

# HEARTPRINTS MONTESSORI



## Parent Handbook

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## Welcome

Dear families,

Heartprints Montessori is delighted to welcome your child to our school!

This handbook was designed to walk you through the details, policies, procedures, and information of our school. We will periodically update it as we grow as a school and adapt/edit policies and procedures. We will always communicate with families if we do revise and update our handbook.

If you have any questions regarding our policies, please connect with our director or office administrator for clarification.

We look forward to beginning this journey with you and your child!

Thank you,

*Heartprints Staff*

## Our Mission

Heartprints Montessori is an early childhood education and care program created to provide high quality early childhood education for children and families living in Tempe.

Our school is a Montessori oriented school. We wish to educate children based on the teachings and philosophy of Maria Montessori. We provide materials scientifically developed and designed for self- directed learning by Maria Montessori many years ago.

## Department of Health Services (DHS) Licensed

Heartprints Montessori is licensed to operate as a child-care facility by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Our current license and number can be located on our "Required Postings" bulletin board in the lobby outside the office.

## Department of Economic Security (DES)

Heartprints Montessori is licensed to serve children who receive child care assistance government subsidy through the Department of Economic Security (DES). If you think you may qualify for childcare assistance, please visit the DES website at <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/child-care> for more information.

Below are the policies we hold in relation to DES:

- As part of the DES contract, the center is required to collect the DES assigned co-payment.
- DES's reimbursement daily rates are less than our daily rates, so families must still pay the difference depending on the type of care they need, known as additional costs. A *Provider/Parent/Guardian Agreement for Child Care Charges* outlining additional costs will be completed and signed by both parties.

- Every child is allotted 2 absences for the month. If a child misses more than 2 days per month, we are not reimbursed by DES and therefore families must pay for those days at full price. Those will be billed through Brightwheel.
- As a high quality program that offers competitive tuition rates, full tuition is collected for every child enrolled. Families are responsible for paying the balance of tuition not covered by DES by the 10th of every month through Brightwheel.
- If co-payment and additional costs are not paid, we are required to report to DES for further action.
- The Provider/Parent/Guardian Agreement for Child Care Charges will be completed each time there is a change in tuition.
- Prior to starting, the center must have received verbal confirmation of services from DES. For care to continue, a written service agreement from DES must be on file within 30 days of enrollment. Families will contact the caseworker to follow up if a written agreement is not received.
- Families are responsible for contacting their caseworker for re-authorization for services (please have the caseworker contact the center with verbal reauthorization).
- If the program does not receive verbal reauthorization prior to the last day of the contract, full tuition rates will be billed until reauthorization is received.
- Upon disenrollment from the program, DES will be notified.
- If the family chooses to return to the program, they will need to contact the DES caseworker for reauthorization. The program must receive verbal confirmation of services prior to the first day of attendance. A new Provider/Parent/Guardian Agreement for Child Care Charges will be completed.

## **Ages Served**

Heartprints Montessori provides services for children ages 1 to 5 years old.

We have three classrooms here at Heartprints:

- Toddler Class: ages 1-2
- Transition Toddler Class: ages 2-3
- Primary Class: ages 3-5

Placement of a child depends on their age as well as individual needs and abilities. We base placement and transition from one class to another on:

- **Toilet training** (this is a huge factor—please make sure to work on this at home!)
- Age
- Language development
- Behavior
- Overall readiness

## **Hours of Operation and Daily Schedule**

Operating hours are Monday through Friday 6:00am-6:00pm (please see tuition rates for specific schedule options and prices). We will be closed on various days for holidays and professional development days. Please stop by the office and pick up a center calendar for the season or visit our website at [www.heartprintsmontessori.com](http://www.heartprintsmontessori.com).

If unforeseen circumstances, such as a pandemic or natural disaster, cause our enrollment to decrease and we need to reduce operating hours, parents will be notified immediately.

Below are **general** schedules for our classrooms. **They may be slightly altered and adapted as routines, seasons, and weather change.**

#### Toddler/Toddler Transition Daily Schedule

- 6:00-8:30 Before School Care
- 8:30-9:00 Arrival: Outside Play Time
- 9:00-9:15 Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 9:15-9:30 Snack
- 9:30-10:00 Independent Work Time
- 10:00-10:15 Circle Time
- 10:15-10:30 Bathroom/Wash Hands
- 10:30-11:00 Reading Time
- 11:00-11:30 Outside Play Time
- 11:30-12:30 Wash Hands/Lunch
- 12:30-2:30 Nap Time
- 2:30-3:30 Snack, Independent Work Time
- 3:30-6:00 After School Care

#### Primary Daily Schedule

- 6:00-8:30 Before School Care
- 8:30-9:00 Arrival: Outside Play Time
- 9:00-9:30 Snack Time
- 9:30-11:00 Independent Work Time
- 11:00-11:30 Clean Up, Music and Movement
- 11:30-12:15 Outside Play Time
- 12:15-12:45 Lunch
- 12:45-1:00 Bathroom
- 1:00-2:30 Nap
- 2:30-2:45 Clean Up
- 2:45-3:00 Snack
- 3:00-3:30 Independent Work Time
- 3:30-6:00 After School Care

## **The Curriculum**

Montessori materials are designed to stimulate a child's interest and are organized into 5 different curriculum areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematical, and Cultural subjects, including science, music and art.

#### Practical Life

In practical life children learn everyday tasks. Children develop coordination through activities such as pouring, scooping, and spooning. They learn to take care of themselves through the activities of buttoning, lacing, zipping, etc., and they learn to take care of the environment through sweeping, table-washing, and most importantly they learn recycling.

In practical life we also teach children grace, courtesy and respect for others, which includes learning good manners.

### Sensorial

This area is for the development and refinement of the senses. Different materials cover different areas of the brain and modalities of perception, such as the visual perception of size, color, and shape; the tactile experience of texture and matching temperature; the auditory discrimination of loudness and softness, and so on.

### Mathematics

The Montessori approach to mathematics is highly effective and makes learning mathematics very interesting and easy. We provide materials that help children learn concepts such as numeration, place value, the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Children will learn math through concrete actions, thus developing a deep understanding of the abstractions that will follow.

### Language

All areas in Montessori are interrelated. What the children learn in other departments will help them learn language. Concrete activities will pave the way for learning to write and read. Children learn with materials that will help them develop writing and reading skills in a pleasurable way.

### Cultural Subjects

Here children learn Geography (map puzzles, globes etc.), science (e.g., biology, plants and animals), and finally music and arts.

## **Staff-to-Child Ratio Requirements**

<u>Age group</u>	<u>Staff- child ratio</u>
● 1- 1 yr. 11 mos.	1:6 (or 2:13)
● 2 yrs.	1:8
● 3 yrs.	1:13
● 4 yrs.	1:15
● 5 yrs.	1:20

## **Holidays**

We are closed for most national public holidays. Please see our school calendar for specific dates and holidays.

## **Open Door Policy**

Typically, parents are encouraged to be involved in the program by reading stories, volunteering in the classroom, joining us for celebrations, and attending parent-teacher conferences. We ask that parents and



family members schedule a day and time with the classroom teacher, director, or office administrator to come in.

During a pandemic or a similar public health situation, physical parent involvement is postponed until the pandemic and public health situation has resolved to a safe standard. During this time, parents must drop off and pick up their children at the door to the classroom or at the gate to the playground. If a parent would like to be involved virtually or with at-home projects, please connect with your child's teacher, school director, or office administrator at drop-off/pick-up or through Brightwheel or email.

## **Enrollment**

The first step in the enrollment process is to tour the facility so staff and families can meet.

Following the tour, you will need to download, complete, and submit the following documents:

- DHS Enrollment Form
- Enrollment Agreement
- A copy of your child's immunization record (or religious exemption form)
- Enrollment fee of \$100 (this does not go toward tuition)

After your child's enrollment application has been processed, you will be added to our online platform, Brightwheel. In Brightwheel you will be invoiced the enrollment fee of \$100, which must be paid online. Instructions on how to pay the fee are included in Brightwheel.

## **Waiting List**

If a prospective family is interested in enrolling their child but there is not space available in a classroom, they may be added to our waiting list. To be added, a family must first come for a tour then submit the enrollment forms listed above. The \$100 enrollment fee must also be paid but is refundable if a family changes their mind and decides to be removed from the waiting list.

## **Withdrawal/Disenrollment**

If a family chooses to withdraw their child from Heartprints, they must give 2 week's written notice via email or Brightwheel.

If it is before the end of the month, the final bill will be prorated only if two week's notice was given. Any past due or outstanding balances must be paid before withdrawing. Unpaid balances at 30 days delinquent will be sent to our contracted collection company. Balances sent to collection will incur an additional 25% fee.

All belongings of the child must be taken home. If anything is left behind, we will wait 2 weeks following the child's last day of school to donate or throw out belongings.

## Drop-Off After Disenrollment/Expulsion

If a child is dropped off but has been disenrolled and has an account locked due to parent's notice, failure to pay tuition and outstanding balance, or expelled, staff will not accept the child. If for some reason the child is dropped off and parents leave the premises, we will contact authorities to pick up the child because they are no longer under our care.

## Tuition

### Tuition Policy

Tuition is based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance. As an early learning center, tuition is due, for each child, for all contracted days and as such is not reduced or prorated when a child is out sick. We offer three convenient drop-off/pick-up times to meet the needs of your family.

- There is a one time \$100 enrollment/waitlist fee at time of enrollment or when added to the waitlist to secure a child's spot. If a student is on the waitlist and would like to be removed, the fee will be refunded.
- Tuition will be raised no more than 5% at a time and 30 days notice will be given before the raise goes into effect.
- Invoices are sent out the 1st of the month and payment is due on or before the 10th day of the month prior to the month of service.
- Registration Fees/Tuition prepayment is due at the time of enrollment if the student is accepted.
- There is no discount, refund, or other allowance for absence, illness, vacation, holidays, scheduled school closures, or any other reason (in the extreme event of an unforeseen accident or illness resulting in an extended period of absence, some consideration may be made).
- A student's schedule for 2, 3, or 4 days must be chosen at the time of enrollment and may only be switched with 24 hour's written notice, staff approval, and depends on availability to ensure safe teacher to child ratios.
- If a student is dropped off before or picked up after their enrolled times, the hourly/minute rate for before and/or after school care will be added to the next month's tuition payment. This is calculated using Brightwheel parent sign-in/out time stamps. We will allow a 15 minute grace period outside of pick-up/drop-off times for half and full days.
- Families who utilize After Care must pick up by closing time of 6:00pm. If they pick up past this time, we will bill an additional fee of \$20 flat plus \$1 per minute.
- If a child who is enrolled for half days (8:30am-12:30pm) picks up after 12:45pm, they will be charged for a full day, which will be added to the following month's bill.
- Families are required to pay any ACH (\$0.90 per transaction) or credit card (2.9%) transaction fees incurred.
- Late Payment Policy: A late fee of \$10 per day is assessed on the Tuition balances outstanding on the 11th of the month. After 5 days of non-payment, the account will be locked and the child will not be accepted for care until the outstanding balance and late fee is paid in full. Should this happen 2 times, the child's Brightwheel account will be required to be on Auto Pay.
- A \$30 fee is charged for any check or auto pay returned by the bank.
- Should you enroll your child any time after the first day of school, the tuition payment due for that month will be prorated based on the daily rate and is due upon enrollment.
- If you withdraw your child before the end of the month and two week's notice was provided in writing, your final bill will also be prorated by the daily rate.
- A \$40 fee will be added to tuition for children who are at least 2.5 years old and in diapers/pull-ups.

- If yearly tuition is paid and there is a tuition increase during that year, families will be required to pay the difference once the increase goes into effect.
- Should a pandemic, extreme weather, or natural disaster force us to close, 50% of contracted tuition will still be required to be paid according to the enrollment agreement. Families will receive distance-learning at least 3 times per week through an online platform (such as Zoom) and learning materials they can safely pick up to use at home. Exceptions to this policy will only be considered on a case by case basis with required documentation.
- Refunds are at the discretion of Heartprints Montessori.
- Failure to make payments may result in disenrollment.
- Unpaid balances at 30 days delinquent will be sent to our contracted collection company. Balances sent to collection will incur an additional 25% fee.

### Tuition Payments

Tuition will be invoiced to families through our online platform, Brightwheel. They will receive an email at the beginning of the month for the month's tuition and any fees acquired from the previous month (i.e. before/after care fees, late payment fees, field trip payment, etc). Follow the link to pay online.

### ***We highly encourage families to enable Auto Pay.***

If a family selects 2, 3, or 4 days per week, those days of the week must be approved by Heartprints staff before enrollment and may only be switched with 24 hour's written notice, staff approval, and depends on availability to ensure safe teacher to child ratios. Full tuition payments are based on a 10-month school year August-May or 12-month calendar year. A 3% discount will be given to families who pay in full two weeks before their child's starting date.

## Tuition Rates

Effective August 1, 2022

2 Days per Week*		Yearly prices shown with 3% discount applied		
	Toddler (1-2) Monthly	Primary (3-5) Monthly	Yearly (10 months)**	Yearly (12 months)**
Half 8:30am-12:30pm	\$305	\$277	\$2,959/\$2,687	\$3,550/\$3,224
Full 8:30am-3:30pm	\$388	\$353	\$3,764/\$3,424	\$4,516/\$4,109

3 Days per Week*		Yearly prices shown with 3% discount applied		
	Toddler (1-2) Monthly	Primary (3-5) Monthly	Yearly (10 months)**	Yearly (12 months)**
Half 8:30am-12:30pm	\$463	\$421	\$4,491/\$4,084	\$5,389/\$4,900
Full 8:30am-3:30pm	\$594	\$540	\$5,762/\$5,238	\$6,914/\$6,286

4 Days per Week*		Yearly prices shown with 3% discount applied		
	Toddler (1-2) Monthly	Primary (3-5) Monthly	Yearly (10 months)**	Yearly (12 months)**
Half 8:30am-12:30pm	\$604	\$549	\$5,859/\$5,325	\$7,031/\$6,390
Full 8:30am-3:30pm	\$777	\$706	\$7,537/\$6,848	\$9,044/\$8,218

5 Days per Week		Yearly prices shown with 3% discount applied		
	Toddler (1-2) Monthly	Primary (3-5) Monthly	Yearly (10 months)**	Yearly (12 months)**
Half 8:30am-12:30pm	\$721	\$655	\$6,994/\$6,354	\$8,392/\$7,624
Full 8:30am-3:30pm	\$969	\$881	\$9,399/\$8,546	\$11,279/\$10,255

**3% discount given if yearly tuition is paid in full 2 weeks before the child's start date.**

\*The 2, 3 or 4 days per week chosen must be approved by Heartprints staff before enrollment and **may only be switched with 24 hour's written notice, staff approval, and depends on availability to ensure safe teacher to child ratios.**

\*\*Full tuition payment based on a 10 month school year August-May or 12 month calendar year.

## **Diapering Fee Policy**

Children who are 2.5 years old or older, who wear diapers or pull-ups, and are not yet toilet trained will have a \$40 fee added to their monthly tuition. Our teachers work diligently to help a child make the transition from diapers to toilet-use, but we also need your support at home to ensure success. This fee will cover the cleaning, supplies, and time needed to diaper the child past 2.5 years of age.

## Before and After School Care

**Please let us know if your child will consistently be attending Before and/or After School Care and what times.** Before and After School Care will be charged for care provided for a child outside of a half or full school day. Billing for after care will be added retroactively to the following month's bill. There is a 15 minute grace period for drop-off and pick-up before charges accrue.

<b>Before Care 6:00am-8:30am / After Care 3:30pm-6:00pm</b>
\$6 per hour / \$0.10 per minute

### Late Pick-Up Charge:

Heartprints is closed at 6:00pm. If a child is not picked up by that time, a \$20 flat fee PLUS \$1 per minute will be charged to the child's account on the following month's bill.

### Inclusion Policy

At Heartprints, we actively promote inclusive practice in order to best meet the needs of children, families, and staff at our center. All children are welcomed to attend Heartprints regardless of ability, need, background, culture, region, gender, or economic circumstances. Through inclusive practice, we aim to reflect our wider community and promote positive attitudes to both the similarities and differences in each other. In order to achieve this, we actively engage with children, parents, and other organizations as appropriate.

### Admissions

In order to provide an open and accessible service for all children and families, admissions are accepted on a first come first served basis where possible.

### Valuing Diversity in Families

- Staff regularly engages with parents to facilitate information sharing and to ensure parents are involved in planning for their child's learning and development.
- Daily communication ensures a partnership approach.
- Staff, children, and parents work together to ensure food brought or served in our service meets the medical, cultural, and dietary needs of each child.
- Parents and children are encouraged to contribute to various aspects of our service for example providing information or resources illustrating aspects of their lives, culture, or community.

### Accessibility and Flexibility

- An induction process is carried out for all families and children new to the service. This involves registration/enrollment, information sharing about both the child, the service, and the exploration of policies and procedures of the service.
- Because the need of each family and child can vary, the service will respond to individual need where possible, for example, period of induction, times of attending Heartprints.

### Representation and Participation

- The curriculum, activities, books, materials and environment are used to reflect the diversity of all children, families and the wider community. Where possible, these will be adapted as necessary to facilitate the inclusion of all children within the daily routine and activities of the service.
- Staff actively discourage stereotyping of gender, culture, background, or ability by facilitating non-stereotypical play, and through the use of non-stereotypical resources and images.
- We strive to provide learning experiences that are meaningful to each individual child and recognize varying learning styles and abilities.

### Staff

- The inclusion policy forms an important aspect of the recruitment of staff within the service. Applicants will not be excluded from being considered for a position based specifically on their need, background, culture, religion, gender, or economic circumstances. Positions will be offered on competency, qualification and enthusiasm for the position.
- Upon commencement of employment, staff will be given a period of induction to the service. All staff will be made aware of inclusive practice within our service and its importance.
- When possible, staff will attend training pertaining to inclusion, for example, behavior management, equality and diversity, language development or special needs.

### **Expulsion Policy**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we must expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

#### Immediate Cause for Expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children

#### Parental Actions for Child's Expulsion

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child
- Verbal abuse to staff
- Failure to provide the required administrative forms

#### Child's Actions for Expulsion

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outburst
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting

### Schedule of Expulsion

1. If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parents behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or come to an agreement with the school.
2. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
3. The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required for the child or parent to return to the center.
4. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent enough time to seek alternate childcare (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).
5. Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

### A Child will not be Expelled

If a child's parent(s):

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures
- Without giving the parent enough time to make other childcare arrangements

### Proactive Actions that can be Taken in Order to Prevent Expulsion

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.
- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.

### **Arrival/Departure**

Parents are required to walk their child into school all the way to their classroom. Parents are required to sign their children in and out during drop-off and pick-up each day through Brightwheel on the iPad located in the hallway outside of the office. Each parent and approved pick-up that was given at time of enrollment will have an individual four-digit code they will type in. For safety purposes, do not share your code with anyone. Your electronic signature will also be required when signing in and out to meet the state licensing requirements.

During a pandemic or similar public health situation, parents are required to wear face masks during drop-off and pick-up. They must take their child to wash their hands in the bathroom, then meet the teacher at the door of their child's classroom or at the gate to the playground. The teacher will do an overall health check. If the child shows no symptoms, they may attend. Otherwise, they must go home until they meet our illness policy requirements (see Illness Policy section below). Parents will use the iPad on the cart outside to sign in and out.

### Safety Tips During Arrival and Departure

- Turn off or turn down loud music.
- Drive very slowly when approaching the building.
- Turn your car off and take the keys out of the ignition before entering the center.
- Do not leave small children unattended in your car.
- Refrain from using your cell phone while in the building.
- Make sure the gate closes completely upon entering and exiting

### **Approved Pick-Ups**

Parents or guardians and those listed as "approved pick-ups" are the only individuals authorized to pick up a child. Parents, guardians, and approved pick-ups have their own individual 4-digit sign-in/sign-out code for Brightwheel.

The first time an approved pick-up picks up a child, the teachers will ask for photo identification to match the name to the approved pick-up list. Only individuals who are authorized may have the gate code.

If you need to add a new person to the approved pick-up list, please contact us via phone, email, or Brightwheel message. Again, we will match their name to their photo ID.

Individuals who are listed as restricted pick-ups will not be allowed to pick up a child. Please make sure to provide the office with any necessary custody or legal documents. All staff is informed as to who these individuals are to ensure the safety of the children.

### **Child Custody**

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### **Gate Code**

For security purposes, we have a keypad lock on the gate for entering and exiting. Only parents or those who are on the Approved Pickup list may be given the parent gate code.



## **Attendance and Absences**

Attendance is important for your child to fully receive the benefits of the program; therefore, we encourage you to bring your child to class every day, even on the days when you are not working.

All children are expected to arrive by their enrolled time. If you plan to arrive late, because of a previously scheduled appointment or an unexpected situation, please let the center know of your situation. If your child has not arrived and you have not called in that day, a staff member will follow up with a phone call or message you through Brightwheel. After your child has been absent for 5 days and we have been unable to contact you, your child will be dropped from the program and will be replaced with one from the waiting list.

We do not refund for days missed due to illness, holidays or days off, because our tuition is based on the yearly academic school calendar and prorated only when enrolment begins after the first day of school. Please let us know in advance if your child will be absent. The best way to do this is to message your child's teacher through the Brightwheel app.

## **Staff and Parent Communication Hours**

Communication is an essential component to a great parent and teacher relationship. We have convenient tools like Brightwheel to make this easy, as well as phone and email. In order to keep this partnership strong, we want to make sure families know what to expect in terms of hours of communication.

### *Brightwheel*

*Monday-Friday 6:00am-6:00pm (excluding holidays/closures)*

Staff will reply to Brightwheel messages during the business hours listed above. The teachers' main focus is to be physically present and engaged with the children, so they will reply or post activities at nap/rest time or after school hours (3:30pm). If it is urgent, our admin will respond as soon as possible. We suggest calling us instead.

### *Phone*

*Monday-Friday 6:00am-6:00pm (excluding holidays/closures)*

We will accept phone calls and respond to voicemails during the business hours listed above. If it is urgent, we will do our best to respond as soon as possible.

### *Email*

*Monday-Friday 8:30am-3:30pm (excluding holidays/closures)*

Heartprints will reply to emails within one school day and within school hours.

## Brightwheel Expectations

Brightwheel is a wonderful tool that has lots of helpful features that allow us to keep families updated with what is going on during their child's day at school. However, our teachers' first priority is to observe, guide, and care for children in the present moment. Anything involving Brightwheel comes secondary to that. Heartprints has strategically decided which features to utilize. Here is what you can expect in terms of features we use and some notes on how we use them:

- **Photos & Videos**
  - We have reduced our expectation of photos/videos posted to make sure teachers are truly present with children
  - Please expect ONE photo or video per week (this may fluctuate at times or in different classrooms that have different capacities)
  - Photos and videos will be uploaded during nap time or at the end of the day
  - If at any point you would like to schedule a time to come in and observe your child in the classroom please email Cat
- **Parent Messaging**
  - Teachers will reply to parent's messages during nap time from about 1-3pm
  - If it is time sensitive or urgent, please address the admin or call the school
  - We value our staff's work/life balance, so messages will not be replied to outside of business hours
- **Incident Reports**
  - We will post incident reports in a timely manner, with a picture if possible
  - Any head injuries or anything urgent will also receive a phone call
- **Check-In/Check-Out**
  - This meets licensing requirements
  - We bill Before/After Care based on timestamps
- **Billing**
  - Brightwheel makes it easy to access invoices and pay tuition
  - We highly recommend turning on AutoPay
- **Diaper Changes for Toddler Room**
  - These may not always be logged in real time on Brightwheel, but are recorded in real time in the classroom
  - Teachers will then input diaper changes during nap time

## Email and Newsletter

When families enroll, they are added to the email list. Heartprints sends out a monthly newsletter at the beginning of the month with important dates, events, and information. We also periodically send email reminders and links to important forms or sign-ups. If you are not seeing these emails in your inbox, be sure to check your email's Promotions folder. Sometimes our emails get filtered there. You can move them to the main inbox and train your email to filter them correctly.

## **Media (Photo/Video) Consent**

During enrollment, families must sign a Media Release Form where they can select whether or not they give consent to have Heartprints share pictures and videos of their child on our website, Facebook page, and/or among parents through a photographer's platform, for educational and informative purposes only (in no occasion will these pictures be used in a commercial way). If a family does not give consent, we will only take pictures and videos of the child to post on that child's personal Brightwheel profile. We will make sure to exclude them from group photos that will be posted on other children's profiles, newsletters, emails, website, etc.

## **Health**

The laws and rules governing childcare and preschool immunization requirements are Arizona Revised Statutes §15-884; and Arizona Administrative Code, R9-5-305 & R9-6-701–708.

Students must have proof of all required immunizations in order to attend childcare or preschool. Parental recall or verbal history of any disease is not accepted; therefore, these students must submit an ADHS medical exemption form. Specifically, with varicella (chickenpox), measles, or rubella disease a medical exemption with attached laboratory evidence of immunity is required.

A child who is missing vaccines required for his age can start childcare but must get a dose of each vaccine due within 15 days of enrollment and bring a copy of the immunization record completed by the clinic to the childcare facility. After 15 days, the child may not attend childcare without documentation that the child has received the required vaccinations.

Arizona law allows childcare immunization exemptions for medical reasons, lab evidence of immunity, and religious beliefs. For further information and guidance please review the Arizona Immunization Handbook for Schools and Child Care Programs along with Frequently Asked Questions.

## **Illness Policy**

According to DHS, we are unable to accept a child if they have a communicable disease or infestation. When your child has any suspected contagious illness, he/she should not come to class. Not only will this help your child regain his/her health more quickly, but it will also protect the other children in the program. If your child is going to be absent due to illness, please notify your child's center.

You will be contacted immediately if your child becomes ill at the center. If you cannot be reached, your emergency contact will be notified to pick up your child. While waiting to be picked up, your child will be allowed to rest in the classroom or office but will not participate in activities with the other children. For the protection of all, children suspected of having an infectious disease must have a physician's statement and be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the center.

If a life-threatening emergency involving your child occurs while attending Heartprints, you will be notified and 911 will be called to transport your child to the nearest hospital. If a parent cannot be reached, your emergency contact will be notified. It is important that you notify the center to update your center records whenever there is a change in your address, phone number, or emergency contact person.

Symptoms that would exclude a child from care include:

- Fever
- Unexplained rash or sore
- Discharge from eyes, ears or nose
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- Productive cough or dry cough lasting more than 1 week without doctor attention
- Any illness or injury that keeps a child from participating in regular activity

### **Illness Policy During COVID-19**

Due to the severity and spread of COVID-19, we have a stricter illness policy in order to protect our children, families, staff, and communities. Families and children need to stay home when they are sick. If a child is home sick, we recommend any siblings who also attend Heartprints stay home as well (it is likely the illness can spread since siblings are in close quarters at home). We all need to be vigilant for symptoms and communicate when someone is sick.

We have an isolation plan where in the event someone becomes sick at the school, they will be moved to a separate space (with teacher supervision) until they are picked up to go home.

If a case of COVID-19 is identified, we will follow current CDC and Maricopa Public Health Department protocol. We will inform those who might have been exposed. We will safely clean and disinfect the person's area.

### **Accident and Emergency Procedures**

All accidents or injuries will be documented according to state licensing procedures. Every classroom has an accident, injury, infestation, and emergency log for each child. Minor injuries will receive appropriate first aid, and parents will be informed through Brightwheel or when they pick up their child. For emergency illness and injuries, parents will be contacted immediately. If illness or injuries occur which require immediate medical attention, parents will be contacted and the child's physician, as listed on the emergency card, will be contacted immediately. Parents will be advised to pick up their child; if the parent cannot be reached, 911 will be called, and the child will be taken to the nearest medical facility. Parents will be responsible for the costs of the emergency medical treatment, including emergency transportation if required. Parents will be informed of the facility to which the child has been taken.

At least one teacher in every classroom is certified in first aid and CPR procedures.

If a child experiences a head injury of any kind, we will contact parents immediately via phone call to inform them.

### **Medication Policy**

We will administer prescribed medicines to children only if it is necessary. If parents wish that their children receive prescription medication during the school day, they must fill and sign a medical consent form (found in the office). All medicines prescribed by a doctor must be in the original labeled container with the original prescription and specific instructions for dosage, times, etc.

Over the counter medication will be dispensed only with a doctor's authorization and directions. Please be advised that if two or three doses of medication are to be given to your child daily, please give the first dose to your child before coming to school in the morning and/ or a dose at home after school.

Our staff has been trained in the five right practices of medication, which are:

1. Verify that the *right child* gets the medication.
2. Verify that the child gets the *right medication*.
3. Verify that the child gets the *right dosage*.
4. Verify that the dose is given at the *right time*.
5. Verify that the medication is administered by the *right method*, with documentation each time the medication is given, and with the person giving the medication signing the document.

Lotions, rash creams, and sunscreens that are purchased over the counter do not require a medication consent form. Only topical creams/ointments that are prescribed require a medication consent form.

## Meals

Children will bring lunch and snacks from home. They are not to share with one another. We will also from time to time provide healthy snacks in the form of fruit and vegetables. Menus will be posted on the parent board if we do have these snacks. We would like to encourage parents to pack healthy food for their children and not include candy, sodas or any food high in sugars, such as processed cakes. These can be provided for special occasions like birthdays.

We will have an allergy list posted, so parents should inform us as soon as possible if your child is allergic to anything.

## Positive Guidance

For a child to develop intellectually, it is important for a child to learn acceptance, cooperation, respect, and self-discipline. In order to run a successful classroom, clear and concise rules, limits, and expectations concerning classroom behavior and discipline are explained to the children. Teachers use a variety of methods in the classroom to encourage proper behavior. Redirection, setting limits and using a safe place are a few of the most commonly used methods of positive guidance used in order to promote the above characteristics.

***Corporal punishment (spanking, hitting or yelling) is not used in the program nor is it allowed on the premises.***

## Disciplinary Action Plan

A child who is disruptive of other children will be removed from the rest of the group. The teacher will then try to talk to the child. If his/her behavior does not change, his parents will be informed.

Biting will not be tolerated. A child may be expelled, as outlined in our expulsion policy. Teachers and the child's parents will continue to work to help the child overcome the biting behavior.

## Transitions

At Heartprints, we believe that how a parent and a teacher handle a transition with a child (whether it is a new child coming into the program; a child transferring between classes; or a child transitioning into a public center) is the key factor in minimizing the child's anxiety about the change. Please keep in mind that the more information a parent, teacher and child have in advance, the more likely that the transition will be easier. Below are some pointers to support a smooth transition.

### Separation Anxiety: What can you do to make goodbye easier?

We know that children, especially this young, can experience separation anxiety when coming to school. This is totally normal and a sign that they feel safe at home with their guardians. Children will adjust to the new environment over time and often will cycle back to those feeling again as they go through developmental changes. Here are some notes on how best to handle it...

- It is normal for a child to cry and struggle with saying goodbye at drop-off, especially if it's a new environment.
- Talk about changes before they happen. Discuss things that will be the same as well as different. Even if your child can't verbally reply or seem to understand, they are still absorbing your words and information.
- Accept and validate your child's feelings. Give them words to help them express what they are feeling and experiencing.
- If possible, prepare your child for your morning departure by giving him/her notice.
- Add a special goodbye ritual to your child's morning routine.
- Assure your child you will return by identifying a specific event in their day, like lunch or snack time.
- Make sure to tell your child you are leaving and go--don't delay. Sneaking out can increase your child's feelings of fear and sadness.
- Goodbyes are difficult for parents, too! It's okay to stay a moment but do not linger.
- Know that our teachers are sensitive to your child's needs for extra attention and comfort!
- On average, it takes most children 2-3 weeks to normalize and feel comfortable when getting dropped off in a new environment (again, remember that they will have hard days or go through development changes and maybe struggle again...completely normal!)

### Transferring to a New Class

Once your child is ready to move to a different class or school, your child's teacher will meet with you to develop a transition plan that will aid in a smooth transition from one classroom to the next. Transition to the next class depends on the child's age, toilet training, language skills, and behavior.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent- teacher conferences will be held twice a year, in the Fall and Spring. Only the parents should be present.

## Toys

Parents are asked not to give children toys to bring to school. This causes a lot of disruption, as children tend to fight over a new toy. Children can bring anything the whole class can share at the same time, such as a

book or DVD (with teacher approval). Children may be allowed to bring an item after a vacation for show and tell. Children may bring a special small-sized blanket that he or she is attached to during rest time.

### **Dress Code/Clothing**

Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. Please do not overdress your child on hot days. Please provide a jacket as needed on cooler days. Shoes must always be worn outside of the classroom. Before entering the classroom, shoes should be left on the shelf outside the classroom. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name.

### **Diapers, Wipes, and Extra Clothing**

All children should bring extra clothing in case they have an accident or get their clothes dirty.

Parents need to also provide diapers and wipes for children who are not toilet trained. The classroom teacher will keep the parents informed through Brightwheel when they run out and more are needed.

### **Rest Time**

After lunch, all children in our facility participate in a quiet rest time. Teachers do their best to create an environment and space where children will sleep. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities.

### **Supplies**

At the start of the year, each child will have a school supply list of supplies they are to provide for their classroom. The teachers will store the supplies and it will be used in the classroom communally throughout the year.

Additionally, we accept donations for any supplies from parents who wish to donate any time. Items we often run out of and constantly need are:

- Kleenex
- Clorox Wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand soap
- Cleaning supplies
- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Paper
- Glue
- Paint

## **Transportation**

As Heartprints is a small operation, we cannot offer transportation to the children for the purposes of field trips. If teachers wish to have a field trip to visit a museum, park or any other place for educational purposes, we will request that parents provide transportation for their own children to and from the site. Because of the age of the children, Heartprints will ensure that parents are responsible for their children's transportation in safety-approved child car seats, as required by the Arizona state law, to the site and back. Additionally, parents must be present and monitor their children during the duration of the field trip.

## **Field Trip Procedures**

Any field trip our school takes are family field trips. This means families bring and supervise their own child(ren) at the location of the field trip. We still receive the group rate and get to experience the field trip components, but parents are responsible for their children. If a parent does not want their child to participate in the field trip, they will be required to make alternative arrangements for their child on the day of the trip (if the trip takes place during a school day). There will be no reduction in tuition in this case. Again, parents are required to stay with their child the entire field trip. Sign-ups for the field trip will go out in advance. Payment for the field trip will be billed through Brightwheel.

## **Weather Policy**

The term "weather permitting" means almost every day unless there is a weather advisory or public announcement related to extreme cold or heat that may cause health problems. "There is no bad weather; only bad clothes." Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken out on most days. This might require that the schedule be changed to allow children outdoor play in the early morning when it will be very hot later in the day. Or it might require that the children have appropriate shoes or a change of clothes when the ground is wet.

## **Closing Due to Pandemic, Extreme Weather, or Natural Disaster**

Should a pandemic occur and AZDHS mandates us to close or if we privately make the decision to close to protect the health of our community, we will notify families immediately via email and Brightwheel messaging/alerts.

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e. snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification will be announced on local news outlets.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility to arrange.

During any of these instances, we will provide distance learning at least 3 times per week via an online platform such as Zoom where children can sing, learn, listen to stories, and interact with children and teachers. If the specific situation permits, we will also provide learning materials families can safely pick-up to take home. Should a pandemic, extreme weather, or natural disaster force us to close, 50% of contracted tuition will still be



required to be paid according to the enrollment agreement. Exceptions to this policy will only be considered on a case by case basis with required documentation.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills will be conducted once every month, during which children will practice evacuating the building and moving to a safe place, where roll call will be taken. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in every single licensed room at the school.

### **Application of Pesticides**

Parents will be given 48 hours written notice before any application of pesticides on the facility's premises.

### **Accessibility**

Parents will have access to all areas on the facility premises only if they have their children enrolled at Heartprints.

### **Disputes**

Any disagreements or disputes are handled after hours with the director. Please call the school or email us to schedule a time.

### **Cell Phone Use**

Talking on your cell phone is discouraged when picking up and/or dropping off your child. This is a special time for you to engage in conversation about your child with center staff.

### **Tobacco Use**

Heartprints is a tobacco-free premise. Tobacco use of any kind is prohibited. This policy extends to electronic or vapor cigarettes.

### **Firearms, Weapons, and Explosives**

Firearms or weapons, open or concealed, are prohibited on center property or at any center-sponsored event.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

If there is reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected, Heartprints has a legal responsibility to report it to the State Child Abuse Hotline or law enforcement officers.

## **Licensing and Inspections**

Heartprints Montessori will be regulated by the Arizona Department of Health Services. Our facility will be inspected by the Arizona Health Services Department of Child Care Licensure. Notices of inspections of the facility by the Dept. of Child Care Licensure will be posted on site and available for anyone to see upon request. You may also review records at:

150 N. 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 400 Phoenix, AZ 85007-3244 Tel.: (602) 364-2539.

## **Insurance**

Liability coverage is provided for all the children enrolled at Heartprints. The documentation of the liability insurance coverage is available for review on the facility premises.

## **Child Record Policy**

In accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Heartprints may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, Heartprints must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the center not disclose directory information about them. Heartprints must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA.