tardiness may also send a message that a child's work day (school) is not a high priority. If tardiness is excessive, we will contact you to support problem solving.

## ADMISSION POLICY

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### *A Nondiscrimination Policy*

Puddletown School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in hiring, promoting, or training of employees, nor in the admissions, rights, privileges, programs, and activities of its children.

*The following requirements must be met prior to admission:*

- Prospective Puddletowners must be at least three years old and toilet-trained.
- All forms and contracts relating to admission must be completed and signed in full before the child begins class.
- A registration fee must be remitted to save the child's place.

## PUDDLETOWN CALENDAR

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Puddletown School loosely follows the Portland Public Schools (PPS) calendar. Please consult the printed calendar included in your packet, Puddletown's website, and the list below for holidays, administrative planning days, etc. Throughout the year we will have other scheduled events, such as adult education nights (fall and spring), work parties, and fund raisers (winter and spring). The dates of these events will be announced as they approach. For closures due to weather and other emergencies, we generally follow PPS east side. If we are making a different decision than PPS, we will contact children's adults via email and text.

### 2021

#### AUGUST 30

*First day for 2nd–6th year returning preschool, kindergarten, and elementary children*

#### SEPTEMBER 1–17

*Orientations and first days for new preschool children*

#### SEPTEMBER 2

*First day for 1st year elementary children*

#### SEPTEMBER 6

*No school - Labor Day*

#### OCTOBER 8

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### NOVEMBER 11

*No school - Veterans Day*

#### NOVEMBER 12

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### NOVEMBER 22–26

*No school - Fall Break*

#### DECEMBER 20–31

*No school - Winter Break*

### 2022

#### JANUARY 3

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### JANUARY 17

*No school - MLK Day*

#### FEBRUARY 21

*No school - Presidents' Day*

#### MARCH 21–25

*No school - Spring Break*

#### MARCH 28

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### APRIL 22

*No school - Teacher planning day*

#### MAY 30

*No school - Memorial Day*

#### JUNE 8

*Last day of school*

## **OBSERVATIONS**

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We request that each family visit at least once a year to observe their child's classroom. Observations are typically scheduled in November and April and may be hosted virtually or in-person.

During a virtual observation, please mute yourself and do not record the session. During an in-person observation, please sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated. Try not to make your presence felt; please don't initiate conversation or get things from the shelves. We are hoping through these observations to create a way for children's adults to get as objective a view as possible of how a day goes at Puddletown. Please make notes to discuss during your conference with the classroom's guide.

We encourage you to observe. Seeing the children in class is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful, take a look around the room and notice the amount and diversity of activity, the range of ages, the types of materials, the individual and group activity, and the interactions among the children. Take some time to watch the guide and notice the composure, observation, and respect the guide shows each child. Watch your child and notice the succession of activities, the concentration on work, the enthusiasm and self-satisfaction in each activity, and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the guides and staff.

Please plan to spend at least one hour and be aware that your child may or may not have a "normal" day while you're there. If your child is having any trouble transitioning as you are leaving, we may ask that you take them with you for the remainder of the day.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS, WEATHER SAFETY & FIRE DRILLS**

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Puddletown School generally follows PPS closures and late starts for the east side. Fire drills and emergency evacuation drills are held on a regular basis. The evacuation plan is posted and all staff members are familiar with these procedures.

In case of evacuation we will either be at Berkeley Park (weather permitting) or Holy Family School (7425 SE César Chávez). We will contact children's adults as soon as possible after evacuating. Please let us know if you would like to see a detailed description of our emergency procedures for illness, fire, earthquake, and evacuation.

In these situations, children's adults will be contacted as soon as children are safe. Emergency files are kept right by the classroom exits for accessibility, and all adults take contact information for each child with them whenever they exit the building.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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In order to be prepared for an emergency or earthquake, Puddletown School requires families to provide their child with provisions that will last one day (24 hours). The following items are requested:

- Nonperishable food items (e.g., snap-open cans of fruit and tuna, crackers, raisins, sunflower seeds, fruit rolls, granola bars)
- A picture of the family and pets
- A brief note addressed to your child offering encouragement and comfort
- A small toy or stuffed animal
- A large plastic lawn bag
- An emergency blanket

Please place all items in a resealable bag that is *dated* and *labeled* with your child's name on it. Each child must have their own kit of provisions. Each guide is responsible for storing the kits in their classroom so they will be readily available in an emergency. Kits will be returned upon request at the close of the school year or before the end of school if a child leaves. All children must have a kit at school by the second week of October.

## REUNIFICATION PLAN

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In the event of an evacuation, children's adults will be notified as soon as the children are in a safe environment and all of their needs are met. This will be done using whatever type of communication is most readily available. Whenever possible we will use Flash Alert, our text service managed by Twilio, phone, email and the Puddletown website if necessary.

For non-evacuation emergencies that are not life-threatening, we will notify children's adults either by phone or at the end of the day. If necessary, a letter explaining the nature of emergency and action taken will be sent home. In the event of an evacuation, children's adults will be reunited with their children at a location deemed safe by emergency personnel. We will refer to the child's emergency contacts for individuals who are allowed to pick up each child. We will follow our normal policies regarding identification checks if necessary.

## **ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

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### **ARRIVAL TIME**

Classroom doors are unlocked from 8:20-8:30am. If you would like to take advantage of our drop-off program, please arrive at the curb on SE Knapp Street from 8:20-8:30am.

### **DRIVE-THROUGH DROP OFF**

Drop off is an offering possible some years and not others. We will communicate if this is available this school year prior to the first days of school. If drive-through option is indeed available, drop off is on the south side of Puddletown on SE Knapp Street. Please make sure you are facing west as you pull up. To help foster good relationships, do not use our neighbors' driveways to turn around. Pull up to the drop-off zone and a staff member will escort your child to their classroom. If you are early, please wait with your child; staff members are unavailable to be with children before 8:20am.

### **PARKING & DROP OFF**

Parking is available on SE César Chávez Blvd. and in the parking lot on the north side of the school; the entrance to the lot is on SE Ogden Street. If you park in the lot or on the street, you can escort your child to their classroom's entrance and say goodbye outside. Sage and Lavender doors are located on the East side of the building (Sage is the North classroom and Lavender is the South classroom); for entrance to the Sunflower classroom, use the SE Knapp Street door and escort your child to the interior door, where they will be greeted by a staff member. Elementary children will enter the South building through the building's East corridor or West staircase.

### **LATE DROP OFF & PICK UP**

Promptness in a child's life is very important. Children who arrive late or who are picked up late tend to feel uncomfortable. Tardiness can also be disruptive to the community and creates an awkward beginning for a child's day. Children arriving at school on time create an important ritual with their community to start their day. Consistency is an integral part of the child's schedule.

If you are running late and try to reach us by phone, we may not answer as we are often helping children with dismissal. Please leave a message and we will contact you as soon as we can.

### **LATE POLICY**

If you arrive after 8:30am please wait at the SE Knapp Street door until 8:45am, when a staff member will come and walk your child to their classroom.

If late picking up, your child will be waiting with an adult. If you are more than five minutes late five times to pick up your child, you will receive a note. On the sixth time we will begin charging \$1/minute.



## **GOODBYES**

Goodbyes can be an emotional and anxious time for children and their adults alike. It is important to remember that lengthy goodbyes are hard on everyone. Children's adults are reminded to model the behavior they want their child to demonstrate. Be strong and confident! Consistency is the key. Please remember the tears rarely last long. You are always welcome to call and check in after a difficult goodbye.

## **PICK UP**

Half-day pick up is from outside your child's classroom door at 1:00pm. If you are late, please come to the office. Extended day and elementary pick up is from your child's classroom door at 3:15pm. Aftercare pickup is from the aftercare room or the playground anytime between 3:15–5:30pm.

## **GUIDANCE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

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Children naturally test and observe the world around them. We find that modeling is the best way to give children the skills they need for navigating conflict. Children observe and imitate all people in their environment. Children's caregivers are the primary source for this information, and as they enter the classroom they expand their skills as they continue to observe and imitate. Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and setbacks, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and non-judgmental communication, are especially valuable to children who are still learning to establish their own self-control.

In any environment conflicts arise naturally. In the classroom, we use what Montessori called "grace and courtesy" lessons to develop the skills of active listening and conflict resolution. Through modeling, children are shown appropriate choices for all manner of social situations, typically before they happen. They are then given the opportunity to practice. We make an effort to show examples of how to gracefully manage taking turns, react to a variety of challenging situations, and understand another's point of view. We strive to give children the tools for coming up with peaceful solutions and create a balance of individual freedom and responsibility. As these skills grow, they find themselves naturally acting as third party mediators for others.

## **EDUCATION FOR PEACE**

At the start of the year in the preschool and kindergarten classrooms we often use an object and a guide, staff person or an older child to facilitate a conversation. A peace rose, stone, shell, or other object is passed as a way of designating the speaker. This discussion evolves without placing blame. In a grace and courtesy lesson we give the script for how to tell someone what is wrong. "I didn't like it when you \_\_\_\_\_." "Next time would you \_\_\_\_\_." Eventually this will be done without a guide, staff person or an older child.

In the elementary program we continue our education for peace. A key component of our program is to foster respect for each child's progress along the path of truthfulness, honesty, empathy, compassion, and action in relation to immediate peers and our larger community. We further develop peer mediation, and prepare and support children to resolve issues among themselves. We strive to give them the tools to handle generalized and ongoing issues as

well as specific interpersonal conflicts. Our goal is to empower a self-managing elementary community where the children are organizing and managing the daily operations of their environment and community.

In addition, in the elementary setting we have a weekly meeting called 'Circle of Friends.' During this meeting members of the community offer suggestions for resolution for a variety of topics, without blaming. The group develops skills for showing empathy and functional problem solving, eventually appointing an older child in the group to facilitate and lead the discussion.

## **POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Puddletown School strives to provide a learning environment in which each and every child feels secure and loved. We work to address issues as a community early. It is important that communication is clear and timely to be as effective as possible. The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal. Often inappropriate behavior is the result of frustration or impulsiveness. It is our belief that skills such as learning to listen carefully, to calm oneself, to generate suggestions, to imagine someone else's point of view, etc., must be taught and cultivated.

Self discipline is an important skill and is fostered in many ways. The classroom lends stability with an organized and logical layout to the classroom and its rules. This alleviates many common discipline issues that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed-age group gives the younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behavior of older children.

All redirection is done in a loving manner. We look for the underlying reasons for a given behavior instead of reacting to the surface situation. Minor problems can be solved through communication and consistency between school and home. This communication serves as a valuable tool to enable both guides and children's adults to have similar expectations in the guidance of the child. No use of physical punishment is ever used. The consequence for inappropriate behavior is to kindly and naturally separate the child from the person, area, or situation in question and allow the child to regain control. This pause is always used as positive motivation in helping a child realize what is appropriate and what is not acceptable. The child is not criticized. The inappropriate behavior is defined with our expectations in as short and clear a way as possible. All redirection is presented by phrasing to the child what behavior we would like to see. This positive phrasing is done in an effort to teach the child how to be a better individual, a better friend, and a better member of our community.

## **PROTOCOL FOR ONGOING, UNRESOLVED ISSUES**

In the first 3 months we are getting to know your child. If, after or during the 3 months, attempts to meet the child's individual needs fail, both staff and children's adults will re-evaluate the benefits of the child staying in the program. During this time of evaluation, we will communicate frequently.

A child who is having trouble navigating challenges peacefully is asked to work closer to the guide or another staff person. When the child seems ready, the guide or another staff person gently redirects the child toward work that will engage their interest. This can include offering a chance to do some deep breathing, a space with less people, noise-canceling headphones, or another solution that seems helpful.

When necessary, careful physical restraint is used if a child may hurt them self or others. If a child becomes too disruptive to the community, arrangements will be made for the child to be picked up. When necessary, a specialized plan will be developed. Sometimes this involves asking for additional support from public or private specialists. Whenever an outside specialist is working with a child or family, we ask to be connected and receive copies of written reports.

If a child is sent home, we ask that it not be seen as a sign for further punishment or a rewarding experience. Sending a child home from school is a last resort due to inappropriate behavior that has been redirected many times. Be careful not to allow this time to be seen as a reward as this may add to your child's challenges. We greatly appreciate your support in helping your child understand what behaviors are acceptable and appropriate.

Puddletown recognizes that there are some situations that are unique and therefore reserves the right to deviate from policy when necessary. In these instances all consequences will be considered and acted upon after at least two members of the staff (including an administrator) come to a consensus, taking into consideration the circumstances, welfare of the child, and the school as a whole. Our aim is to be fair and compassionate while remaining realistic, and this may mean finding a better place for the child to be successful.



## HEALTH POLICY

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If your child is sick and will not be attending school, please call or email by 9:00am.

In the classroom, children tend to infect and re-infect each other. When young children are recovering from an illness, they may seem fine at home. However, when you bring them back to school too soon and they are in a group setting, they may ultimately stay sick longer. We want your child to be well enough at school to take care of their own physical needs (as appropriate for their age) and contribute as a member of the group all day. If your child has clearly developed a communicable illness, please make other arrangements for their care. Also, please call us so we may alert all families to look for symptoms.

In Oregon any child who has had an elevated fever, vomiting, or diarrhea is required to be free of symptoms for 24-48hours before returning to school. If your child has been to a doctor and needs medication, they are not to return to school until the medication is “active” (usually after 2 doses). If your child is found to be sick at school and needs to be at home, we will contact you.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the school also has a handbook addendum that is updated as needed and is accessible from the banner on our website.

## MEDICATIONS

No prescription or non-prescription medication, including but not limited to pain relievers or first aid ointments, may be given to a child except under the following conditions:

- A signed, dated, written authorization by a child's adult is on file.
- Prescription medication is in the original container and labeled with the child's name, name of the drug, dosage, directions for administering, date, and physician's name and signature.
- Nonprescription medication is in the original container, labeled with the child's name, dosage, and directions for administering.

## LICE

Head lice infestations have been an occasional problem at Puddletown, as in schools everywhere. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines are as follows:

*Head lice are not a health hazard or a sign of poor hygiene and, in contrast to body lice, are not responsible for the spread of any disease. No healthy child should be excluded from or miss school because of head lice, and no-nit policies for return to school should be abandoned. Though head lice pose no definite health threat, the bugs are an annoyance for children and adults alike.*

—American Academy of Pediatrics

Lice do not spread disease; most often they just cause itchiness, although not everyone gets the itchiness. Transmission within schools is thought to be relatively low. Many school outbreaks, which typically first show up in October, are left over from the summer.

What's more, children are typically diagnosed several weeks after infection since it takes about a month for the scalp to start itching. Most of the transmission of lice happens before the child is even aware they have them.

The pediatricians' group also suggests that children's adults combating an outbreak might want to try alternative treatments that don't rely on pesticides. Among these is "wet combing," or wetting the hair with water or other fluids and combing out the lice and eggs, or nits, with a fine-toothed "nit comb."

We will notify the community of any lice outbreaks and ask that you take precautions at home to ensure the quickest possible end.

## **ILLNESS & INJURY**

If your child has an accident or is involved in a noteworthy incident at school, normal first aid and follow-up procedures will be followed. An accident/incident report and copy will be completed and handed to you at the end of the day. The copy must be initialed by the child's adult to indicate they have received it, and then returned to us. Adults are notified at the time of the accident or incident if there is a question as to whether the child should be picked up. In the case of an accident that requires your child to be taken to a doctor or hospital, the child's adult will be called **IMMEDIATELY**. If the child's adult or emergency contact person cannot be reached and the staff thinks medical care is necessary, the child's doctor will be called. If the injury is life-threatening, we will call 911. In a medical emergency we will have your child transported to the nearest hospital.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

All children enrolled in our program must be toilet trained. This is defined as knowing when and how to use the bathroom independently. Since accidents happen, we ask that an extra set of clothes be kept in the classroom. Please dress children in clothing they can manage themselves. Buttons down the back, one-piece outfits, and buckle belts are difficult for young children to manage.



## LUNCH & SNACK

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Puddletown children bring their lunch to school every day. Lunch is a very important part of a child's school day. If a child comes to school with food containing sugar or a sugar substitute as one of the first three ingredients, the food will be sent home for eating later. Please do not send juice boxes or food that comes in a tube. Uneaten foods will also typically be sent home. We appreciate your care in preparing a good and balanced lunch.

Depending on a child's schedule, they may eat snack 1-3 times per day. Elementary children pack extra food with their lunches so they may also eat snack in their classroom. Puddletown provides snack for preschool and kindergarten classrooms and aftercare. We make every effort to purchase organic food whenever possible and always make sure that snacks are healthy and low in sugar. We can accommodate most food allergies/intolerances by referencing the forms children's adults fill out upon enrollment. If there are any changes in your child's diet please notify us immediately.

## FIELD TRIPS

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Preschool and kindergarten classes occasionally take walking field trips around the neighborhood area. When we are off campus we leave a note with our planned map and a phone number in case you need to reach us.

Elementary children begin taking more field trips and participating in excursions called *going outs*. These are excursions into the community that are thought of and planned by the children themselves. *Going out* is a natural extension of learning the children have begun in the classroom. These trips are supervised by a guide and/or the children's adults with the goal of establishing the children's responsibility for their own safety and education. The elementary children also participate in an overnight *outdoor school* trip at the end of every school year. Elementary children sometimes go on an overnight camping trip at another point in the school year, as well.

## HOLIDAYS

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Holidays that focus on history, seasons, and cultural heritage are explored throughout the year. If your family observes a specific holiday, please feel free to talk to us and perhaps offer items that would enrich a classroom exploration

## **CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE**

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### **IN THE PRESCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM**

*Trips around the Sun.* We like to make note of each child's trips around the sun and all the amazing changes that happen for our children as they get older. During the celebration each child is honored by holding a globe and demonstrating their trips around the sun. Children's adults share in this important occasion by helping their children select photographs from each year of their life and preparing a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. Children's adults are invited to share some of these milestones as the teacher leads the celebration and the child "walks around the sun" for each year celebrated. Children's adults should make every effort to participate in this beautiful ceremony with their child. If you are planning a home birthday party for your child, please do not bring or hand out invitations at school. Those not invited may have hurt feelings.

### **IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

Each year we will be hosting gatherings to celebrate the special traits each individual brings to our community. We divide our community into smaller groups and about once a month honor them with a celebration that will include a treat, songs and games. During their month (this is done randomly and makes sure all in our community are celebrated), the group will plan a treat to serve to the group on celebration day. The treat will always be something the whole community can eat. On the day of the celebration, the honorees will each be presented with a compliment book, a book of lovingly crafted letters from their classmates. This celebration will most likely not be on the day your child was born but will be planned out by each group monthly throughout the year.

## **CLOTHING**

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Comfortable clothes are encouraged (e.g., simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to-manage). In cold weather, layering is best. Please have your child's name on all clothing—including boots, hats, and gloves—so we can help identify their clothing. Raincoats and boots are a must for rainy winters.

Your child must have a complete change of weather-appropriate clothing, including underwear and socks, kept in the classroom. The extra clothing should be brought with the child on the first day with their name on it; When clothes get wet or too dirty to wear, your child will change into their spare set and we will wash and return the clothes to your child's cubby. If clothes are heavily soiled we will return them to you.

Clothing that cannot be dirtied should be left at home. Please also remember that when children come to school in clothing with characters (e.g., super heroes, Disney characters), it can be a disruptive distraction. Please focus on providing clothing that is label and character free.

## **LOST & FOUND**

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Misplaced and unlabeled items will be placed in the lost and found box in the entry and purged at the end of every other month.

## **MYSTERIOUS OBJECTS**

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Many of our classroom materials consist of small attractive objects that are appealing to children. If you find any mysterious objects in your child's possession, please return them to school.

## **SUGGESTION BOX**

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Have a great idea? Insight? We would love to hear about it. Please place your suggestion in the tuition tin located in the entry. You can also email or call us with any ideas or concerns.





## **VOLUNTEERING AT PUDDLETOWN**

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Every family is expected to contribute their talents and time to fundraising, community events, and classroom endeavors with a minimum of 10 hours a year (5 hours more for each additional child). We encourage families to use up to 3 hours volunteering with your child in the greater community (e.g. Food Bank, Animal Shelter, etc.). At the end of the school year a per-hour payment of \$20/hour is charged for families who have not reached the minimum level, unless this presents an undue hardship for a family and we've arranged otherwise. A link will be shared where you can track your hours. We will tally your hours mid-May so that you can include any money owed in your June tuition check. The school makes every effort to connect families to volunteer work that fits their interests, and our goal is that no one use the payment option.

Please ask us about volunteer opportunities. During the course of the year there are many opportunities for children's adults looking to donate time and energy, including work parties, fundraising, garden care, and bringing a special talent or skill to the Puddletown community. We also look for ways to build our scholarship fund and suggestions are appreciated. Included in your enrollment packet is a volunteer form. Use this form to let us know how and where you have interest in helping.

## **FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

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All adults with children attending Puddletown are automatically members of the family association. From there, involvement is up to you. The purpose of the association is to serve as an avenue of communication and cooperation among adults, administration, and faculty; to build and foster the spirit of community; and to assist in the implementation of mentoring, fundraising, and other school activities.

## **ASSESSMENT**

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At Puddletown there are no grades and comparisons are kept to a minimum. Each child is assessed according to their progress on an individual basis. A portfolio is created for each child, in which the guide records which lessons have been given and observations of the child's interaction in the classroom. Conferences are set up between children's adults and guides twice a year.

At the elementary level the fall conference is led by the children. During this conference, each child will meet with both the guide and their adults to highlight areas of achievement and explore where more work is needed. When that portion concludes, adults and the guide continue the conference without the child. Each child will keep a daily journal of activities and will be checking in weekly to assess progress. The children are made aware of the state standards and work to show how they are meeting and exceeding those standards. Children will explore and build test-taking skills to be ready when they transition out of Montessori.

## **TRANSITIONING INTO SCHOOL**

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Each new child enters with a provisional thirty-to ninety-day trial period. During this time, the guides expect that all children will experience an adjustment as they begin a new routine with a new guide, staff and classmates. Guides will communicate during this time to share observations, victories, and challenges. If a child is struggling beyond what we feel is the norm, a meeting will be requested. No child is ever discriminated against because of information shared prior to or during the enrollment process. This information will allow us to serve your child and do our best to meet their needs.

### **PRESCCHOOL / KINDERGARTEN**

At the beginning of the year, children transition into the classroom in phases. The phase-in is a stabilizing period in which the children, guides and other staff get to know one another. During this transition, we foster security and comfort by phasing in new children gradually. The new children get an overview of how things work in the classroom and the returning children receive reinforcement and guidance on how to welcome the new children and act as role models. They prepare by learning the new children's names and how to graciously help them through their first days at Puddletown.

The new children are eager and excited about the year ahead and they learn new skills quickly. Their environment throughout the year will be stimulating and exciting, where independence, freedom, and choice of materials are the rule. The children must learn how to handle this choice and freedom while respecting the materials and each other. We begin the year with a few core materials on the shelves that focus on specific skills and on the completion of a work cycle (taking a task from its beginning to completion). These materials introduce the child to the classroom and allow older children to re-establish work habits. Montessori schools all over the world have a phase-in:

- In smaller groups, the guide can establish or reestablish a relationship with each child individually, creating an atmosphere of security and emotional comfort.
- The gradual phase-in allows the child to absorb and digest new concepts and ideas without becoming confused from too much information.
- Phasing-in establishes a tone of respect and care for one another and the environment. It sets the stage for making choices and independent learning.

### **ELEMENTARY**

The transition from kindergarten to lower elementary and from lower to upper elementary typically begins the previous school year through visits. At the beginning of each school year we spend time with the older children, re-establishing routines before introducing new children to the classroom.

## WHAT TO BRING

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### PRESCHOOL / KINDERGARTEN

- A complete change of clothes with your child's name on all items  
*Please check periodically to ensure clothes will be there when needed*
- Rain boots, jacket, and pants  
*Rain pants are optional, but helpful*
- Lunch with your child's name on it  
*Please use an insulated lunch bag with freezer pack for perishable lunch items such as meat, fish, dairy, and previously cooked items*
- Weather-appropriate items  
*Sun hat, winter hat, gloves*

### ELEMENTARY

- Cloth placemat, cloth napkin and napkin ring
- Mug with a handle
- Library card
- Rain gear
- Child-sized hiking backpack
- Water bottle
- Stay tuned for more communication over the summer months about other elementary work supplies such as:
  - good quality colored pencils
  - hardbound sketchbook
  - high quality watercolor pencils

### WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Toys of any kind
- Candy, gum, or other sugary food
- Personal items  
*If your child has a favorite toy or blanket that they are attached to, please practice leaving it in a safe place (the car seat or a specific spot at home) so your child can trust it will be there when they return.*

## TOYS AND BOOKS

Children should not bring toys to the classroom. Books or other educational materials that might be of interest to all children are welcome. Clearly mark your child's name on all items. Avoid bringing special things to school; we can't ensure that they will come back in the same condition (or at all).

## CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The classroom environment contains pocket-sized items such as money, rocks, shells, and educational materials. We often have fish to observe in the classrooms. Because of the self-correcting nature of the materials, any material that is missing a part is removed from the classroom until that part is found or replaced. This is a practical and not a punitive action. On some occasions, if your child's pockets should contain such an item, please return it promptly. It can otherwise take six or more weeks to replace an item, and some items are irreplaceable.

Electronic toys, trading cards, and money are to be left at home. If there is a unique item you believe would be of interest to your child's class, send the guide a note asking if and when it may be brought to school.



## DAILY SCHEDULE

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*Monday through Friday*

### **LAVENDER ,SAGE AND SUNFLOWER CLASS ROOMS :**

8:20 am – 8:30 am	Arrival
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Individual projects
11:30 am – 11:40 am	Gathering, transition to lunch time
11:40 am – 12:10 pm	Outside (Sunflower eats lunch at this time)
12:10 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch (Sunflower goes outside at this time)
1:00 pm	Dismissal for 1/2 day children
12:45 pm – 3:15 pm	Extended day
3:15 pm	Dismissal for extended day children

### **ELEMENTARY CLASS ROOM :**

8:20 am – 8:30 am	Arrival
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Morning work period
11:30 am – 11:45 am	Tidy up/transition
11:45 am – 12:15 pm	Lunch
12:15 pm – 1:10 pm	Outside
1:00 pm – 1:30 pm	Read aloud
1:30 pm – 3:10 pm	Afternoon work period
3:10 pm – 3:15 pm	Transition/Dismissal

## THE FIRST WEEKS

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Beginning school can be tiring for children. They are busy forming new relationships and experiencing new procedures and challenges. Be sure your child has adequate rest and appropriate quality time spent with you. Reluctance to go to school sometimes manifests itself after the first week and usually passes quickly with your consistent support. It is important that you communicate with your child's guide so we can be aware of any reluctance and you can be informed of the child's adaptation to school (but be sure not to communicate about this in front of the child; a note or phone call will initiate the discussion). When children's adults express confidence in their child and the school experience by encouraging them to attend, it helps build their security.

For children and their adults, the first weeks can bring wonderful and challenging new situations to daily life. It often takes 21 days to form or break a habit. A consistent schedule, positive attitude, and working together can make this transition smoother. If we feel that your child needs additional support or more time to prepare before attending Puddletown with the schedule you have chosen, we will talk with you about options for making your child's experience more successful.

## COMMUNICATION

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Communication between children's adults and staff is vital. At Puddletown there are several ways to communicate easily with one another:

- Emailing is the quickest way to get in touch with office and administration. This also allows us to revisit a conversation since all information is saved.
- Phone calls and notes are also encouraged. These can include requests for a longer in-person conversation as well.

All lead guides and administrators are available for meetings by appointment. Puddletown also has adult-guide conferences twice a year.

If a response is needed same day, please go through the office. Guides typically do not check messages during the school day and are unable to communicate during class time unless previous arrangements have been made. Guide emails are checked about once a week.

Failure to attend conferences or reply to communications regarding behavior could lead to the dismissal of the child. It is vital that the child receives support when needed. Regular communication is fostered in order to address any emerging difficulties in a timely manner.

## WEBSITE

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[puddletownschool.com](http://puddletownschool.com)

Puddletown's website is full of useful information regarding upcoming events, recent happenings in the classroom, and other helpful material. Our news page is updated frequently to keep families in touch with some of the things that happen during their child's day. Watch for updates on the Puddletown Journal and be sure to follow the Preschool/Kindergarten Daily Story and Elementary Weekly Digest to find out about the highlights. A unique part of the website at Puddletown are these regularly updated within-community blogs, which includes pictures and stories that the children tell about their day/week. This section of the website requires a password (sent via email at the beginning of each year).

## CHANGES IN THE HOME

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Please notify the school as soon as possible if any significant changes occur in your family's life. Your child's guide will be happy to schedule an appointment if you would like to discuss this matter in detail. These events could include:

- Loss of a family member, including pets
- Moving or staying somewhere other than home (relative/friend) for an extended period
- Change in family environment (e.g., separation, divorce, new partner, new baby)
- Changes in health, including adding or stopping medication or diet

## WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

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Tuition and enrollment is an annual commitment for the academic year September to June. When you enroll your child at Puddletown, you are obligated to pay the stated annual tuition and associated fees. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child, the following policies apply:

- You must provide written notification to the head of school of your intent to withdraw your child.
- Withdrawal prior to July 1st — *no fee.*
- Withdrawal between July 1st and September 1st — *a prorated tuition fee will be incurred based on the date of withdrawal.*
- Withdrawal after September 1st — *you will be responsible for 50% of annual tuition (minus any tuition installments already paid).*
- Withdrawal after December 15th — *you will be responsible for the entire annual tuition (minus any tuition installments already paid).*
- The head of school reserves the right to consider alternative withdrawal policies based on individual circumstances.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**

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Payment is due in full the first of every month for the current month. Families pay 10 payments beginning in September and ending in June. Families who pay the whole year in advance (by no later than September 15) receive a 3 percent discount. We also offer a sibling discount of 10 percent off of the second child's tuition while they are in attendance together.

A \$20 late fee is assessed to payments made after the fifth of the month. There is a \$25 fee for returned checks. To continue enrollment, a missed payment must be received by the first of the following month.

## **TUITION**

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*Tuition fees for the 2021–22 school year are based on a 10-month school year.*

### **PRESCCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN:**

- \$8,700 Half Day – 5 mornings: drop-off 8:20-8:30am, pick-up 1:00pm
- \$10,550 Extended Day – 5 full days: drop-off 8:20-8:30am, pick-up 3:15pm

### **ELEMENTARY:**

- \$11,750 Full Day Only – 5 full days: drop-off 8:20-8:30am, pick-up 3:15pm

### **EARLY & AFTER CARE:**

- \$1,550 Early Care – 7:30am to 8:30am
- \$2,850 After Care – 3:15pm to 5:30pm
- *When space is available, drop-in care is \$10/hr with at least 24 hours notice*

### **OTHER FEES:**

- \$500 New Child Registration Fee – *a non-refundable one time fee due by the deadline communicated in the enrollment invitation.*
- \$50 Preschool and Kindergarten Materials Fee – *annual.*
- \$350 Elementary Program Materials Fee – *annual.*
- \$25 Nap mat fee – *one time fee for children resting at Puddletown.*
- \$varies COVID fee- *monthly as needed. The amount varies and will be communicated clearly.*
- \$600 Next Year Deposit – *submit by March 1st to hold your child's space at Puddletown for the following school year. This is non-refundable and deducted from the following September's tuition.*
- \$800 Program Deposit – *holds your child's space at Puddletown until they complete the cycle of the program they are enrolled in. It is applied to tuition of your child's last month of their last year of each cycle (1st, 4th or 7th grade). Each family commits to paying this fee during the first school year of enrollment.*

### **DISCOUNTS:**

- A discount of 3% is available for families who wish to pay in full by September 15th. A sibling discount of 10% is available off the second child's tuition.



## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

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Puddletown offers a limited number of partial scholarships. Awards are based on financial need, space, availability, and family commitment to a Montessori education. The number of scholarships is dependent upon available funds but we strive to offer about 20% of tuition income in scholarships each year. Our financial need assessment is conducted by FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment. Please email us if you'd like the link to proceed. All requests and information are strictly confidential. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, please let us know.

## **REFUNDS OR RELEASE OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION**

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No refunds of paid tuition will be made for any uncompleted portion of the school year unless the child is withdrawn at the request of the school. Please contact us in person and in writing to discuss a need for a tuition waiver. Missed school is not refundable.



## RESOURCES

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### BOOKS:

*Many of these books are available for borrowing in our caregiver library.*

#### THE ABSORBENT MIND

*Maria Montessori*

#### HOW TO RAISE AN AMAZING CHILD THE MONTESSORI WAY

*Tim Seldin*

#### UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING

*Alfie Kohn*

#### PUNISHED BY REWARDS

*Alfie Kohn*

#### MONTESSORI: A MODERN APPROACH

*Paula Polk Lillard*

#### MARIA MONTESSORI: HER LIFE AND WORK

*E.M. Standing*

#### TAKING CHARGE

*Joanne Nordling*

### WEBSITES:

#### CHILD OF THE WORLD CATALOGUE

[michaelolaf.net](http://michaelolaf.net)

#### TOMORROW'S CHILD MAGAZINE

[montessori.org](http://montessori.org)

#### ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNATIONALE [montessori-ami.org](http://montessori-ami.org)

#### OREGON MONTESSORI ASSOCIATION

[oregonmontessori.org](http://oregonmontessori.org)

#### MARIA MONTESSORI.COM

[mariamontessori.com](http://mariamontessori.com)

#### MONTESSORI INSTITUTE NORTHWEST

[montessori-nw.org](http://montessori-nw.org)

#### NORTH AMERICAN MONTESSORI TEACHERS ASSOCIATION [montessori-](http://montessori-namta.org)

[namta.org](http://namta.org)

