



Echinacea
Montessori School

Family Handbook
2024-2025



Echinacea
Montessori School

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Welcome to Echinacea Montessori School!

We ask you to take a few minutes to read through this handbook and hope you find it to be a helpful resource to answer two questions:

“What can you expect from Echinacea Montessori School?”

and

“What does Echinacea Montessori School expect of families?”.

This is designed to clarify the policies and procedures of our program. To provide the best quality Montessori education and care to each child from the first day, it is important that we communicate as clearly as possible what we can expect of each other to start building a trusting, nurturing and respectful relationship between your family and the school.

Please sign and return the Family Handbook Acknowledgement indicating that you've reviewed the school's policies.

If you have questions, please ask. If you have suggestions, we'd love to hear them.

Thank you!

The Echinacea Montessori Team



Welcome to Echinacea Montessori

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Section 1

Our History

Echinacea Montessori School began in 2019 with the idea of serving the children and their families in a small, community-centered Montessori preschool/Kindergarten in the heart of Denver. We opened our doors in early 2020 to serve children ages 2.5-6. This summer will be our fifth anniversary in the Baker Neighborhood!

Our Mission:

Together with our community, Echinacea Montessori uses high quality Montessori practices to guide and challenge each child to develop independence, voice, confidence, self-discipline and respect.

Our Vision and Values

We commit to:

- Support children's innate joy of learning and curiosity, building confidence to challenge themselves in a safe, thoughtfully prepared environment grounded in Maria Montessori's original scientifically-based work.
- Montessori education that nurtures the whole child: body, mind, and spirit-not solely academic.
- Nurture respect for the natural world by providing a dynamic outdoor learning environment and additional interactive experiences.
- Honor each student's unique developmental timetable and learning style by providing individualized instruction that supports self-exploration and self-discipline required for independent learning choices.
- Thoughtfully prepare environments that challenge and nurture freedom to pursue interests.
- Partnering with each child's caregivers and building a community for each child to feel connected and cherished.
- Be culturally responsive and accepting, celebrating the richness of the cultures that make up our community, serving as catalysts for us to learn about one another on a deeper level.
- Support children's voices in speaking their truths and to the truth they see around them-to stand up for each other.
- Problem-solve as a community with empathy and understanding.



Anti-Bias Anti-Racist Statement:

Echinacea Montessori School acknowledges that every person at any moment can experience privilege and oppression.

As educators, it is our responsibility to tackle these issues through reflections of ourselves and the treatment of children, families, and staff in our environment. We take an informed, dynamic approach to education that works to identify and respond to discriminatory policies and practices in education.

Our school community is founded upon Dr. Montessori's philosophy that education is the catalyst to peace. It is our role as members of this community to mindfully model and guide children to their roles in creating social justice and equity, providing educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners. By providing guidance on equity, we hope to encourage socially aware and responsible beings in their communities: locally, nationally, and globally.

In affecting social change, Echinacea Montessori will work with children in a safe and supportive environment where they can communicate and explore their individual interests and passions together in their community. Our staff will also engage in investigations of our own identity through anti-bias, anti-racist training each year and continuous reflection.

Recognizing that our experiences affect others, we will provide opportunities for children and families to explore and celebrate each other's differences and similarities, to build honor and respect for Humanity's differences, recognize bias, and to begin to learn how and why to speak up for what is right. Montessori education, while providing many academic opportunities, also specifically teaches how to exist in a rich and varied social group that addresses race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical & learning abilities, and economic class; purposefully encouraging and empowering children to take an active, problem-solving approach to create strategies for improving social conditions of their communities.

We know that this work is never done and it will continue and needs to be done as a community of people lifting one another up in hopes of new intellectual, emotional, and social evolution.

At Echinacea Montessori we are all lifelong learners.



Administrative Structure

Staffing

Echinacea is a micro-school that serves 22 primary-age (2.5-6) students. The school was created by teachers and is staffed by teachers. The school has two teacher leaders and one teaching assistant. Together they provide a coordinated and consistent school experience for children and their families.

Roles of Our Children’s Caregivers in the School

Our staff are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. We require all lead teachers to be Montessori certified by a MACTE accredited program. Typical staff certifications are as follows:

Position Title	Education/Certification	Experience
Lead Teacher	Bachelor Degree or Master Degree from a 4 year University/College MACTE Montessori Certification	Minimum 10 years in education
Teacher Assistant/Aide	Associate Degree Montessori Assistant’s Training	Minimum 2 years in working in a licensed program and/or life experience equivalent.

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

Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Echinacea Montessori School.



School Hours and Program Hours

School Hours:

Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 3:00 p.m.

After Care:

Monday through Thursday, 3:00 to 5:30 p.m., Friday, 3:00-4:00

Childcare

We consider the school day and aftercare as two different services:

- Montessori lessons and learning occur during the school day
- Enriching, safe child care after school Monday through Friday

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following standards for child to staff ratios 1:10.



Section 2

Communications

How we communicate with our community

Communication between our families and the school is a vital component of our children's education. At Echinacea Montessori we make every effort to keep you informed of your child's work and development and pertinent school news. We also want to hear important information about each of our children from you.

School-initiated Communications

- School to Home emails will always come from Analisa or Amanda as the voice of all the teachers.
- Monthly emails of individual child progress and weekly updates through Class Dojo App
- Monthly Newsletter
- Monthly Family Community Meetings-We ask that families participate in a minimum of 3 out of the 7 meetings offered.
- Teacher home visits.
- Classroom Observations are welcome and occur from November to April. Please call us to arrange a time to come in.
- School Directory is a listing of contact information of each of our participating families.
- Meetings with teachers and progress updates are holistic. We have two dedicated days a year (Fall & Spring) scheduled for family conferences. Meetings can also be scheduled upon request. A child's growth is ever changing and assessment happens constantly. We work together to understand a more complete picture of how a child is learning a given skill. If you have concerns about your child's development we want to know. This information is kept confidential.
- School Community Events
- Family/Child Library: educational resources available for check-out.



Translation Services

Families may receive all communications including family conferences and meetings in their home language. The school will provide translations using a professional translation service for languages other than Spanish or English.

Family-initiated Communications

Phone calls and emails will be answered within 24-48 hours and we are happy to schedule a meeting to talk about your child.

Physical and Program Access for School Events

Our school is committed to providing access to everyone. Please let us know about any accommodations or access to school events that are needed at least a week prior to an event or meeting. Requests, comments, or questions may be directed to Amanda or Analisa.



Section 3

Transportation

Arrival/Departure Procedure

Children should be brought to the outdoor classroom between 8:00-8:30 each day. The teachers will greet the children and parent/caregiver will sign them in before saying goodbye.

At the end of the school day, parent/caregiver will sign their children out at the same location. Each child will only be released to his or her parent/caregiver, unless there is a written authorization from the legal guardian stating another individual to pick up the child.

Children going to aftercare will be signed out of school by their teacher and signed into after care by the aftercare adult.

Late Arrival/Early Pick-up Procedure

The Montessori morning work cycle is a time for children to develop independence and concentration; frequent interruptions affect the teachers' work with the children and the continuity of the work cycle. We strongly recommend that children arrive on time to benefit from the full three-hour morning work cycle.

When a child comes late to school, the parent/caregiver will call the school or come to the front door to let staff know they are there. A staff member will meet the child and parent/caregiver at the back gate to sign the child in and welcome them into the classroom. We understand that being late and medical appointments happen, however, we do ask that families keep these interruptions to a minimum. If the arrival time is later than 10:00 we ask families to keep their child home for the day unless you have had a conversation with the staff prior to the day.

If an early dismissal is needed, please arrange with one of the teachers prior to pickup. If a child leaves early we ask that it be for the rest of the day. We will welcome the child back again the next school day.



Parking

Parking for Echinacea Montessori is extremely limited and we share it with our immediate community. While we are partnering with DCIS/Fairmont School community, the parking lot across from our school is reserved for their needs. Two hour parking is usually available within a block or two of the school.

Designation of Non-Custodial Adult Pick-up

Written notification of a different adult is required prior to pick-up. The note/email must be a signed and dated statement of authorization that includes the name and relationship of the designated pick-up person and the date(s) of pick-up. The approved person will be asked for photo identification (drivers license) upon arrival to pick up your child. Children will not be released without this written communication.

School Closures and Emergency Dismissals

Under all but the most extreme conditions, the school will remain open. This is one of the benefits of having the school in your neighborhood. Please refer to information regarding our attendance policy.

On rare occasions, the weather will be severe enough to close schools. We will follow the school closure decisions of Denver Public Schools. When this happens it is important that families have pre-arranged child-care available to them. This is a great opportunity to offer help or ask for help from our family community.

Safety

Emergency Procedures and Drills

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group, all available staff will search for the child. If the child is not located within minutes, the family and the police will be notified.



Safety Drills

Our center is fully equipped with mandated fire equipment. Our fire evacuation plan is community-vetted and reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis. Additionally, from March through October staff and children review tornado safety drills as mandated by state licensing. The center also conducts quarterly lockdown drills. All drills are documented for the year and available for review upon request.

Visitors

Visitors are welcome at Echinacea Montessori. As the Wildflower Colorado flagship school we welcome classroom observers interested in learning about our program. Caregivers of students are welcome to observe in the classroom. We require that all visitors sign in, do a health check and sign out.

Toys, Skates, Bikes, Electronic Devices

We ask that toys, skates of any kind, bikes (except those used as transportation to and from school), and electronic devices be left at home to support the concentration of the children's work at school. A child may bring a comfort item (lovey, blanket) for naptime in their nap bag.

Health

Confidentiality

In accordance with PL 90-23 (Freedom of Information), June, 1967, caregivers may request and review their child's file. Requests must be submitted to an Echinacea Montessori teacher who will review the contents with the caregiver and answer questions regarding information contained in the file. A copy of the child's file will be obtained within one week of a request. In accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and PL 93-579, no information from a child's file may be shared without the caregivers' permission except information needed for documentation of eligibility, for local, state or federal funding and evaluation reporting requirements, litigation procedures, and education planning purposes. Echinacea Montessori complies with HIPAA where necessary in the request and retention of applicable health records.



Absence from School Due to Illness

If your child will be absent from school due to illness please email or call the school, (720) 549-0282 as soon as possible so that we know your child is not supposed to be at school that day. Please include symptoms of the illness so that we can track this information and help keep our community healthy. This information is solely for the school's use and will not be shared. Email messages may be left 24 hours a day.

Child Abuse

Each of Echinacea Montessori's staff is required to attend a state-sponsored class on child abuse prevention annually. Staff is personally responsible to report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect according to state law. Any caregiver or staff member in a school facility who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect or has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect must immediately report or initiate a report to be made of such fact to the County Department of Social Services or local law enforcement agency.

Illness, Accidents, Injuries

We understand that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work, but to protect other children; you may not bring a sick child to the center. The center has the right to refuse a child who appears ill and we follow guidelines written in the latest CDC document "How Sick is Too Sick". You will be called and asked to pick up your child if they exhibit any of the following symptoms. This is not an all-inclusive list. We will try to keep your child comfortable but he/she will be excluded from all activities until you arrive.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than we can provide.
- Illness that poses a risk of spread of harmful diseases to others.
- Fever 100°F or higher accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in underwear or toilet.



- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or more than 2 times during the previous 24 hours.
- Mouth sores caused by drooling.
- Rash with fever, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease.
- Pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge, until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat, until 48 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Has a physician or other health professional's written order that a child be separated from other children.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 48 hours.
- They are able to participate comfortably in all usual activities.
- They are free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless:
 - The child's physician signs a note stating that the child's condition is not contagious, and;
 - The involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

If a child had a reportable communicable disease, a physician's note stating that the child is no longer contagious and may return to our care is required.

If your child becomes ill at school with a fever or contagious illness we will contact the caregiver and the child will be sent home. For the safety of the school community, please pick up your child as soon as possible.



A record will be kept in the child's file. The Echinacea staff is required to have First Aid Training biannually and are capable of responding appropriately to first aid emergencies in a systematic manner. If your child has an accident or injury we will evaluate and determine the action to be taken. Caregivers will be informed in a timely manner.

Medications at School, Medical Records, Emergency Cards

Echinacea staff is regularly trained in proper medication administration. If your child is on medication and needs to have it administered during the school day, you will need to fill out the medication form (available upon request). This form needs to be completed by the physician or dentist who prescribed the medication and signed both by the physician, the legal caregiver and the school's nurse consultant. The medicine must be in its original container and delivered to one of the teachers by an adult. Medications will be stored properly and administered by designated personnel. Please note, without the proper signed form, school personnel cannot administer medications.

Physical Examinations and Immunizations

Before your child can attend class, the school will need a copy of up-to-date immunization records or have a medical waiver on file. Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. Every year, we check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

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



Smoking Policy

Echinacea Montessori School is a smoke-free environment. Smoking or the use of tobacco products or marijuana is prohibited in the classroom, at program events and during any activity sponsored by Echinacea Montessori School. This includes buildings, playgrounds and parked vehicles.

Weather Conditions and Outdoor Time Policy

Students will go outside on a daily basis. Children are expected to come to school prepared for the current weather conditions with appropriate outdoor clothing labeled with their name.

Outdoor Time will be canceled in the event of extreme and/or dangerous weather conditions:

- Temperatures below 27 degrees with a dangerous wind chill.
- Significant Precipitation
- High Winds
- Lightning



Code of Respect

Our goal at Echinacea Montessori is to help each child develop a “discipline which is not limited to the school but which extends out into society.” (Montessori, Discovery of the Child). This discipline is more than just keeping order. It is a gradual growth of the child toward a desirable kind of self-control that will create peace and harmony inside that will radiate out into the community and into the world. The adults’ responsibility is to provide a loving, respectful environment, as well as a freedom balanced with well-informed, consistent guidance. Mistakes are seen as having an important role in the process of learning. Children are treated as learners, with kindness, understanding and patience.

Echinacea Montessori Code of Respect

1. Treat others like you would like to be treated.
2. Include others and share.
3. Be safe.
4. Show respect for others’ property and the environment.
5. Solve problems with words.
6. Consider others.
7. Ask for what you need.
8. Work together.

Echinacea Montessori Behavior Code

Children have the right to work and play in a safe and respectful environment. They also have the right to have their needs met through clear expectations and logical, just and consistent consequences.

We would like to stress that in all situations, we see children’s behavior as communication of a need. It is important to understand that, while we as adults would prefer that children be able to use their words rather than show us through physical actions such as tantruming or hitting others, they are still learning language and can’t always tell us what they need.

Because of this, it is the role of the children’s adults, including the full involvement of the family, to work together to figure out what steps to take to fill that need. The



purpose of discipline is to provide boundaries, and logical consequences, that allow for a safe and nurturing environment for all children. Discipline is not associated with food, rest, toileting or outside play time. Our priority as a community is creating an individualized plan for the future so that the needs of all the students are being met and unproductive or unsafe behavior is not habituated. When a child demonstrates unsafe or aggressive behaviors we will enact the following protocol:

- Additional lessons on safe classroom functioning and documentation of behavior.
- The child and/or staff member will call the parents/guardians to discuss the behavior.
- Restorative Justice Intervention if there has been harm done to an individual or the community.
- Unsafe behavior will be addressed and problem solving will include all of the child's adults to construct a plan that supports the child's needs being met as well as ensuring the safety of the community.
- Request a family member come observe their child for a full work cycle (three hours).
- A meeting will be held with the child, a family member, teachers and any others impacted by the behavior.
- An alternative to suspension will be enforced.
- We don't believe that suspension of children 0-6 years of age is an effective teaching tool.

Problem Solving/Restorative Justice Plan

When a student is struggling with any of the above mentioned behaviors they will be treated fairly and with the full involvement of their caregivers. We will work together to create a specific plan that may include professionals from outside the school for the future so that unsafe or inappropriate behavior does not reoccur. We believe in using restorative justice practices in our school as a way of supporting our community.



Section 4

School Policies

Ages of Children Accepted into Program

Echinacea Montessori School is a combined preschool/Kindergarten accepting children ages 2.5 through 6 years old.

Attendance Policy

Echinacea Montessori works with caregivers to maintain consistent attendance for their child in order to ensure each child's ability to be successful in school. Caregivers are asked to inform the school when their child will be absent because of illness, a family emergency, or a pre-arranged absence. Echinacea staff will contact caregivers whose children are absent. We keep track of attendance and absenteeism for all children.

Consistent attendance is important. The children who benefit most from the prepared environment are those who attend regularly. There are several reasons for this:

- A consistent routine provides security for children; a sense of security enables children to feel safe and learn more readily.
- A child's experiences in the classroom are cumulative; consistent attendance bolsters learning. Your commitment to your child's presence in school affirms the importance of school. Intermittent attendance, or periods of long absence, can affect both your child's adaptation to school and their learning.

If the child is absent for three (3) days in a row, and the caregiver has not contacted Echinacea Montessori, staff may request a home visit to discuss your child's enrollment and establish a plan to improve his/her attendance. The child may be placed on the waitlist if there is no contact from the family after five (5) consecutive days.

Dismissal during the school day is discouraged. We ask that caregivers schedule as many appointments as possible outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a caregiver to pick up a child during the school day, please make sure to let a staff



member know and sign the child out. Once a child is signed out it is for the remainder of the day.

When a child comes late to school, the parent/caregiver will call the school or come to the front door to let staff know they are there. A staff member will meet the child and parent/caregiver at the back gate to sign the child in and welcome them into the classroom.

We understand that being late and medical appointments happen, however, we do ask that families keep these interruptions to a minimum. If the arrival time is later than 10:00 we ask families to keep their child home for the day unless you have had a conversation with the staff prior to the day.

You and your child are important members of the Echinacea Montessori community. Please remember Echinacea Montessori staff is here to assist you with any situation that may interfere with regular attendance or your ability to meet your child's needs. It is one of the things that a community does to support its members.

Celebration Policy

In order to ensure celebrations are unbiased and culturally consistent along with being a part of our curriculum, we guide celebrations and end-of-year activities to be developmentally appropriate. Please do not bring outside food for birthdays or other celebrations. Instead, we have a class celebration of the child on their birthday where family may attend (a birthday packet will be given to families a week prior) and donate a used or new book in the child's honor to our library.

Child's Personal Belongings

Children's personal belongings will be kept in our cloak room. We ask that **all** belongings (clothes, backpacks, water bottles) be clearly labeled with the child's name. Their classroom materials will be kept in a separate work area within the classroom.



Child's Safety and Field Trip Policy

Weather permitting we supervise outdoor play and/or walking trips around the neighborhood for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips. These will be announced one month in advance. We encourage you to join your child on the trip. Permission Slips for these trips must be signed by the child's family.

All Echinacea Montessori field trips will be within walking distance, in our own neighborhood. For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The school will not take any field trips that require transporting children by vehicle. That being said, proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the school.

All information about school field trips will be announced in advance. In the event that a child arrives at the school while the class is on a field trip, the child's adult can call one of the teachers to arrange a meeting place that allows the child to join the class. The same procedure applies when a family is picking up a child during a field trip. In either situation we will ask that the child be signed in/out following school procedure.



Classroom Visitor Policy

Visitors are welcome at Echinacea Montessori. Caregivers of students are welcome to observe in the classroom. We require that all visitors sign in and out.

In order to maintain the integrity of the learning environment with the number of expected visitors each week, we require the cooperation of all of our visitors on the following:

- Classroom observations are scheduled between November and April.
- Please schedule your classroom visit in advance with one of the teachers.
- Visitors are to observe quietly so as not to interrupt any student or staff member.
- If visitors have questions or comments concerning their observation, please schedule a meeting with staff.

Chokable/Glass Hazards

In the Montessori school environment and curriculum, small educational materials are deemed chokable/breakable hazards. These materials are accessible to children in the classroom environment. These materials are a necessary and intricate part of the Montessori curriculum, and are generally seen in the Primary program specifically. Echinacea Montessori School has a Choking Hazard & Glass Waiver to be signed at the time of enrollment of your child.

Deposit

A \$250.00 deposit (scholarships available upon application determination of need) is required to complete the enrollment process and secure their child's spot for the coming school year. This deposit will be applied to the last month's tuition that the child attends the school

Enrollment

Before enrollment can occur, families must have completed an online application, received a letter of acceptance, and submitted a \$250.00 deposit (scholarships



available upon application determination of need) to complete the enrollment process and secure their child's spot for the coming school year.

Upon acceptance into our program, families will receive a letter of acceptance and instructions on completing the necessary enrollment forms. These forms can be accessed on each family's Early Ventures Account (information provided in acceptance letter). Paper copies will be provided upon request.

Withdrawal

Families understand that they may withdraw their child from Echinacea Montessori School at any time given written notice. However, as the spot has been held for the child, the family understands and agrees that they will be required to pay the remaining tuition payments for the rest of the school year. We may, in our sole discretion, decide to waive the requirement that the family pay the remaining tuition after withdrawal or to refund such tuition payments, but the family understands and agrees that we are under no obligation to do so, and that all tuition payments are generally nonrefundable. Families also understand and agree that the fact that Echinacea Montessori has decided to refund tuition under particular circumstances in the past does not amount to a guarantee that it will do so under similar circumstances in the future.

Filing a Complaint with Social Services

Your child is enrolled in a childcare program that is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services. The license indicates that the program has met the required standards for the operation of a childcare facility. If you have not done so, you may ask to see the license. Licensed facilities make every effort to provide a healthy and safe environment for children. On rare occasions an incident of physical or sexual abuse may occur. If you believe your child has been abused, you should seek immediate assistance from your county department of social services. The telephone number to report child abuse in this county is 1-844-CO-4-**KIDS** (1-844-264-5437). If you have any other concerns about the childcare facility, please consult the Colorado Department of Child Care at 1-800-799-5876 or <http://coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.force.com/oc/home?lang=en>.



Food & Nutrition Program

Foods Brought from Home

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- We are a no-nuts school and do not accept any foods that may have peanuts or tree nuts in them.
- Foods should be labeled with the child's name, date, and type of food.
- Children will not be allowed to share food provided by the child's family.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Again, Echinacea Montessori is a no-nut school. Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>) and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Late Pick-up Policy

Please be prompt in picking up your child after school. After school childcare is available for a fee of \$400.00 per month. Caregivers are responsible for their child(ren) after school dismisses.



If there is an emergency and you know you will be late, please make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child before closing. Also, call the school to inform the staff.

Parents/guardians will be charged \$1.00 for every late minute after a five minute grace period. For example, between 5:30-5:45 the family will owe \$10.00. Echinacea Montessori will allow one late pick-up before the fee is assessed. The late fee is due at that time to the staff member present. If a family is late picking up their child three times within a semester they will be ineligible for aftercare services.

If, after 30 minutes past the end of aftercare, we've not heard from the family we will call the police and child protective services to assist with additional care for the child.

Meal Time

At meal time the dining table is set with plates and flatware. Children are encouraged to set up their places for lunch and feed themselves. Good table manners are modeled and encouraged. A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals. No child shall go more than 4 hours without a meal or snack being provided. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.

School Policies-Toileting and Diapering

- Most children, except those with special needs, are developmentally ready to be fully toilet-trained by the age of three.
- Not being toilet trained by three is an indication that the child is not developmentally ready for a preschool program.
- Some toileting accidents are expected as a child transitions into preschool.
- Pull-ups and other absorbent paper underwear products impede a child's ability to self-monitor their body functions and become responsible for their own toileting. We recommend cotton-training pants with an outer layer of absorbent underwear or rubber pants.



Echinacea Montessori's Policy of Toileting

- Children are required to be toilet trained before beginning in the primary program except for children with special needs who may require diapers at school.
- A six-week transitional period from the student's start date will be permitted in recognition of the fact that enrollment commitments may need to be made before toilet training has been completed.
- During the six-week transitional period the occurrence of toileting accidents will be communicated to families for each child.
- During the six-week transitional period caregivers will be notified if toilet accidents are a persistent concern. We will work with families to focus on consistent toileting training at school and home.
- When a student has a toileting accident at school they will be guided to change their own clothing. They will be assisted with hygiene and things that they cannot do for themselves in accordance with the Colorado Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers.
- Each child is required to have a complete change of clothing labeled to be kept in school. This supply is to be kept replenished by caregivers.
- Family involvement, as detailed below, will be required for students who are still consistently having toilet accidents (as recorded) after the six-week transition period.
- After the six-week transitional period a toilet training plan will be developed and implemented between the teacher and the child's caregivers which may include:
 - A change in the child's schedule to allow the family more time for toilet training with their child.
 - Caregivers on call to come and change the child when accidents happen.
 - Consistent behavioral modification techniques employed both at home and school to reinforce toileting successes.
 - Alignment between home and school on toileting training expectations, clothing used and consistent follow-through with the child when an accident occurs.
 - Other options as the teacher and family see fit.



School Policies-Tuition

School and Aftercare Rates

Echinacea Montessori School tuition rate:

- Full Time: \$1800.00 per month.
- After Care: \$400.00 per month.
- \$50.00/month: Lunch and snacks fee.
- Materials Fee: \$100 due with the first month of tuition.

Scholarships for the school are available. Applications for school scholarships are available on the school website or by request. We also accept Denver Preschool Program ([DPP](#)), Universal Preschool ([UPK](#)) and Colorado Child Care Assistance Program ([CCCAP](#)) tuition credits.

Tuition is due on the fifth day of each month in which the child is enrolled. It is the responsibility of each family to submit tuition payments on time.

All payments received after the 7th of the month will accrue an additional fee of \$25 per day late past the initial 6 day grace period. Echinacea Montessori reserves the right to deny entry due to delinquent payments.

Screen Time

Screen time (video viewing) is not used at Echinacea Montessori School. Screen time at home is also discouraged in accordance with the recommendations put forth by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Sunscreen Policy

In accordance with Colorado State Licensing requirements, all children enrolled in Echinacea Montessori must have sunscreen applied to all exposed areas including the face, tops of ears, bare shoulders, arms, legs and feet 15-30 minutes before outdoor activities (year round). Sunscreen will not be applied to any broken skin or if a skin reaction has been observed. Any skin reaction observed by staff will be reported to the child's family. Echinacea Montessori will provide a SPF 30+ sunscreen for all children and will assist children in applying it to themselves. If your family



prefers a specific product, they are responsible for providing it directly to the school. Clearly label the product with your child's first and last name and request a "Topical Preparations Permission Form". (Creams, lotions and ointments cannot be applied by Echinacea Montessori staff without a signed permit).

Use of School Facility by Community Groups

Requests to use of the school facility by special groups, classes and meetings can be requested through school staff.



Section 5

Family Involvement

School Activities: Enjoy and help your child's class with these special activities.

- Share a meal with your child
- Chaperone field trips
- Read to children at arrival or pickup
- Donate requested items
- Welcome new families
- Contribute to class potluck meals for an evening Family Community Meeting.
- Laundry and school maintenance/cleaning volunteer opportunities

Family Community Workshops: Our menu of family workshops changes annually. Below is a list of workshops we typically offer. We try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar for scheduled topics. We require that families attend 50% of all workshops in a school year with childcare and snacks provided.

- Montessori Parenting
- Montessori 101
- Toilet Training
- Literacy and Language Development
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Practical Life
- Freedom within Limits
- Parenting and Self Care
- Equity and Bias in the Classroom
- Parenting in the age of screen time
- Montessori Math (Ages 3-6 and Beyond)!



Family Handbook Agreement

As a Echinacea Montessori School Montessori family, I/we have read and understand the principles and policies described above. To the best of our ability, I/we will abide by these expectations through my/our words and actions.

Specifically, I/we agree to (please initial each item below):

1. _____ Allow home visits
2. _____ Attend at least 3 Family Community Meetings
3. _____ Strive to ensure that my/our child attends school every day and arrives on time.
4. Create a home environment that supports my/our child's development through:
 - a. _____ Establishing and maintaining regular routines.
 - b. _____ Providing work/play and sleeping spaces that are orderly.
 - c. _____ Whenever possible, allow my/our child to practice self-care & independence.
 - d. _____ Regularly sharing information about my/our child with Echinacea Montessori School Montessori staff.

Additionally, by my/our signatures below, I/we acknowledge that I/we received and read the Echinacea Montessori School Montessori's Family Handbook in its entirety. I/We acknowledge that our family will follow the practices and policies set forth in the Family Handbook. I/We further understand that the policies and benefits described herein are subject to change at the sole discretion of Echinacea Montessori School Montessori staff. I/We also understand that if such changes do occur; notification will immediately be made in writing.

Name(s) of
Child/Children: _____

Please Print

Caregiver 1: _____ Date: _____

Signature

Please Print Name

Caregiver 2: _____ Date: _____

Signature

Please Print Name





Echinacea Montessori School
[2024/2025] Enrollment Agreement

Name Of Child _____

Guardian 1 _____

Guardian 2 (if applicable) _____

Welcome to Echinacea Montessori School! We are so excited to welcome you into this community. Included in this agreement is the relevant information. We are happy to talk in person about any questions you may have.

For the purposes of this agreement, each of the individuals named above as Guardian 1 and Guardian 2 will be referred to as a “Guardian,” and collectively as the “Guardians.” If only a single Guardian is listed above, the “Guardians” will refer to the single Guardian. The child named above will be referred to as the “Student.”

As a member of the Echinacea Montessori School Community, the Guardians agree to the following (Note: Please initial and select an option in the Tuition and Payment sections where indicated below):

____ (initial here) **Tuition.** The Guardians understand that annual tuition at Echinacea Montessori School (the “School”) is \$1800.00 for children attending full-day and an additional \$400.00 per month for extended day. The Guardians are enrolling the Student in (select an option):

____: Full-Day (8 am-3 pm)

____: Extended Day (8 am- 5:30 pm M-TR, 8 am - 4:00 F)

____ (initial here) **Payment.** Thereafter, the Guardians agree to pay tuition to School as follows (select an option):

___ A single payment in full by [August 19, 2025].

___ Equal monthly payments on the first of each month beginning [August 1, 2024], and concluding with a final payment on [May 1, 2025].

Late payment. The School depends on timely payments in order to operate. Late payments will be charged a fee of [\$25/day] late.

____ (initial here) **Deposit.** The Guardians understand that a \$250.00 at Echinacea Montessori School (the “School”) is required to secure an individual spot for the coming school year. This deposit will be applied to the last month's tuition that the child attends the school.



Timely drop-off and pickup. An important part of Montessori is an uninterrupted three-hour work cycle. Children tend to choose the most challenging work at the end of the cycle, and therefore the full three hours are important for their growth. Further, timely pickup is important, as teachers usually have administrative obligations after school. The Guardians agree to drop off the Student during the drop-off window that is communicated by the School, and pick up the Student during the pick-up window communicated by the School. The School will charge a late pick up fee of [\$1/minute] [after a 5 minute grace period].

Guardian Involvement. Guardian involvement at the School includes guardian conferences, family community meetings. The School depends on this involvement and continuing education for the Guardians, and the meetings represent great effort and devotion by the faculty. The Guardians agree that at least one Guardian will attend guardian conferences, family education evenings.

Withdrawal. The Guardians understand that they may withdraw the Student from the School at any time given written notice. However, as the spot has been held for the Student, the Guardians understand and agree that they will be required to pay the remaining tuition payments for the rest of the school year. The School may, in its sole discretion, decide to waive the requirement that the Guardians pay remaining tuition after withdrawal or to refund such tuition payments, but the Guardians understand and agree that the School is under no obligation to do so and that all tuition payments are generally nonrefundable. The Guardians also understand and agree that the fact that the School has decided to refund tuition under particular circumstances in the past does not amount to a guarantee that it will do so under similar circumstances in the future.

Newsletters & Family Community Meetings. The Guardians agree to read newsletters and other communication from The School. They agree to attend at least 3 out of the 7 meetings.

Walks. Teachers will regularly take children on walks and to the park. The Guardians grant permission for the Student to participate in all walks.

Forms. There are a number of forms required by the state that the School will distribute prior to the start of school. The Guardians agree to complete these forms before the first day of school, and understand that the Student may not attend school until these forms have been completed and returned to the School.

Termination. This agreement may be terminated by the School without cause upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the Guardians. In the event of a termination without cause, the Guardians will be entitled to a pro-rata return of tuition paid for that portion of the school year remaining after termination. This agreement may be terminated by the School immediately for good cause. Good cause includes: (a) the Student is destructive, violent, or abusive to students or staff or otherwise unreasonably disruptive in the judgment of the School, (b) a Guardian's behavior is unreasonably disruptive in the judgment of the School, (c) any payment due to the School is more than thirty (30) days delinquent, (d) the Guardians consistently fail to engage in guardian events or violate the clauses in this agreement. Our intention as a school is to support the children's developmental growth in a peaceful, loving, and nurturing environment. The heads of the School will do all in their power, working with the families and children, to help each child reach their highest potential and succeed. In the event of a termination for cause, the Guardians will not be entitled to a tuition refund, and will remain responsible for the full amount of tuition for the full school year.

Damage. Students and guardians are expected to treat all school property, including all facilities, with respect. The Guardians agree to pay for the accidental or willful destruction of any property located at the School, whether owned by the School or any other person, at the replacement cost, if, in the School's discretion, such destruction was caused by the Student or a Guardian ("Damages"). The Guardians further agree to indemnify, defend, and hold the School harmless from and against any and all liability arising out of Damages, or out of any action that would allow the School to terminate this agreement for good cause. The Guardians' obligations under this paragraph will survive the expiration or termination of this agreement.



Force Majeure. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this agreement, neither party shall be liable for delay or non-performance caused by any circumstance beyond its control, including, but not limited to, acts of God, failures of utilities or public services, civil unrest, a public health emergency of international concern, natural disasters, cyber-attacks, wars, acts of terrorism, or requirements of any governmental authority.

Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability. Understanding that COVID-19 has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization, the Guardians acknowledge that COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. The Guardians understand and acknowledge that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) states that the best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed to the coronavirus. The Guardians acknowledge that the CDC states that recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people.

The Guardians understand and acknowledge that there are unique risks associated with attendance at the School. The School has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the School cannot guarantee that any Student or Guardian will not become infected with COVID-19. The Guardians understand that risks associated with the Student attending the School during the COVID-19 pandemic include, but are not limited to, contracting COVID-19, exposure to individuals who have contracted COVID-19, and being prohibited from the School following potential exposure to COVID-19. The Guardians understand that the CDC states that contracting COVID-19 may lead to severe illness or death. The Guardians acknowledge that the Guardians are voluntarily enrolling the Student at the School for the personal benefit of the Guardians and the Student and the value of such benefit is sufficient consideration for the Guardians’ voluntary execution of this agreement. The Guardians voluntarily assume any and all risks, whether known or unknown, related to the Student’s attendance at the School. The Guardians understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at the School may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Student and others, including, but not limited to: School employees, agents, representatives, students, and any others present on the premises of the School.

The Guardians further acknowledge and voluntarily agree to assume all the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to the Student or the Guardians (including, but not limited to, personal injury, disability, and death), illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that the Student or Guardians may experience or incur in connection with attending the School (“Claims”). The Guardians hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless the School, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. The Guardians understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the School, its employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after the Student attends the School.

School’s Right to Modify Services. The School reserves the right to alter or modify services provided by the School, including but not limited to, ending the school year early, extending the school year, suspending the school year for any length of time, holding school remotely online for any length of time, providing another alternate learning method remotely for any length of time, canceling extra-curriculars, and any other measures deemed necessary in the School’s sole discretion, because of or related to the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disaster, acts of terrorism or war, or any other similar event that is beyond the School’s reasonable control.

Tuition Changes. In the event that the School alters or modifies services as discussed above in the School’s Right to Modify Services provision, the School may, in its sole discretion, make changes to the annual tuition.

Safety Precautions. The School reserves the right to adopt safety measures as it deems appropriate in the School’s sole discretion, including, but not limited to, requiring Students with symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home,, requiring Students promptly leave the School if COVID-19 symptoms persist while at school, health screenings upon arrival, staggered arrival and dismissal times, limitations on visitors, and limitations on bringing items from



home. The Guardians agree that the Student and Guardians will follow any such measures and requirements that are adopted by the School.

Merger. This agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Guardians and the School regarding the subject matter covered in this agreement, and supersedes all proposals, written or oral, and all other communications between the parties relating to the subject matter of this agreement.

Waiver and Modification. This agreement may only be modified by writing, signed by both the Guardians and the School. Any waiver of compliance with the terms of this agreement must be in writing, and a waiver in one instance will not be deemed a waiver in any future instance.

Successors and Assigns. This agreement will be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the Guardians and the School and their respective successors and assigns. The Guardians understand and agree that they may not assign their rights or obligations under this agreement without the prior written consent of the School.

Counterparts. This agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each one of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument. Electronic, digitally reproduced, and facsimile signatures will be effective as originals.

Severability. The invalidity, illegality or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement will in no way affect the validity, legality or enforceability of any other provision.

Governing Law. This agreement will be construed and enforced under the laws of the State of Colorado as now in effect and as amended in the future, without regard to conflict of laws principles. The Guardians agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the State of Colorado in any dispute arising under it.

Contractual Agreement. The Guardians understand and agree that their signature on this form constitutes consent to a contractual agreement with the School consisting of the terms contained in this form (the “Agreement”), that the receipt of this signed form and processing of deposit payment from the Guardians by the School shall be deemed acceptance of the Agreement by the School, and that the effective date of the Agreement shall be the earlier of the earliest date listed next to the Guardian signatures below or processing of the deposit payment by the School (the “Effective Date”). The term of the Agreement shall continue from the Effective Date until the end of the [2024/2025] school year at the School, June 3, 2025, unless terminated earlier according to the terms contained in this form.

Legal Guardian Signatures:

Guardian _____ Date _____

Guardian 2 (if applicable) _____ Date _____

Please complete and return this form to:

Echinacea Montessori School

300 Elati Street

Denver, CO 80223

Checks should be made payable to Echinacea Montessori School.



For school use only

Date deposit received:

Deposit received by:

Notes:

Echinacea Montessori School is a nonprofit organization and does not discriminate by race, color, national or ethnic origin, creed, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or status with regard to public assistance. Furthermore, Echinacea Montessori School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administred programs.

