

Viroqua Children's House Montessori Preschool

411 S. East Ave. Viroqua, WI 54665

(608)637-3522

childrenshouse.jessica@gmail.com

2023-24 Policies and Procedures

Vision and Mission Statement:

The Viroqua Children's House original vision was to bring Montessori education to this community. We give the children a prepared environment and the power to self-educate through the use of manipulatives. Maria Montessori observed that from birth, all children have a natural desire to learn and grow. We offer the children a rich environment, prepared in a way that makes it easy for them to learn and succeed. We create a positive social environment which encourages cooperation and helping. We seek to support the children's learning through positive guidance, and give them the space to learn through direct experience in their environment.

The Viroqua Children's House has the additional goal of conducting business in the most eco-friendly way possible, in order to serve the needs of the children and families in the program without breaking the back of mother earth. We also commit to serving healthy, whole foods and having very little plastic in our classrooms.

DISCLAIMER: Viroqua Children's House Montessori Preschool is a private institution, and attendance at our school does not guarantee your child acceptance into the Viroqua Area Montessori School, which is a part of our public school, Viroqua Area Schools. Nevertheless, Montessori education is highly beneficial in the formative years of early childhood. Starting at an earlier age makes it more natural, as your child will incorporate the joy of learning, order, responsibility, independence, and self-motivation into their personality and worldview.

2023-24 Calendar

Summer:

June 5 - June 9: Summer Break 1*

June 12: First day of summer session

July 4,5: Independence Day*

Aug 18: Last day of summer session

Aug 21-25: Summer break 2*

Fall:

Friday, Sept 1: First day of school

(half day for new students)

Monday, Sept 4: Labor Day*

Oct. 31: 3:30 Costume parade

Nov.6-21: Conferences, open

Nov. 22-24: Thanksgiving Break*

Dec.22- Jan. 1: Winter Break*

Winter/Spring:

Tues, Jan. 2: Welcome back!

February: 2024-25 Enrollment

Mar. 29- Apr 1: Spring Break*

Apr. 8-26: Conferences, open

May 24: Last day of school year

Graduation potluck 4-6pm

* School closed

Section 1: The Program

The Viroqua Children's House is a preschool for children ages 3-5, two playschool rooms for children ages 1-3, and a school age group for summer and after school care (5-10 yrs). We are open Monday through Friday, 7:30am-4:30pm. We offer 3, 4, and 5 day attendance, with various drop off and pick up times. 2 day attendance is available under special circumstances only, contact Jessica for this option.

Our capacity is 49 children (33 upstairs, 16 downstairs), but we usually have around 25 children in the house. The children's adult guides will vary from year to year, and their bios are included. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or ancestry.

Viroqua Children's House Structure:

Our school is split into four classrooms:

The Playschools: 6-7 children each, ages 1-3 years

The Preschool, 12 children, ages 3-5 years old

The School Age group, 10 children ages 4-10 years old

See page 5 for the daily routine of each group. The routines will vary slightly depending on the needs of each age group. All schedules will contain a variety of: indoor time, outdoor time, quiet and active activities, and individual and group activities. The groups may combine after 3:30, when many children have been picked up. Staff to child ratios are always observed.

Each classroom has a Guide and an Assistant Guide (except the school age group, who just have one teacher). These staff members lead the children through their day, with emphasis on each month's theme. They do this by using songs, stories, and books relevant to the topic. They help the children through their day in a gentle, age-appropriate manner. All staff will be vigilant and aware of the children's needs, how many are in our care, and their location at all times. See page 4 for more information on staff and qualifications.

A wholesome environment:

Viroqua Children's House is a Montessori preschool, and as such we seek to provide the children with purposeful learning activities in a carefully prepared environment. The teachers and assistants in this program take a supporting role, encouraging children in their independent learning rather than leading the class in group activities. All teachers receive basic training in Montessori and Positive Discipline. Central to this program is the theme of respect and caring for ourselves, for others, and for the world.

Montessori education is individualized, so we show each child activities at their own level. We carefully prepare a rich environment, and clearly present many activities to each of the children throughout the day. They will learn practical life activities, motor skills, painting, sizes, shapes, animals, plants, counting, letter sounds, along with exposure to different languages.

Every moment is an opportunity for learning, especially mealtimes, dressing, and toileting. We show the children how to button their jackets, wash their hands, etc. It is important to not rush children through these activities, but rather give each child just as much help as he/she requires. Trying not over-help, we show them how to do things, encouraging skill building in everything that we do.

It is extremely helpful when participation in daily tasks and practicing life skills is also encouraged at home.

Our teachers work together to solve problematic situations by looking at environmental changes or routine changes that may better enable the children's success. Each classroom has the same focus on teaching life skills and encourage steps toward independence, and it is done in a way that works for ages of the children in the room. The teachers and assistants maintain a high standard for order and cleanliness in each of our classrooms, and all children are offered the same wholesome meals (though at slightly different times).

The activities provided in all groups offer children a variety of experiences. Each will include activities in: language development, large muscle skills, small muscle skills, creative expression, sensorial education, self-help skills, math/counting, natural science, and geography. The pets we have are a turtle and several fishtanks for the children to watch and enjoy.

Child guidance:

The employees of Viroqua Children's House provide positive guidance, redirection, and clearly specified limits for the children. Our goals include helping each child develop self-control, self-confidence, and respect for the rights of others. When giving guidance to the child, we use Positive Discipline, which gives us tools to avoid power struggles, and empowers children to make healthy choices. We model consent and talk about caring for others. We try to be self-aware and model the behaviors that we want to encourage. We do not use 'time outs' or any form of punishment or humiliation to deal with unacceptable behavior, but rather give clear reasons and different choices. We work to make toilet training a positive experience.

We understand that there will be times when a child will be crying, distraught, or fussy. Our first action in this situation will be an attempt to determine the cause of the distress. We will stay calm and do whatever we can to soothe your child. When in doubt, and if we feel that it is necessary, we will call you for your advice or assistance.

Staff and qualifications:

Our biggest hiring goal is to only employ people who we believe you'll feel good about, as we know how important it is to feel trust in your child's teachers and caregivers. All of our staff engage in ongoing continuing education, which includes state-required courses to be working in childcare, training in Montessori, Positive Discipline, First Aid/CPR, Abusive Head Trauma prevention training, Mandated Reporter training on child abuse and neglect, what to do in an emergency, and confidentiality and professionalism.

Jessica Anderson: Program Administrator

Jessica studied Montessori education for Early Childhood and Elementary 1 (from birth-age 9) in Oslo, Norway. She also worked as a teacher trainer for Waterpark Montessori in Oslo, and has 15 years of experience in Montessori preschools (almost 12 years running this school). The Viroqua Children's House first opened in August of 2011. Jessica has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Spanish, and has also taken the introductory childcare course, a course in infant and toddler care, a teacher-training course, a course in business management, and a course in administration/supervision. She is mother to Gryffin, who attends the Viroqua Area Montessori School.

Jessica commits time every week to various administrative tasks that are necessary for the licensing, rating, insuring, financing, account maintenance, and enrollment in the program. She is the person to contact if you have any questions about attendance changes, tuition, licensing, staffing, the facility, as well as Montessori. The easiest way to contact Jessica is at school or through email: childrenshouse.jessica@gmail.com, but if you need to get ahold of her right away feel free to call her cell: (608)606-4629.

Sara Root, Food Program Manager

Sara is responsible for our nutritious, whole food-based meals that are largely organic and local. She will plan, prepare, record, and report the meals, in accordance with the CACFP requirements. Sara has a bachelor's degree in biochemistry and the equivalency of a master's degree in herbalism. She has previously run an herbal clinic in Viroqua. She is trained in food preparation and sanitation. Sara has

cooked for Drifless Organics Farm and the Driftless Café, and her meals go over super well with our children! She has been with us since 2014.

Sara is the person to contact in regards to the menu or any changes in your child's diet/allergies. Please provide any changes in your child's diet to her in writing, at least a day in advance. She prepares our meals daily. For any changes to your child's diet, please email her directly at rootsherbs.sr@gmail.com and provide written instructions to your child's teacher, as well.

Zenda Shimshak, School Year Preschool Guide

Zenda is our oldest employee, she has been working for the Children's House since summer 2015, and in the field of Early Child Education for the last 9 years. While living in San Francisco, she shadowed in a Waldorf preschool, assisted in a toddler preschool room, and volunteered in an after school program for youth living in subsidized housing. In Madison she worked as the lead teacher for two preschool programs at the Goodman Community Center before leaving to provide long term joined childcare for two families for two years. During this time, she kept one foot in the classroom by continuing to substitute teach at GCC and worked as a float teacher at Big Oak Childcare Center.

Zenda is mother to Ernest (7 yrs), Maple (4 yrs), and Roscoe (1.5 yrs). Her passion for Early Childhood Education comes from the belief that experiences in the early years directly affect us as we grow. She truly thinks she has the most important job in the world, and is honored to know the children she works with!

Kayla Tibbetts, Summer Preschool Guide

Kayla (she/they) has had a long career of tutoring school age children, teaching swim lessons from 6 month to 12 year olds. She's worked both 1:1 with children and adults with special needs as well as in a group setting. Recently she has become a parent, to Forrest who is 1.5 years old.

She went to college at UW Oshkosh and majored in Elementary Education. She is now completing more training via the Wisconsin Registry to have the best education and serve your children in the best ways with the most updated practices. In addition, she spends much of her free time reading nonfiction books regarding raising children to be the best they can be with titles such as "Barefoot and Balanced" by Angela J. Hanscom, "The Whole Brain Child" by Dan Siegel, and "Raising Good Humans" by Hunter Clarke-Fields, among others, and the list keeps growing!

Kayla is a photographer, and loves taking candid photos of day-to-day life. You'll see that reflected in her frequent updates through our child center's app, ELV. She's excited to share the school year with your family and your brilliant children!

Lizzie Hiles, School Age group Guide

Lizzie is 22 years old and from Viroqua. She attended the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse for Early to Middle Childhood Education. She enjoys reading, crocheting, being outside, and spending time with her family and friends. She has wanted to teach and work with kids her whole life. She has been with us since September 2021, and is currently the teacher for our School Aged group.

Kaitlen Gross, Playschool Guide

Kaitlen grew up in Viroqua. She lives in Viola with her 3-year-old son, Daxtyn. She went to college for a degree in Graphic Design in which she completed 2 years. She is a Certified Nursing Assistant and has experience working with the elderly population with Alzheimer's and dementia. Some of her favorite things to do are hiking, movie nights and playing with her son.

She started a career in childcare because she loves working with children and enjoys the creativity that comes with early childhood education.

Ella Penchi, Playschool Guide

Ella recently earned an Associates Degree in Foundation of Teacher Education Program from Western Technical College. She truly loves working with children, and preparing them for the future. She likes watching them learn and grow while having fun. She grew up on a dairy farm in Vernon County, and enjoys swimming, fishing, playing video games, and listening to music.

Savannah Kenyon, Playschool Guide

Savannah Kenyon has lived around the Westby and Viroqua area most of her life and I loves it here. She has a great passion for working with kids. She has 6 siblings, so being around children has been a huge part of her life. She has been working in childcare for 3+ years, and has worked with every age group, from infants and toddlers to school age. She has enjoyed every minutes of it. The reason she has chosen childcare is because she loves watching each child grow and meet different milestones.

Hannah Ellefson, Playschool Guide

Hannah is 27 years old, and was born raised in Viroqua. For the past few years, she has been living in Madison, studying Early Childhood Education. During her time there, she also taught at a Montessori preschool, where she learned so much, and fell in love with the Montessori philosophy. In the future, her goal is to complete her Montessori training, and become a Montessori directress. Hannah loves all things nature and outdoors. She enjoys taking her dogs on hikes, camping, cooking, yoga, and snuggling her cat.

Abrianna Franks, Assistant Guide/Substitute

Abrianna Franks is 19 years old and going to school for cosmetology. She grew up in Viroqua, but currently lives in Westby. She’s an animal lover, her favorite animal being a shark. What she loves about working with the kids is being able to get to know them. They share stories and tell about their families. It’s a different adventure everyday, and it’s always fun!

Shereen Baird, Assistant Guide/Substitute

Shereen is originally from Scotland, but also lived in Ireland, Spain, France and now here in Viroqua. While living in Spain and France she studied French and Spanish and also taught English. She taught kids and adults, but preferred teaching and spending time with young kids, ages 2 and above. She also had the opportunity to volunteer teaching English in an orphanage/new life project in Thailand a few years back, teaching kids between 4-18.

She personally loves spending time with the kids here at the Children's House, “They are so full of presence, play, fun and they have impressive imaginations.”

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Our Daily Schedules:

<u>Time</u>	<u>Preschool:</u>	<u>Playschools:</u>
8:00	Arrival inside	Arrival inside
9:00	AM snack	AM snack
10:00	Circle time	Outside time
10:30	Outside time	
11:00		Come in, Lunch
11:30	Come in, Lunch	Naptime
12:00	Naptime	
2:00	Snack upon waking	Snack
3:30	3:30 pick ups	3:30 pick ups
4:30	Outside, last pickups	Outside, last pickups

Yearly Thematic Units:

June: Rocks and rainbows	Oct: The body & clothing/costumes	March: Homes and houses
July: Camping, shelters	November: Food, Giving Thanks	Construction equipment
August: Water and bubbles	December: Family	April: Animals, springtime
September: Friends and Feelings	Jan: Our unique selves	Our earth
Autumn	Feb: How we show love	May: Gardens, plants, flowers, bugs

Our Curriculum:

In a Montessori school, the curriculum is the carefully prepared environment. The teacher offers a variety of activities, which the children use to learn and develop skills. The teacher will change out the activities to coordinate with the monthly theme, or to accommodate needs they see in their observations of the classroom.

The teacher shows each individual child how to do different things in the classroom, which they then work on and internalize in their own way.

Our Program:

We have many common practices between classrooms, outlined below. Contact Jessica or your child's teacher if you would like more in-depth information.

Transitions:

We minimize the stress of transitions in our schedule, by creating a "trickle" of children going to the next thing, instead of making them wait, form a line, or excusing them all at once.

Arrival:

When you come in with your child in the morning, we will have you do a quick health check upon check in. Add your child's current temperature, and then don't forget to hit the sign-in button afterwards.

Our regular school day begins at 8:00, with early arrival by arrangement, at 7:30 or 7:45. If you arrive before your scheduled time, you may have to wait until your dropoff time for your child's teacher to be ready to take over. If they are not expecting early children, they may come at 7:55. When you bring your child inside, and the teacher will do a temperature check. You can work on starting the sign-in process. If you are in a hurry, don't

feel like you need to help your child with getting their things off or slippers on. We prefer to help the children do these things, because they are accustomed to doing things themselves at school. Goodbyes can be sad, usually it is easiest for the child when their parent is confident and quick. Some children like to wave at their parents through the window as they go.

We will always greet your child warmly and help him/her find an activity to do. Please remember that, especially inside, there may be children already focusing on work, and that a loud or late arrival can disrupt their progress. Also, it can help your own child to transition into this calm environment if they sense you calming your own energy and lowering your voice on your way in.

Please inform us by 8:30 am if your child will be absent, or arriving late (after 9:00) so that we can plan accordingly.

Rest time:

In the afternoons, all children will have a rest time. They lay down after they eat lunch, Playschoolers usually around 11:30, and the preschoolers around 12:30. The preschoolers who no longer nap, or nap intermittently, are given books and activities after 30-40 minutes of resting, if they don't fall asleep. Children in the school age group are not required to nap, but have the opportunity to do so as needed.

If your child will be staying all day, please send a machine-washable blanket. If they would like a machine-washable soft toy or pillow to sleep with, they may bring one from home to keep at the school. We will keep everything in their cubby or bag, and wash it every 5 uses, or immediately in the event of illness or if it becomes soiled.

During rest time, the children relax on cushions while listening to soft music and white noise. Those who do sleep will be allowed to sleep until they wake up, unless we have other instructions from you. Upon waking, each child will join the rest of the group in having snack and getting ready to go outside. If you really do not want your child to nap, or would like to limit the length/time of their nap, please let us know in writing and we will adjust accordingly.

Potty training:

Potty training is a main theme in Early Childhood. We strive to help the children have a positive experience.

Potty chairs will be available in the bathrooms, and all rooms have regular toilets, with smaller seats for the children who prefer that. The children will be encouraged to sit on the potty in between removal of a dirty/wet diaper, and putting on of a fresh one. We encourage parents to send potty training children in simple cotton pants, rather than jeans or overalls, because they are easy to get up and down.

As they start to exhibit the ability to control their bladders, children will be encouraged to try training pants (pullups) and then underwear. We will coordinate this with you, so that we can be on the same page in our expectations and guidance. Accidents are treated as learning opportunities, and all adults remain positive and encouraging to children who make mistakes. Wet or soiled clothing will be put in a bag and sent home. If we notice that the child is having accidents at a certain time every day, we will implement that they try at that time, as a part of their routine.

All children over the age of 2 are encouraged to sit and try before putting on the fresh diaper or pull up (Velcro sides, please). Children entering the preschool do not need to be completely potty trained to join the preschool group, but they do need to be actively working on it.

Outside time:

Daily we will go outside with the groups at least once, but usually twice, weather permitting. There are fenced outdoor play yards on the premises, and we may sometimes take the children on walks in the neighborhood. Year-round, families are encouraged to send filled water bottles with their family name on it.

Please make sure your child has clothes that are appropriate to the weather conditions of the day. This includes rain gear, snow gear, or sun protection, depending on the conditions. All children should have a full change of clothes, including a new hat, mittens, and socks in case they get wet the first time we are outside.

We will provide the children with stimulating and purposeful activities outdoors, such as: a sandbox, buckets and shovels, a buckboard-wagon, a climbing dome, slides, balls, gardening tools, snow shovels, rakes, a parachute, and more. Outside time is important for the cohesiveness of the group, and for each child's health. Because of liability, we will not have a pool, wading pool, large trampoline or other inflatable bounce surface. If it is very hot, we may turn a sprinkler on to cool off.

We will keep the children indoors during the following conditions:

- Thunderstorms, heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F.
- Temperatures/wind chills of less than 0 degrees F for children over 2 years, and less than 10 degrees F for children under 2.

Religion:

We do not include religious instruction or practices in our daily activities. The children will be free to practice any religion that they want to practice, including prayer before meals and singing of religious songs; but this will never be teacher-led. We will mark the holidays that nature has determined for us, the solstices and equinoxes which mark the changing of the light and seasons.

If you have any concerns about how holidays will be presented, don't be afraid to contact us with your suggestions. We want to represent diversity, and will have a focus on any culture represented in the class. Any information you can give us about your family's background/culture will help us make your child's holidays special. Religious holidays will be presented in a very neutral way, if deemed appropriate at all.

Sometimes in circle time or before a meal, we will encourage preschool-aged children to express gratitude for something, whether it be the sunshine, a favorite activity, the food, something that happened, mom and dad, etc.

Child Pickup:

Upon pickup, your child's teacher or assistant teacher may communicate a thing or two about your child's day. Feel free to ask any questions you may have. Remember to sign your child out. This is when responsibility shifts from us back to you. Please remind your child to walk inside.

Unexpected delays do have a large impact on the personal schedules of our staff members, so please be considerate and pick up your child on time. If you will be even just a few minutes late, please call us at (608) 637-3522, to let us know what is happening, and check in about a late pick up. If you are more than 5 minutes late and we have not heard from you, a \$10 fee will be added on to your next month's tuition. We will call you, and then call your emergency contact that you have authorized to pick up your child. All emergency contacts must live in the Viroqua area.

For staffing reasons, we cannot extend this service beyond 4:30, so please come punctually. If you will be even just a few minutes late for pickup, please call us right away at (608)637-3522 and let us know you are running late. Quicker, efficient pick up and an apology to the staff is what feels appropriate for late pick up.

Please, also inform us if you need to come very early to pick up, so that we can help your child be ready for you. Naptime is generally from 11:30-2:30, so please come into the space quietly if you are picking up early.

If you are a little early, feel free to hang out and chat at pick up time. Observe your child, talk to their teacher, other parents, or play with your child. Don't forget to say goodbye to the teacher who is caring for the children, to make sure that we know you are leaving with your child.

Daily, bring your child's back pack home, and check their clothes supply, to be sure they are prepared for the next day. Dirty clothes should not be left in the bag overnight, but brought home to be washed.

If the parent or other authorized person arrives to pick up a child and that person appears to be unsafe in some way; all reasonable steps will be taken to prevent the person from leaving with the child, including offering to call a cab or another contact person. While we cannot legally withhold a child from the legal guardian, we will not hesitate to call the local authorities if we feel that the child is in danger. We are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect.

Notification of pickup by another person:

Upon enrollment, you will fill out the enrollment form which has a field in which to indicate who is allowed to pick up your child. If someone who is not authorized by you on this list will be picking up your child, we must receive written and verbal notification from you beforehand. **If we do not receive written notification and an unknown person comes to pick up your child, they will not be allowed to leave with that person until we get ahold of you to confirm.** The same goes for children in the class going home with each other. We must have *written notification*, to ensure that all parents know where their children are.

Transportation/field trips:

If we go on any walks, they will be in our immediate neighborhood, within 30 minutes walking distance. We will bring a wagon when walking with the youngest children, in case someone gets tired. Make sure your child's clothes and footwear are practical and comfortable enough to go on a walk.

Whenever children are off the grounds of the preschool, we will bring an attendance checklist, and count the children periodically throughout the trip. We will also have with us a cell phone and each child's emergency information, just in case.

Birthday celebrations:

Each child's special day will be a celebration! We have several children with dietary restrictions, so we prefer to make the special birthday treat. The standard birthday treat is muffins, with blueberries or another fruit. No gifts, please. The preschool-aged children will be receiving a birthday book or birthday poster from their classmates.

You can contribute by sending us with a couple of pictures on your child's special day, which we will return to you upon pick up. We would like: A newborn picture and a picture from each subsequent year, so we can talk about their growth. If you like, you may come and help tell your child's story at circle time. In the preschool during group time, the birthday child will hold a globe and walk around a 'sun' candle once for each year, while

we talk about the things that they have learned along the way. In the younger groups we talk about the child as we look at the pictures.

Extended day and clothing:

If your child will be participating in extended days, they will be inside at drop off, and outside at the end of the day. It is of utmost importance that these children have proper gear.

Our Classrooms:

We have 4 different groups: 2 Playschools, Preschool, and School Age. In normal times, we have contact between all groups, to allow some contact between siblings and allow older children to have the experience of helping a younger friend. Since covid, we have been keeping the groups separate inside, and combining only outside. The children are familiar with all teachers, and we use the same short list of substitutes, so they get to know them, as well.

Playschool North and South: (6-7 children, ages 1-3)

The environment and the teacher's style of encouragement are the most important things for a child under the age of 3, as they are learning to use their bodies and coordinate their motions. Children under 3 years old need a safe environment to explore, one that has small furniture and lots of floor space. This room is very floor-oriented, with some small shelves, but also baskets of toys easily within reach. The playschool rooms are physically separated from the Preschool, to reduce the risk of choking on small objects, and to minimize the frustration of the older children. They do have a full-view door, so they may be able to observe the older children at work. Both Playschool rooms will have a fine motor zone, with tables and chairs, and an open gross-motor area, for the little ones to work on coordination and strength. Low sinks will enable the children to wash their hands often, or have a sensorial experience with water.

These children will be encouraged to self-feed, but will be given help when necessary. A small plate, glass, and spoon will be provided, even if they eat with their hands still. Teachers will notice if a child's bowl or glass are empty, and ask if they want more. If the child does not answer, they will be given a little bit just to be sure. We know that young children are going to put things in their mouths, and will have a tub available in each classroom where the teacher can place objects that need to be washed before being put back out for use.

We will gladly use cloth diapers or disposables, whatever you send with your child is fine. If you do bring cloth diapers, we will send a wet bag home with you each night for washing. Please send along a container of wipes and whatever brand of diaper cream you'd like us to use in the case of a sore bottom.

For enrollment of any child under the age of 3, we ask that you complete form called "Intake of a child under the age of 2 years". Your child's teacher will thoroughly read the information on the form, and be sure to ask for clarification as needed to ensure that we fully understand your child's needs and schedule. We'll document changes throughout the year, based on discussions we have with you regarding your child's development, and will work with you during times of changing needs, to try to provide as much consistency as possible. Children under 2 will be allowed to roughly follow their own individual pattern of activity in sleeping, eating, and diapering/toileting.

If we have a child under 1 year of age (very rare, special circumstances only) we will inform the parents of the type of formula we offer, which we can give the child. Parents also have the option of providing breastmilk or the formula of your choice. Individuals who bring milk/formula from home must label it with the child's name and the date. They will have this formula or breastmilk offered to them at meals, and also at other times if they seem hungry. Those who cannot hold their cup or bottle themselves will be held and fed by a teacher. Any infants we have will be placed on their back in a crib or pack and play for nap, with their blanket tucked around

them and no loose materials, to reduce the risk of SIDS. Children over the age of 1 will use a cushion wrapped in a sheet for nap time.

We coordinate the outside time and basement times of the two youngest groups, so that the children have time together, as they will be growing together in classrooms in the future. These groups will stay inside if it is below 10 degrees with windchill.

Preschool group: 10-12 children, 3-5 years

Children can transition from the Playschool to the Preschool after they are 2.5, and deemed ready by their classroom guides. This is often around their 3rd birthday. Readiness for the preschool room includes ability to follow instructions, focus on activities, voice their own needs, and working on potty training. This group also starts inside, and they begin the day with their work cycle in the classroom.

Work cycle: This is the part of the day when the children are free to choose their activities in the prepared environment. The teacher will show the children different activities to get them started, in a clear and concise manner, and the child who is focusing on something is never interrupted unnecessarily. A Montessori Environment is organized and intuitive. Every activity has a 'home' on a shelf or table, so that the child knows where to go to find it. They learn to put the things away in the same place when they are finished, so that the next child can also find it. This gives the children independence in choosing their work, enabling them to self-educate.

During this work time, the child may also choose to rest, look at books, have their morning snack, or just observe others working. The guides will be aware of who has eaten, gone to the bathroom, and who looks tired, etc., so that we can help the children be aware of their own needs. If you are ever visiting or observing the work cycle, your child's teacher will help you find a place to sit and watch. Please remember to keep your voice low and not draw attention to yourself, so as not to interrupt the children's work.

School age group: 8-10 children, 5-9 years

This group's focus is not on Montessori education, as these kids will only come after a full day of school or in the summer. The focus is rather on the outdoors and nature. They will explore the woods, fields, and parks in our neighborhood. The program has two different offerings:

1. Summer program, full days (Ages 5-10) June 12-August 18, 2023
2. After school program (Ages 4-10) Aug 28, 2023 – May 22, 2024

We may offer extra days for elementary-aged children, when the public school is closed. These will be communicated in the monthly newsletters, and you can email Jessica if you want your child to attend.

Section 2: Health, Sanitation, and Wellness

We seek to provide all of our children with a clean, well-organized environment that is free from toxins and communicable diseases. We work actively with the children to teach practices which can increase the cleanliness of our environment, such as proper hand washing techniques, especially after eating, bathroom, using tissues, and picking nose/sucking on fingers.

Nutrition: We believe that good food is central to health. Our nutrition program is based on organic whole foods, which are seasonal and local when possible. When we are eligible (at least 25% students enrolled

eligible for free/reduced meals) we do participate in Wisconsin's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All snacks and meals served will meet USDA guidelines, and we have a record available for review.

We believe that it is important for people to have a connection with their food, and so we create mini-gardens with the children, in which the children help us to raise some of the food we will be serving! If you have any questions about or desire to help with the garden, contact Jessica.

The menu will be posted weekly. We welcome new ideas for meals and snacks, the only restriction is that we keep to the guidelines set out by the food program. Our meals are:

9-10:00am	AM snack	Fruit, grain, and milk <u>or</u> fruit, protein and milk
11:00-12:00	Lunch	Vegetables, grain, protein, and milk
1:45-3:00pm	PM snack	Vegetable/fruit, grain, protein (2 items)

Please inform us of any dietary restrictions we should follow for your child. **We must have special diets in writing on the first day of implementation, with a doctor's note if you would like us to serve anything other than cow's milk or soy milk to your child.**

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

2023-24 Health policy:

We ask that you not bring even a *mildly* ill child to the program. Because of the group nature of our setup, we are not licensed to care for sick children, and cannot care for sick children without the risk of spreading it. Please stay home with your child or make other arrangements until they are **24 hrs fever-free, and 24 hours vomit/diarrhea free, with other symptoms improving**. It is definitely a good idea to establish a backup plan for care, in case you are unable to send your child to school because of illness.

Some examples of a child who is too sick to attend the program are:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred even once in the past 24 hours
- A copious and persistent nasal discharge that requires constant maintenance
- An unidentified rash, cough, or sore throat
- Any communicable disease (serious and less serious) that is described below
- Direct exposure to a serious communicable disease (see communicable diseases below)
- A newly prescribed medication has been administered, and the suggested time has not passed, or the child continues to have symptoms of illness
- A possible symptom of particular concern, as per directives from Vernon County Public Health Dept.

If you are not 100% sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, please call from home to ask, rather than bringing your child and asking us at the door.

Any child who becomes sick during the day while at school will be laid down to rest in a secluded area until he/she can be picked up. Please come promptly, within an hour, both for your own child's sake and for the health of the others. **Children who are sent home with symptoms of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea should not be in attendance the following day (24 hour rule), unless accompanied by a note from their physician clearing them for attendance.** For your child's own good, and a speedier recovery, take it slow and allow your child extra sleep, fluid, and nutritious food to fight it. Remember that while your child is fighting an illness, they are also more likely to succumb to the next germ they're exposed to.

Absent specific guidance due to a public health epidemic, children may return to the Children's House when they have had a normal temperature *and* have been symptom free for 24 hours without medication. If medical attention was necessary, appropriate treatment must have been administered or the doctor has given medical approval for the child to return. When in doubt, we will follow the guidelines for exclusion of children from child care as adapted from the Division of Public Health. Because we have 3 serious respiratory illnesses circulating (coronavirus, influenza, and RSV) if their sickness is respiratory in nature, the child must be tested and cleared by public health officials. An unidentified rash must be cleared by your child's doctor, as well.

Notification of exposure to a communicable disease:

Please notify us if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease, and the degree of the exposure, so that we can help determine if your child should attend school or quarantine.

We take the responsibility to inform all families of enrolled children if a child in attendance has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. We will do so via email and will also post a sign. We are required by state licensing to report to the health department any instances of certain communicable diseases that show up in our facility.

Please respect that we strive to maintain confidentiality, and will not ever discuss with others who the sick child is. We can tell you if we remember your child spending significant time with or near that person, but not who it is.

School closing:

We reserve the right to temporarily close the school if there has been a mass exposure to a serious communicable disease. The length of time that we remain closed will be directly related to the incubation period of the illness/disease, and the public health guidance that is relevant. We will re-open when it is clear who has it and who is healthy, and when we have adequate healthy staffing. Make-ups will, of course, be given to all part-time students, and tuition reductions to those who are full time.

Reducing transmittance:

Rest assured that if a child with a communicable disease has been in attendance, we will follow local health official's guidance. We will continue wearing masks, whenever it is recommended. We will also continue having individual work space and supplies for each child. It's possible we may need to close a room. If there has been a serious communicable illness in the room, we will always disinfect the room before the children's next arrival. We will focus on the cleaning of: doorknobs, faucets, and specific materials which the child may have had direct contact with. We will put extra emphasis on hand washing, scrubbing for 20 seconds minimum. We will always notify you of the exposure so that those who want to avoid the risk will have that option.

It is also very problematic with this age group to have a lot of mucus. We would like to draw extra attention to the item on the unwanted symptoms list at the beginning of this section which states: "A copious and persistent nasal discharge that requires constant maintenance" If your child can't maintain a clean face, and you are having to wipe it constantly, please keep them home to avoid contaminating our indoor environment. It is most comfortable for a child to be home on these days. Less constant discharge is okay, but if the teacher feels like it is constant, or your child seems too uncomfortable, we may call you to pick up your child.

Serious communicable diseases:

If your child has had a significant direct exposure to a serious communicable disease, we ask that you keep them home until the incubation period is over. While it is obvious that a child needs to be kept home when they are ill, it is also important to know that they should not be in school after exposure to a serious communicable illness. This is especially relevant if the person who has been diagnosed is somebody in your home. By keeping them home, you avoid exposing all of the children in the program and inconveniencing a great many families.

These serious diseases include, but are not limited to:

COVID-19	Influenza	RSV	Strep throat	Rubella	Measles	Mumps
Chickenpox	Scarlet Fever	Staphylococcus/MRSA	Roseola	HIV	Tuberculosis	
Fifth Disease	Hepatitis	Mono/EBV	Pertussis	Bacterial meningitis		

We will follow public health recommendations, particular to the situation. Remember that day 1 of the incubation period dates back not to when it was diagnosed, but actually 24 hours after antibiotics are administered to the carrier. Please make sure to wait long enough to see if symptoms crop up before mixing, to be sure they are not bringing it with them! Make-up days will be given freely.

Less serious communicable diseases:

If your child has had a direct exposure to a less serious communicable disease, please notify us so that we can help everyone practice extra good hygiene, and so that we can keep an eye out for symptoms. If the symptoms manifest while the child is with us, they will be sent home to begin treatment. Only after treatment has been administered for at least 24 hours should the child return to school, unless a different time period is indicated on the medication.

These less serious diseases include, but are not limited to:

Ringworm (must be covered)	Pinkeye (must be treated)	Scabies	Pinworm
Lice/nits(must be picked & oiled)	A common cold (must test)		

Staff absences:

We call in substitutes to be at the school with the regular daily workers. The substitute must have a clear background check, a health exam, and has been trained in abusive head trauma prevention. This person is also given an orientation ahead of time on our routines, and upon arrival is updated on the needs/schedules of the specific children who are present.

Because of the specialized nature of the program, and for the security of the children, we will never have only substitutes at the school. If there is inadequate staffing, we will notify you as soon as possible that we must close the school, or the classroom.

Missed days:

We do not offer tuition reductions or refunds for missed days, except in extreme cases. We encourage part-time students to take advantage of make-up days. If your child misses a day due to sickness or an emergency situation, they will have credit for a make-up day, as long as we are notified in advance. You can call at (608)637-3522, email Jessica, or leave a note on the app. Please email Jessica to schedule a make up day. For full-time students, as make-ups are not available, tuition reduction may be an option if your child misses a lot.

Immunizations:

We are required to have immunization records or a waiver for every single child in our care. These records will be kept private, but will be included in our yearly immunization reporting survey conducted by the state. If your child is not immunized, or has followed an alternate immunization schedule, you are required to sign the immunization form, and check the waiver at the bottom. We highly recommend immunization for all children who are medically able.

Medications:

Any child who needs to be given prescription or non-prescription medications must have a signed authorization form. Both the form and the *original bottle* must be labeled with the child's name, the name of the medicine, and with dosage and administration directions. We need written permission for any medicines or supplements, whether they are over the counter or prescription.

We will keep written record of all administration of medicine with: the child's name, type of medication, usage, time, date, and the initials of the person who administered the dose. All medications will be stored in the refrigerator, in a jar that is clearly marked 'medication'. We will read carefully and administer the medicine correctly. If we should ever miss a dose, we will administer it immediately and record it (unless it states otherwise on the authorization form). Any errors in dispensing or timing will be reported to you, so that you can adjust the next dose if necessary.

Blanket dispensing of any medication, such as Ibuprofen, neosporen, or cough syrup, is banned. We will never give your child medication without your written permission, and we will also obtain a written authorization form from you for the brand and ingredient strength of even the sunscreen we will keep at the preschool. We do not wish to dispense deet-containing bug sprays, but will accept natural ones. You may send along sunscreen with your child, labeled with their name. It will not be used on others.

Emergency Medical Treatment:

We all have current certification for CPR, and have first aid instructions on-site. We will follow standard precautions for treating injuries. We will wash and bandage scrapes, and put ice on bumps. Any head injury will be treated as a serious injury, and parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Should there be a need for immediate emergency medical treatment, 911 will be called. If an ambulance is necessary, parents will be responsible for any costs. We will take care of your child first, and you will be contacted as soon as possible.

In the case of less urgent (yet needing attention) emergencies, you will be contacted to pick up your child. If you cannot come, please arrange to have someone else pick them up. In certain circumstances, we may call the

physician/medical facility specified on the enrollment form to get advice on the situation. Minor injuries will be treated with first aid, and communicated to you upon pickup, so that you can be aware and follow-up on your child's well-being.

All medication administered, accidents or injuries occurring during the time the child is in our care, marked changes in behavior or appearance and any observation of injuries to a child's body received outside of our care will be entered into the center's medical logbook. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local authorities.

If a staff member who is injured, we will call the emergency contact person to come and help with the children while we address the situation.

Emergencies:

During any type of emergency that requires evacuation, the children will be evacuated through the nearest safe exit. The attendance form and list of phone numbers for parents and emergency contacts will be taken along. We will always do a headcount, and compare it to the attendance list to ensure that all children are accounted for.

The Children's House may be closed at any time for if we experience: loss of heat, water, or electricity, severe enough weather to cause local schools to close, or a communicable disease of great concern. We will notify you of the problem as soon as possible before we open; and if we are already open you will be contacted to pick up your children within the hour.

We follow suit with what Viroqua Area Schools decides in regard to closing due to extreme weather. When in doubt, tune in to WDRT, WVRQ, or check VAS website: <https://www.viroquaareaschools.com> for school closings. Download the Viroqua Area Schools app on Google Play or iTunes.

Emergency backup assistant: If for some reason something happens that causes us to need an emergency back-up provider, we will contact the designated person. This emergency backup provider will be available in the case of an emergency such as:

- Only one provider at the Children's House, and a child hurts himself/herself
- A staff hurts himself/herself, and the other must attend to him/her.
- A staff member is not able to work, and a substitute has not been found yet.
- A lost or missing child, which necessitates that the providers spread out and search the house and neighborhood.

This person must be available upon short notice, and must go through training for shaken baby syndrome prevention. Upon arrival, this person will receive a quick orientation on what's happening and the needs of the children in their group before we leave.

Fire:

All staff will receive an orientation on fire emergency procedures, and training on how to work the fire extinguisher, which is maintained yearly. Smoke detectors are hard-wired, and maintained in operating condition on each level and in all areas used for nap/rest. We will have fire drills with the children each month, and completion of the practices will be documented.

We will gather the children to the nearest main exit (doors to front deck), and bring them outside as a group and gather on the deck. Most of the time, it is a drill or false alarm, and we go back in once the alarms are quiet.

In the event a real fire (or smoke from a fire) has been detected:

- We will go all the way down to the grass, and even out to the farthest back fenced yard.
- All teachers will have children's emergency contact information with them outside, and we will call you to pick up your child
- No one will re-enter the building until it is declared safe

Tornado/Severe Weather:

In tornado season (April-October) we will practice tornado drills as well. We will gather each class group at the top of the stairs in turn, count them, and go down in groups. We will then count them again. Next we will show them how to duck and cover, and will talk to them about staying safe, and show them our portable radio and flashlight, and extra batteries.

In the case of actual severe weather, we will do the following:

WATCH:

- Monitor the weather radio
- Close doors, windows
- Be prepared to bring the children downstairs
- Children can be picked up early

WARNING:

- Gather all children in the storm safe area, check attendance against binder
- An adult will monitor the weather radio in the back room
- Parents who come to pick up at this time are urged not to leave, instead invited to shelter with us

Missing child:

In the event we ever have child go missing, we will search the immediate premises and interview the other children. If the child cannot be found, the child's parents and the police will be notified immediately, and we will continue to search the neighborhood. We will also notify the Department (state licensers) within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Threat:

If the center should receive a threat to the building or its occupants, law enforcement will be contacted to assess the credibility of the threat. They will help determine the need to evacuate. We will get in touch to advise all parents of the threat. Depending on the nature of the threat, evacuation and/or closure may be required.

Evacuation of napping toddlers and children with special needs: If an alarm sounds while the children are sleeping, those who can be roused will be. Those under the age of 2 may be carried out. Provisions for children with special needs will be written in advance, with the specific circumstance in mind.

Section 3: Parent's Role and Communication

Parent's Role: You are your child's most important support people, even while they are away at school. By making sure your child is well rested and has had a good meal before coming, you help ensure that they are feeling their best and are able to learn and interact with others optimally. By sending them with a change of clothes and appropriate outside gear, you are helping them to feel secure and well-prepared for anything. Finally, by being on time to pick them up you allow them (and their teachers and peers) get home and get

rested after a long day. All of these things may seem like small tasks, but together they add up to be a great help for your child while he/she is away from you.

Observation:

You are welcome to observe your child and the program at any time. However, we do encourage you to arrange a visit at least a day in advance. This is because we do not wish to double up, or have visitors every day, as it can be disruptive to the children’s activity.

Parent Participation:

We believe that, in you, we have a great wealth of knowledge and experience, of which even your own children may not be fully aware. We welcome your input.

We encourage you to participate in the program in the following ways (other ideas are welcome, too!)

1. Fulfill your parent contribution, by coming to demonstrate life skills or volunteering to do necessary tasks, such as gardening, shoveling the sidewalk, etc.
2. Donating useful items such as art supplies, books, puzzles, or gently used clothes to have on hand. Household items include: shopping bags, scraps of fabric, ribbon, yarn, bedsheets, paper towel rolls, etc.
3. Come to events, such as our seasonal potlucks

Items to be provided:

Item:	Parent provided	Center provided
Slippers	X	
Change of clothing	X	
Weather-appropriate outdoor clothing	X	
Washable blanket, cuddle toy (if napping)	X	
Bed cushion, sheet to wrap cushion		X
Diapers and wet wipes	X	
Cremes, balms, as needed	X	X(Natural brand)
Meals, snacks, drinks		X
Birthday treat		X
Soap		X
Craft supplies	X	X

Communication:

General notices, the menu, and other pertinent information will be posted on the bulletin board near the entrance for each group. A copy of this policies handbook and the DCF Licensing rulebook are available, along with the past monthly newsletters and menus in the parent binder by each door as well.

We will be sure to communicate to all staff who works with each child about the special needs or schedules by writing notes in the staff binder, as well as giving verbal updates to each other daily.

It is important that we communicate daily concerning the needs and well-being of your child. For minor issues, such as schedule changes, authorization for pickup, or tired/sensitive children, please discuss with your child’s teacher upon pickup or drop-off. If there is something you would like us to know, but don’t want to discuss in front of your child (crankiness, a family event, etc.) please jot down a note and hand it to your child’s teacher. We can call you when it’s a good time and we have privacy.

Below is a summary of the communication we need from you:

ISSUE:	WRITTEN:	VERBAL:
Initial orientation on your child's needs and habits	X	X
Minor issues/ schedule changes	X (email Jessica)	X
Authorization for pickup by new person	X	X
Dietary restrictions	X	X
Medication	X	X

If there are larger issues or concerns that need to be discussed, please talk to your child's teacher to arrange a meeting in private. You know your child best, and we are always grateful for more information about your child or how they respond in different situations. We may also have some suggestions for you, from our experience with other children. We hope to have an open dialogue with you, working together for the best of each child. It is important, however, that we try to avoid talking about the child in their presence, unless we deliberately want to include them in the conversation.

Conferences: Twice a year (November/April) we will hold parent-teacher conferences to talk about your individual child's development and needs. We will allot 20 minutes per child, and ask that you not bring your child along. You are always welcome to set up a meeting with us any other time as well, for any reason.

Confidentiality: We will be conscious of our words and actions, and work to act in a professional manner. We will respect your family and your child outside of the preschool, and won't disclose information that is personal. Staff will share information internally, as needed.

Records:

All enrolled children must have the following records on file

RECORD:	Upon enrollment:	1 ST day:	Within 1 month:
Child Care Enrollment & Enrollment Fee	X		
Intake for Child Under 2 Years (if applicable)	X		
Parent/Provider Contract	X		
Food program enrollment and income report	X		
Health History & Emergency Care Plan		X	
First Month's Tuition		X	
Record of allergies/food restrictions		X	
Child Health Report			X
Immunization			X
Food Program enrollment		X	
Household Size Income Statement (if eligible)		X	
Parent Agreement		X	
Child Health Agreement		X	

The children's records and medical logs will be kept private, where only the Children's House employees have access to them. You may see your child's records upon request.

Section 4: Administrative

Jessica Anderson is the owner, director, and administrator of the Viroqua Children's House Montessori Preschool. She is the one to contact if you have any questions about enrollment, tuition, staffing, or facility. The best way to contact Jessica is through email: childrenshouse.jessica@gmail.com, or, for more pressing issues you can call her at (608) 606-4629.

Monthly Tuition Rates

<u>Playschool (1-3 years)</u>						<u>School-age group (5-10 years)</u>			
Under 2	3:30	4:30	Over 2	3:30	4:30	<u>Summer, full days</u>			
3 days	\$998	\$1131	3 days	\$960	\$1088	3:30	4:30		
4 days	\$1200	\$1359	4 days	\$1147	\$1299	3 days	\$726	\$823	
5 days	\$1405	\$1593	5 days	\$1346	\$1526	4 days	\$874	\$990	
*Tuition decreases the month after a child's 2 nd birthday						5 days	\$982	\$1113	

<u>Preschool (3-5 years)</u>		
Over 3	3:30	4:30
3 days	\$793	\$899
4 days	\$961	\$1089
5 days	\$1080	\$1224

<u>After school care for 2023-24 school year</u>	
2 days	\$70/mo
3 days	\$100/mo
4 days	\$130/mo
5 days	\$145/mo

Early arrival for any group:

7:30 \$10/weekday scheduled= \$10-50 more per month
 7:45 \$5/weekday scheduled= \$5-25 per month

Extra days for school-age (add on by arrangement):

Possible extra days for school age group (if teacher available):
 Full day: \$40
 Half day: \$20

2023-24 Enrollment Policy:

Early Enrollment:

The early enrollment window will be shorter this year, as we need to figure out if we can continue to house Tracy's Kinderhaus this summer. Current families can **enroll from now through March 17th**, and not pay an enrollment fee. You can still enroll after March 17th, but you pay the late enrollment price instead. The enrollment fee is waived for current families who register early. It is needed for all new enrollees, and continuing students who register after Friday, March 17th.

Once current families have their desired schedules, we open enrollment to new families in this order: families on the waiting list, and then new families. New families can send in the enrollment with \$25 waiting list deposit before March 17th to be considered among those first considered when it opens up.

The groups for the summer will be sent out in March, and the school year groups will be sent out in early April. This is after Viroqua Area Montessori School has their enrollment drawing in March, so you should know if your child got in to Pre-K or not. We want to make sure that our current families have their plans set before they give up their child's spot. Once the initial groups are made, we will extend enrollment to returning families and those on the waiting list.

You may put in any scheduling request you desire, which we will consider according to the criteria outlined under the title: Priority. On the Schedule Request Form, fill out what is relevant to your family. If you are enrolling for the summer or fall only, you can cross out the other section. Seasonal enrollment is dependent on available space, and there are no guarantees, but a child that takes the summer off can usually still get in in the fall if you enroll early.

Scheduling: Based on our observations on greater confidence and progress for children who attend at least 3 days per week, we are offering 3, 4, or 5 day attendance.

Plan an attendance schedule that is realistic for your family. When children are picked up late, a staff member has to stay late to keep the group in ratio. This is an extra expense for the school, and an inconvenience and disruption of the staff member's personal time.

Drop off times:

7:30 or 7:45 = Early arrival

8:00 or later = Regular arrival

Pick up times:

3:30 Regular pick up

4:30 Extended day

Optional add-on days: You can use make-up days to add attendance days, as they are available. We also have optional days for older siblings and 4K students, when the public school is closed. Contact Jessica for more information.

GROUPS AND ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Playschool North and South (1-3 years): Our entrance requirements are that a child be at least one year old, and able to get around. To be fair, we will consider making exceptions for children with special needs, if we can accommodate on a case by case basis. Children in this group are just starting to work on basic life skills, and the routine is slow and clear.

Preschool (2.5-5 years): Children joining the preschool group generally have gained an ability to focus on their work, and are able to communicate their needs. If your child is currently in the playschool group, the teachers will communicate with each other about the child's readiness, and they will be moved up when they seem solidly ready. If your child is joining us anew, and is a young 3, it is more difficult to evaluate readiness, and we will consult with you about their development to try to find the best fit.

Generally, if your child will be 3 before the session begins, they can enroll in the Preschool group. If they will be turning 3 during the course of the summer, they should join the Preschool in the fall. If your child is not yet 3, they will normally start in a playschool room, and possibly move up to the preschool in January, subject to availability and determination of readiness. If there are too many children for the Preschool to include them all, the children's readiness will be evaluated, and the balance in the classroom considered.

It is recommended that a 4-5 year old going into the Children's House classroom at VAMS in the fall stay with the **preschool** group for the summer session, when possible. This allows for continuity of peers and similar classroom structure and expectations.

School Age program (5-9 years): We will be offering a summer program for this age group. The group dynamic is a major consideration for this age group, and we will try to maintain a balance. For a child who is older than the average child in the group to be considered, we must feel that they would be a positive role-model for the younger kids in the group. This group is for children ages 5 and above, who have completed their kindergarten year at VAMS, or are going into kindergarten but are enrolled in a school other than VAMS.

If you have a child who will be 4 by Sept 1st, you may be considering enrollment in the public school. The 4K program runs 4 days per week (M,T,Th,F). We have a limited capacity to offer Wednesday only attendance. These children will spend much of their time with the preschool group. Remember to include this on your enrollment document if you have a 4 year old, and are interested in this option.

We will also be offering an after school program in the fall, in which the children ride the bus after school, and their teacher will meet them at the bus stop, which is at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. They will walk back to our program, have a snack, and play outside until pick up time at 4:30.

Priority:

1. Currently enrolled families are given priority over new families. Siblings get priority.
2. Previously enrolled families are given priority on the waiting list, and will be arranged from oldest to youngest.
3. Those who request full-time attendance (4-5 days) are given priority over part-time attendance (3 days). A request for part-time attendance can trump a request for full-time attendance only if all of the following:
 - The student is currently enrolled
 - The schedule works out well with another family, so that there are no gaps
 - One of the days requested is a Monday or a Friday
 - The child requesting full time attendance is a new family
4. Children of employees may be scheduled on certain days/at certain times according to the parent's schedule.
5. Lower income families might be prioritized, in order for us to participate in the CACFP food program, which requires 25% of those in attendance to qualify for Free and Reduced benefits.
6. If there is still question on who can join the program after these factors are taken into account, we will look at the date the application was received, as well as considering the balance of age, gender, and personality in each group.

New students: If there are openings in the groups once currently enrolled students have been scheduled, the spots will be opened up to families on the waiting list. Siblings are at the top of the waiting list, arranged from oldest to youngest. We will check to see who's ready to start in that session, and offer the spot. If no siblings are ready to fill a spot, it will be offered to a new family on the waiting list.

If the program is full, and your child is not currently on the waiting list, you will receive notification that your child's name has been put on a waiting list. Should a spot open up, we will contact the first family on the list by phone and email, and you will have one week to respond before the spot is offered to another child. The enrollment check for those on the waiting list will not be cashed until a spot is offered and accepted.

30 day trial period: Each new child will have a 30 day trial period, to ensure that the child functions well in our program. At any time in this first month the program or the parent can discharge/withdraw a child if it is not working out. The enrollment fee and tuition are non-refundable, but the next month's tuition will not be required. The decision to discharge a child will not be made lightly. See the Policies and Procedures for more detail.

Withdrawal: We require 30 days notice if you want to decrease your child's attendance or withdraw them from the program. If we get shorter notice than 30 days, you may be asked to pay half of the next month's tuition. We need time to arrange for another child to take their place, and avoid a budget shortfall.

Tuition payment and make-up days: Tuition is due monthly, in the first week of the month unless another arrangement has been made. To make an arrangement for an alternate monthly payment date or split payments, contact Jessica at childrenshouse.jessica@gmail.com. After the 16th, you will receive an email reminder and there will be a fee of \$25 added to your balance. If you contact Jessica before the 16th to arrange another payment date, no late fee will be added.

If there is an overpayment, the credit will go forward onto your next month's invoice. The preferred payment method is by ACH transfer, or a check brought to the school. Your child's price is a flat fee, no matter how many days the month has or how much school your child misses. You may contact Jessica in the case of numerous or extended absences to discuss a special situation. We need a minimum of half tuition to save a child's spot for a missed month, if known in advance.

We do not offer tuition reductions or refunds for missed days, but rather we encourage you to take advantage of make-up days. If your child misses a day due to: sickness, a family emergency, or an unplanned school closing, they will receive credit for a make-up day. Voluntary absences initiated by the family are only eligible for make-ups if the days are opened up on our calendar 2 weeks in advance. Ask your child's teacher for guidance.

If you need care every weekday, choose 5 day attendance. With this option you pay a lower rate, as make-ups are not available. If you want full-time attendance, but have some flexibility and want the opportunity to earn and use make-up days, 4 day attendance is great for this.

WI Shares Subsidies: If tuition seems unmanageable, we encourage you to look into WI Shares Subsidies, which is a program of great help to many of our low income families. More information can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/eligibility> . Start this process early, it can take weeks to figure out how much help you'll be getting. Another option in addition to this is discussing labor trade possibilities with Jessica, or alternate payment schedules. Some families like to split their tuition into two monthly payments, or pre-pay some at tax time, for example. You will need our provider number, which is: 5000586815/001

Non-Discrimination Policy: At VCH we value diversity among our students and their families. We extend our services to children of any race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, mental/physical disability, and gender identity. No child will be denied admission solely on the basis of any of these factors.

The parents of any eligible applicant with special needs will provide the school with as much information as possible. The child will be admitted if, after careful evaluation of the child's care needs and the preschool's capabilities to meet these needs, it is felt that the child can participate in and benefit from the program, and we can make reasonable accommodation to provide safe care to this child as well as to the other enrolled children.

Licensing:

The Viroqua Children's House Montessori Preschool is licensed by the State of Wisconsin, Department of Children and Families. We are licensed to have no more than 49 children at one time, from 1-10 years of age, though we normally have ages 1-5 years. For older children, we offer and after school and summer programs.

We are inspected regularly to ensure that we meet licensing standards, and must maintain compliance with all laws governing the facilities and operation of a childcare business. Licensing standards assure you that our program has been checked thoroughly for safety and good program planning. It also guarantees that all of our workers are qualified and participate in continuing education.

The following will be on the shelf or bulletin board in the main entrance for your review:

- Licensing rules, license certificate
- Any stipulation, condition, or exception that affects the license.
- Results of the latest monitoring visit, any warning letter or enforcement action issued
- A summary of licensing rules, titled "Your Guide to Licensed Child Care".
- The Viroqua Children's House current policies
- The month's newsletter and menu

Being licensed through the state of Wisconsin enables us to utilize beneficial public programs such as Wisconsin Shares Subsidies, for families who need assistance in paying for care. Also, we participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, to help pay for our wholesome menu. If you are interested in more information about how to get assistance, speak with Jessica, the program Administrator or with your current caseworker if you have one.

We strive to ensure that any action, by commission or omission, or any condition or occurrence relating to the operation or maintenance of this preschool, does not adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of any child under our care. The Viroqua Children's House Montessori Preschool and its facility are insured.

Thanks for being a part of our school community! We look forward to the year ahead