



PARENT HANDBOOK

This parent handbook outlines many of our policies and procedures that relate to the care of your child, as well as the information I am required to give to you when you enroll your child in our program. This handbook will also acquaint you with some of the key EEC standards designed to ensure a safe, healthy and educational child care experience.

We encourage you to maintain an open dialogue with us, as communication between parents and educators is the foundation for a solid working relationship, and a good child care experience. Before filling out your enrollment form, please read through the information contained in this parent handbook.

Our Mission

Sharon Montessori strives to provide an enriching environment that supports the development of the whole child to achieve high standards of academic success through the joy of learning.

Program Overview

Sharon Montessori is an educational program for children ages 2.9 through 6. Our program fosters the child's joy in discovery and learning, growth in independence and problem solving, the development of order, concentration and coordination, and nurturing of oral communication skills.

Sharon Montessori is committed to providing children with an environment that promotes cultural, social, and individual diversity while developing awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of differences.

Contact Information

Address: 283 North Main Street, Sharon, MA 02067

Phone: 781-784-7242

Email: irina@sharonmontessori.com

Website: www.sharonmontessori.com

Enrollment Information

Enrollment Process

1. Parents visit the program.
2. Submit application form.
Applications must be accompanied by a \$75 non-refundable application fee.
3. Child visits the program.
4. Child's placement offered (contract).
5. Return enrollment contract with deposit to secure space.

Required forms for Enrollment

One month from the day your child is scheduled to begin the program you must submit:

- Completed and signed Enrollment Contract.
- Completed and signed Enrollment Forms.
- Medical information:
 - A statement from a physician or health care professional that says that your child received a physical exam within the past year;
 - Evidence that your child has been immunized as recommended by the Department of Public Health;
 - A statement from a physician or health care professional which says that your child has been screened for lead poisoning.

Please note: Your child's immunization record must be updated and submitted in accordance with the Department of Public Health's immunization schedule. Also, your child's lead screening report must be updated as required by Department of Public Health Regulations. This report must also be provided to Sharon Montessori.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Sharon Montessori welcomes families of all races, creeds, religions, national origins, cultural heritage, genders, marital statuses, political beliefs, disabilities, sexual orientations, or family styles.

Toileting Independence

Children should be toilet trained before starting at Sharon Montessori.

Sixty-day Trial Period

All children enrolling at any level for the first time are considered provisional for the first 60 days. If, during that time, the program is seen as incompatible by Sharon Montessori with the child's needs, the child may be un-enrolled. Prior to un-enrollment, two meetings with the parents will take place, first at the end of the first 30 days and the second after the second 30 days. Should the child be un-enrolled from the program, the family will be excused from any further financial obligation beyond a proration of the tuition for services already provided by Sharon Montessori.

Voluntary withdrawal procedures

Children may be withdrawn through a formal written request with a 60-day notice. Sharon Montessori may refund or cancel 50% of tuition paid or due, except the non-refundable deposit. Monthly tuition is not pro-rated if the child is withdrawn before the end of a month.

The following requirements must be met prior to admission:

- all forms and contracts relating to admission must be completed and signed in full before the student begins class
- a deposit must be remitted to secure the child's placement

Department of Early Education & Care (EEC) License Information

EEC is the agency that oversees early education and care and after school services for families in Massachusetts. As the agency that licenses child care facilities, EEC has quality standards for all licensed

programs to ensure high educational value, as well as health and safety. Having a license means that we have demonstrated that we meet the standards outlined in the EEC regulations.

To obtain your own copy of EEC Family Child Care Regulations, you may download them from the EEC web site at: http://www.mass.gov/Eeoe/docs/EEC/regs_policies/20090122_606_cmr.pdf

For information about our regulatory compliance history, you may contact our local EEC regional office, whose contact information is as follows:

1250 Hancock Street, Suite 120-S
Quincy, MA 02169
Phone: (617) 472-2881
Fax: (617) 472-2722

Enrollment/Capacity

My current licensed capacity is 10, which is posted on my license. At any one time, we can only care for the number of children that we have been licensed for, which may include my own children, depending on their ages.

Use of Assistants

When required, I will have an assistant to help care for the children, provided he/she is approved by EEC. I may also use interns and volunteers, and although they will not be directly responsible for the care of children in the program, they will be on the premises and assisting me.

Plan for Meeting Potential Emergencies

EEC regulations require that we have a plan for meeting potential emergencies that may occur either during child care hours or at nap time if they may affect the operation of the program.

In the event of an emergency, I will contact the local authorities to determine whether or not to evacuate the program, or to remain sheltered at the program.

The escape routes from the child care space are as follows:

Escape Route One: Front Door

Exit through the front door and proceed towards the back of the house via the driveway. Go to the playground and gather at the far-left corner.

Escape Route Two: Back Door

Exit through the back door. Go to the playground and gather at the far-left corner.

In the event that a child goes missing from the program, we will gather all the children, notify the police department, the parents of the missing child and EEC via cell phone or land phone.

Should the program need to be evacuated in the case of a fire, natural disaster, loss of power, loss of heat or hot water, or any other emergency situation, all parents will be contacted to arrange pick-up of their children. If necessary, we will meet parents in the empty lot adjacent to the facility.

If the program needs to be evacuated, I will notify all parents, as well as the appropriate authorities (fire, police, etc.) and EEC on the cell phone or land phone.

I will ensure that no child has been left at the program after an evacuation by conducting a head count and comparing it to the daily attendance sheet.

Children's Records

EEC regulations require us to maintain an individual written record for every child we have in our care. These records include the information that parents complete at enrollment, as well as progress reports, incident reports and other documentation regarding your child's care. Records are updated at least annually, but may be updated as frequently as is needed.

Progress reports will be completed twice a year for all children in our program. Your child's progress report will be shared with you and you will have an opportunity to meet and discuss your child's progress.

As a parent, you have access to the records that we maintain for your child, and you have the right to add information or to request that information in your child's record be changed or deleted. You also have a right to receive a copy of your child's record; however we may charge a reasonable fee for that copy.

EEC regulations require that we make children's records available to EEC at any time that EEC may request these records, such as during a licensing/monitoring visit, a complaint investigation, or a financial review of our program. Failure on our part to provide these records to EEC could result in EEC citing us for regulatory non-compliance or taking legal action against my license. When EEC staff members review children's records in order to ensure that we are in compliance with EEC regulations, at times they may copy and keep the information found in these records in order to review my compliance with all EEC regulations and policies applicable to our program. This information will be kept in my EEC Licensing file or in EEC's financial monitoring file if the information involves issues related to subsidized care. EEC is required by law to keep confidential any personally identifiable information found in children's records collected and maintained by EEC staff members. EEC has a Privacy Policy which discusses how EEC keeps such information confidential. That policy can be found by going to the EEC website at http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/20101124_eec_privacy_policy.pdf.

Please let me know about any questions you have regarding your child's record.

Maintaining a Safe Environment

EEC has a number of licensing standards related to safety in a Family Child Care Home. Most of these standards outline common safety precautions such as making dangerous materials inaccessible to children, covering outlets, having a first aid kit, practicing evacuation drills, gating stairs, windows, or heating elements, posting emergency numbers, and maintaining a clean, hazard-free indoor space. Also, the outdoor space must be safe and hazard free and there should be no access to a busy street, water, construction materials, rusty or broken play materials, debris, glass, or peeling paint.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

All Family Child Care Educators are required by EEC to provide parents with information regarding the risks of Lead Poisoning. The following are some facts that all parents should know about lead and lead poisoning:

- Lead poisoning is caused by swallowing or breathing lead. Lead is poison when it gets into the body.
- Lead can stay in the body for a long time. Young children absorb lead more easily than adults. The harm done by lead may never go away. Lead in the body can:
 - Hurt the brain, kidneys, and nervous system
 - Slow down growth and development
 - Make it hard to learn
 - Damage hearing and speech
 - Cause behavior problems
- Most of the lead poisoning in Massachusetts comes from lead paint dust in older homes. Many homes built before 1978 have lead paint on the inside and outside of the building.
- When old paint peels and cracks, it creates lead paint chips and lead dust. Lead dust also comes from opening and closing old windows.
- Lead dust lands on the floor. Lead gets into children’s bodies when they put their hands and toys in their mouths. Children can also breathe in lead dust. Children between the ages of 9 months and 6 years are most at risk.
- Important: Home repairs and renovations also create lead dust.
- Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick. A lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning. Ask your doctor to test your child for lead if you have concerns about some of the following signs of lead poisoning:
 - Upset stomach
 - Trouble eating or sleeping
 - Headache
 - Trouble paying attention

As mentioned earlier, if your child is over nine (9) months of age, you will need to provide documentation to us that your child has been screened for lead poisoning. Most children will be screened annually until either age three (3) or four (4), depending on where the child lives. I am required to disclose to you if I am aware of any known sources of lead in my home.

For more information on lead poisoning, you can visit <http://www.mass.gov/dph/clppp> or call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (800) 532-9571.

Health Policies and Procedures

Sick Policy

There will be times when you will need to keep your child(ren) out of the program due to illness. Children must remain at home until they have gone 24 hours without symptoms if any of the following conditions are present:

1. Fever (temperature at or above 100 degrees). Children must be fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to the program.
2. Discharge from nose, eyes, or ears
3. Diarrhea
4. Vomiting
5. Undiagnosed rash
6. Sore throat
7. Persistent cough
8. Head lice and/or any untreated nits

9. Contagious disease (such as conjunctivitis, chicken pox, fifth's disease, strep throat etc.)

Please let us know if your child is absent due to illness and notify us immediately if your child has a contagious disease so that we can alert other parents as to risks of exposure.

If a child becomes ill while at Sharon Montessori, we will isolate the child in a comfortable and visible area and notify parents immediately. The child must be picked up as soon as possible.

Medication Administration

EEC has regulations requiring Educators to have a policy regarding the administration of medication to children in care. As a licensed Family Child Care Educator, I am also required to take medication administration training. The following guidelines are common to all programs that are licensed by EEC:

Prescription Medication

- Prescription medication must be brought to the program in its original container and include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the number of times per day and the number of days the medication is to be administered. The prescription label will be accepted as the written authorization of the physician.
- The program will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the label unless so authorized by written order of the child's physician.
- The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication Form before the medication can be administered.

Non-prescription Medication

- The program needs written parental authorization to administer oral non-prescription medication. The parent must fill out the Authorization for Medication form, which allows the Educator to administer the non-prescription medication. The statement must be renewed on a weekly basis.
- In the case of unanticipated non-prescription medication that is used to treat mild symptoms (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen), the program must still have written parental authorization, however it must be reviewed annually.
- The Educator will make every attempt to contact the parent prior to the child receiving the non-prescription medication unless the child needs medication urgently or when contacting the parent will delay appropriate care unreasonably.

Topical Ointments and Sprays

- Topical ointments and sprays such as petroleum jelly, sunscreen, diaper rash ointment and insect repellent will be administered to the child with written parental permission. The signed statement from the parent will be valid for one year and include a list of topical non-prescription medication.
- When topical ointments and sprays are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin, the Educator will follow the written procedure for non-prescription medication which includes the written order of the physician, which is valid for a year, and the Authorization for Medication form signed by the parent.

All Medications

- The first dose must be administered by the parent at home in case of an allergic reaction.
- All medications must be given to the Educator directly by the parent.

- All medications will be stored out of the reach of children. All medications that are considered controlled substances must be locked and kept out of reach of children.
- The Educator will be responsible for the administration of medication.
- The program will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication (excluding topical ointments and sprays applied to unbroken skin) which will include the child's name, the time and date of each administration, the dose, and the name of the person administering the medication. This completed record will become part of the child's file.
- All unused medication will be returned to the parent if possible, or disposed of in accordance with Department of Public Health guidelines.

Oral Health

Proper oral health begins at home. We will be reinforcing good oral health practices with your child each day. If your child is in care for more than 4 hours per day, or he/she will be receiving at least one meal while in care, we are required to assist your child with tooth brushing at the program. Please, provide us with a toothbrush and travel size toothpaste for your child, which we will store in a safe and sanitary manner at the program.

Parent Notifications

I am required by EEC regulations to notify you of certain information about my family child care home. These notifications include, but are not limited to:

- an injury to your child;
- allegations of abuse or neglect regarding your child;
- if another educator will be caring for your child;
- the administering of first aid to your child;
- whenever a communicable disease has been identified in the program;
- children being taken off the child care premises;
- the existence of firearms in my home;
- if there are any changes in my household composition,
- prior to any pets being introduced into the program;
- whenever special problems or significant developments arise

Mandated Reporting

As a licensed Educator in Massachusetts, I must operate my program in a way that protects children from abuse and neglect. As such, I am a mandated reporter (under M.G.L. c.119 s51A) and must make a report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) whenever I have reasonable cause to believe a child in the program is suffering from a serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon the child, or from neglect, no matter where the abuse or neglect may have occurred or by whom it was inflicted.

Curriculum

The learning environment at Sharon Montessori is based on the Montessori Method - an approach to learning that engages the five senses, kinetic movement, spatial refinement, and small and large motor skill coordination. We use this method as a basis for studying language, science, mathematics, music, art, and other subjects.

Practical Life

Practical life is the most basic and essential area of Montessori development. There are four goals of the practical life curriculum that make it a foundation of the child's day to day life: concentration, coordination, independence, and order.

Children of all ages find something challenging and satisfying in practical life materials. The success of our program depends upon this foundation. Through practical life, the child develops a work process that is freely chosen, undertaken with self-discipline, using physical skills in an intelligent way. Some examples of practical life materials include flower arranging, table washing, wood polishing, apple slicing, and button sewing.

Sensorial

Young children explore the world through their senses. The Montessori Sensorial curriculum allows for the development and refinement of all five senses.

Sensorial exercises are done with an extensive set of materials, each of which isolates one sense and expands upon it: color, shape, weight or pitch are matched, graded and named.

Language and Math

Cognitive work in language and math develops from concrete sensorial materials that the child uses, forming the foundation for the use of symbols. The child will first be introduced to each sound and number verbally before using the written symbol that represents it. In this way the child moves from concrete ways of understanding to the more abstract concepts that follow.

Arithmetic, geography, reading and writing, grammar, music, art, science, and geometry are developed in gradual stages from the concrete sensorial to the abstract conceptual through sequential materials and exercises and repetition of these exercises. Each child works from his/her own choice at his/her own pace, successfully completing self-correcting materials, while the guide, through observation, works to give lessons that seamlessly provide the next step of growth.

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies include sciences, zoology, botany, physical and political geography, biomes of the Earth and the study of world cultures.

Child guidance

The development of inner discipline in a child is always the goal at Sharon Montessori. Self-discipline is fostered in many ways. The classroom environment is organized in an orderly and logical manner. Children choose work that has been presented to them and are free to do it as long as they wish without interference. This approach alleviates many problems of discipline that might arise in another kind of environment. In addition, the mixed-age group gives younger children an opportunity to emulate the more mature behavior of older children.

Children are encouraged to handle their disagreements by talking to each other first and by attempting to resolve conflicts independently before seeking help from an adult. Skills needed for conflict resolution and problem solving are learned as an important part of the Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons presented and practiced in the classroom.

Misbehaviors at Sharon Montessori are handled with the following positive responses:

- The child will express and define his/her feelings. The teacher will engage in active listening, which is modeled by the teacher to the child.
- The teacher sets the tone for bringing the child into harmony by avoiding harsh words and sudden reprimands. A child who has misbehaved may be requested to work for a period of time near the teacher.
- The child will be gently redirected by the teacher toward work which will engage the child's interest.
- The child will be assigned to a temporary seat.
- The child repairs minor damage to the environment.

Parents will be notified of serious discipline problems immediately. Minor problems can be solved through communication and consistency between school and home. This communication serves as a valuable tool to enable both teachers and parents to have similar expectations in the guidance and discipline for their child. No use of physical punishment is ever used. The consequence for inappropriate behavior is to separate the child from the person, area, or situation in question and allow the child to regain control.

All young children have off-days, but if a child is unable to adjust to care, is consistently insubordinate, or has a serious behavioral problem that disrupts the harmony of the classroom, Sharon Montessori reserves the right to suspend or terminate the child's enrollment.

Observations

We encourage you to observe our program. Seeing the children in class is to experience the Montessori philosophy in action. To make your observation more meaningful, take a look around the room, and notice the amount and diversity of activity, the range of ages, the types of materials, and the interactions among the children. Take some time to watch the teacher and notice the composure, observation, and respect the teacher shows each child. Watch your child and notice the succession of activities, the concentration on work, the enthusiasm and self-satisfaction from each activity, and the child's respect for other children, the materials, and the teacher. Please be aware that your child may or may not have a "normal" day while you are there.

During the observation, please sit quietly in the observation chairs indicated. Try not to make your presence felt, please do not initiate conversation or get things from the shelves. We are hoping through these observations to create a way for parents to get as objective a view as possible of how a day goes at Sharon Montessori.

Communication and Staying Involved

It is important to keep an open dialogue with me as your child's educator, and to maintain an active role in your child's care. Feel free to visit, not just at pick up and drop off time, but at a variety of times during your child's day — it's your right as a parent. Please also make sure to follow-up with me if you have any questions about the program or your child's care.

I look forward to working with your family and providing a great experience for your child(ren)!