

A New Parent's Guide



100 Grove Avenue, East Providence, RI 02914

401.434.6913

oceanstatemontessori.org

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Purpose of this booklet

This booklet is intended to be a reference guide regarding contact information, clothing, snack and helpful suggestions to welcome you as a new member of the Ocean State Montessori School family. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for detailed explanations and further information about OSMS, its policies, schedules and procedures.

How to contact us

If you need to speak with any of us during the day, please feel free to call the office at 401.434.6913. Primary Lead Teachers are unavailable to return phone calls until 1:30 (12:30 pm for the Wee Threes) but you are welcome to leave a message on the school's answering machine or with the Director. If you need to contact the Children's Room, you may call 401.434.6442 to speak with an afternoon staff member. You may also leave a written note in a Teacher's pocket located outside each classroom. Please avoid using Drop-Off as a time to conference with a teacher. Teachers use this time to greet your child and to prepare them for the day.

You may also contact the Director or your child's teacher via email. Unfortunately, teachers cannot check email until well after the school day has ended. Any message that requires a quick response—a change in a student's pick up time for instance—must be conveyed by speaking directly to someone in the office. Any changes in address or contact information should be conveyed immediately to the school's Director, who will pass the information on to all appropriate staff.



Feel free to email us during the summer if you have any questions.

Staff email addresses

Erica Douglass, Director: erica@oceanstatemontessori.org

Amy Andrews, Curriculum Coordinator for the Wee Three and Primary Programs, Primary Lead Teacher: amy@oceanstatemontessori.org

Amy Healey, Wee Threes Lead Teacher: healey@oceanstatemontessori.org

Betsy Facincani, Primary Lead Teacher: betsy@oceanstatemontessori.org

Leah Galligan, Primary Lead Teacher: leah@oceanstatemontessori.org

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled in October and March with a written progress report given to the parents at the March conference. If you need to meet with your child's teacher during the school year for any reason, please contact her directly.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Teachers will respond to an email with a request for a one-on-one conference if they feel that email is not the best way to address the issue.

School-Home Communication

Each family has a mail pocket located outside their child's classroom. Snack lists, family or special events notices, notes from teachers, monthly newsletters and other important correspondence is placed in these pockets for you. Please check your pocket daily as some of the messages may be time sensitive.

Children often come home from school and report that they "did nothing" today. This is normal! Many things happen during the course of your child's day and it is difficult for them to recall the details. A child who stays for our afternoon program often cannot remember what they did during the morning. Ask your child specific questions like "Did you sing a song today?", "What book did you read?", "Did you play outside?", and "What did you eat for snack?" As your child gets older and more familiar with his or her new routine, you'll begin to hear stories about Flower Arranging, the Binomial Cube, Red Rods and Sandpaper Letters.

The monthly newsletter contains valuable information about upcoming events, ongoing projects, units of study and exciting classroom news. This is a great way to discuss what is happening at school with your child.

Practical Life and Everyday Living Skills

The practical life element is the cornerstone of a Montessori first-year student's curriculum. When your child is allowed to care for him or herself in age appropriate ways s/he will gain independence and confidence, which are two important components of the Practical Life area in a Montessori classroom. When children are given the freedom to care for themselves, to become independent and confident, we are enabling them to become successful lifelong learners.

Teaching a child to dress him or herself is a valuable lesson that allows the child to succeed in more complex, academic situations later in life. Learning to put on underwear before pants, and socks before shoes is a lesson in sequencing, order, and logic - all valuable and much needed tools for reading and writing. The *process* of learning how to dress is more important than the final product. It does not matter if the clothes are on backwards, shoes are on the wrong feet or socks do not match. When your child is able to dress him/herself without help, it does not matter if the clothes look good together – celebrate the “I did it myself!!!” moment.

Helpful suggestions:

- ✓ Choose clothing the night before to avoid power struggles in the morning.
- ✓ Allow ample time in the morning for your child to get dressed.
- ✓ Allow children to pick their own clothes by limiting their choices (Would you like to wear the blue pants or green skirt?).

What your child should wear to school

Please send your child to school in clothing that allows for independence and participation in outdoor play. Suggestions

LABEL, LABEL, LABEL!!!

To avoid any tears and confusion, please label all children's belongings (jackets, backpacks, lunchboxes, shoes, slippers, clothes, hats, mittens, etc.)

include pants/skirts with elastic waistbands, and shoes and boots that are easily put on by the child. Please avoid t-shirts with action figures or super heroes (Star Wars, Ninjas, Spiderman, etc) as they often promote discussion about their fighting powers (along with re-enactments of their

kicking and chopping moves!). Overall clasps and belt buckles can be tricky for little fingers (if you have to help your child at home, don't send it to school).

Well-fitting shoes should be worn at all times so children can run and play freely and safely on the playground. Please avoid "party" shoes that have smooth, slippery soles. **Clogs, Crocs and other slide-on type shoes are not acceptable, nor are platforms.** These types of shoes have proven to be dangerous while playing on the playground, climbing structure and in the Multipurpose Room for indoor recess.

The children have outdoor recess throughout the school year even during the winter months. Please make sure your child has a warm winter coat, snow pants, a hat, mittens (gloves can be frustrating for little fingers) and snow boots. These can be left at school to avoid the hassle of bringing snow gear to school every day.

We encourage you to send a complete set of extra clothes (pants, long and short sleeved shirt, underwear and socks) for your child to be kept at school. Occasionally children have toileting

accidents, spill something on their clothes or get cold/warm during the day. If your child attends the Children’s Room, a second set of clothes should be kept there as well.

It’s my snack day. HELP!!



Parents are required to provide snack on their designated day (or week if a Wee Three parent) -a monthly schedule is distributed in mail pockets and posted outside of each classroom, along with a gallon of milk or juice. There should be sufficient snack for 20 children. Typically snack is set out as though it is just another “work” in the classroom. Children serve themselves when hungry.

NO-NO’S: The following are not allowed:

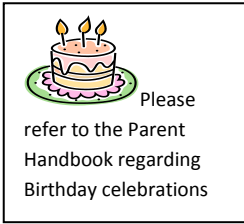
- *Go-Gurt or other squeezable food (choking hazard)
- *Grapes, cherry tomatoes (choking hazard)
- *Peanuts or any other type of nut. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for our “**No Nut**” policy.

Cheese Day: cheese and crackers (cut cheese into squares or cubes), cheese sticks, yogurt, pudding. If you send in cheese and crackers please do not put the cheese on the crackers—the crackers get soggy and then the children don’t want to eat them.

Fruit Day: fresh fruit including watermelon, cantaloupe, honey dew, strawberries, oranges, clementines, bananas and apples, or assorted fruit cup, applesauce, or raisins. If sending in bananas or apples please do not cut them ahead of time—they will brown and the children won’t eat them.

Vegetable Day: carrot sticks, celery sticks with cream cheese (on the side), pickles, sliced cucumbers, broccoli. Many children enjoy

vegetable more if they have “dip” (salad dressing). If you send in dressing we will portion it into individual servings to avoid “double dipping”. Zucchini bread or carrot muffins are also ok.



Grain Day: pretzels, bagels with cream cheese, goldfish, crackers, bakery pizza strips, cinnamon bread with cream

cheese or margarine, snack mixes, mini muffins.

Free Choice Day: any of the above or your child’s favorite food. Be creative!

Classroom Schedules

Children may be dropped off at their classroom beginning at 8:15 am, or via Drive-Thru Drop-Off (see Parent Handbook for more information). Please do not leave children unattended in the hallway. It is important for the teacher to acknowledge your child’s arrival so that all children are accounted for at all times. All students are expected to enter their classroom on their own.

Goodbyes, hugs and kisses should take place outside the classroom door. Students are responsible for hanging up their own belongings on their hooks in the classroom. Each class begins their day at **8:30 am** with a Good Morning circle to establish a sense of community. In order for your children to successfully transition into the classroom each morning, please plan to arrive on time to school. Tardiness is extremely difficult for children at this age. A daily schedule for each classroom will be distributed to parents at the Parent Orientation in September.

WEE THREES
Age 3: preschool 8:30-12:00
PRIMARY
Ages 3-4: 8:30-12:00
Kindergarten: 8:30-1:30
CHILDREN’S ROOM
Ages 3-4: 12:00-5:30
PRIME TIME
Kindergarten and Elem
1:30-5:30

Pick-up begins at 11:45 am for children who do not use the Children's Room or stay for Kindergarten. If you are running late or have a change in your pick-up schedule, please contact the office so your child's teacher can be notified.

Please check the School calendar, Special Events schedule and website for additional information regarding holidays, closings or other important events during the school year.

Children's Room

Students attending the Children's Room are picked up from their classroom at 12:00 pm by an afterschool staff member. They walk as a group to the Children's Room where they use the bathroom, wash their hands, get their lunch box and then eat lunch.

After lunch, the children are brought to the bathroom again as a group (they have the option of going separately if the need arises) and then head into the nap room for rest time.

Helpful Suggestions:

- ✓ *Have your child practice using a lunch box over the summer*
- ✓ *See which type of lunch box and containers (no glass, please) your child can easily open and close on their own*
- ✓ *Pack several small food choices for your child to choose from*
- ✓ *Dinner leftovers may be reheated in our microwave*
- ✓ *Please avoid sending in juice boxes or a thermos. Milk and water will be available for your child.*
- ✓ *At a loss for lunch ideas? Try www.lunchtaker.com*

Rest Gear: Please send a small pillow, blanket and stuffed animal in a tote bag for your child to keep at school for the week. It will be sent home every Friday to be laundered.

All children attending the Children's Room are required to rest whether or not they fall asleep.

What to Do on the First Day of School

It's here, the first day – what should you do? Stay calm. Your child will sense your stress level and feed off of your nerves. Treat today as any other day – wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed and head off to school.

Sounds easy, right? Avoid morning hassles by getting prepared the night before.

Review the Phase-In schedule (included in your Parent Orientation folder) to see which session your child is scheduled to attend.

Night time Check list:

- Pack lunches
- Pick out clothes
- Keep nap gear, backpacks, shoes and jackets near door so they can be found when you are ready to leave

Once you get to school, please park in the Grove Avenue parking lot, on the street or in the church lot across from the school. Please do NOT park in the John Street lot (near the Children's Room). This lot is reserved for Staff between 7:30 am-3 pm. The children walk through this lot on their way back from the playground. Parents who pick their children up at 11:45 am need to use the front door to enter the building after parking in the Grove Avenue lot. You may use the John Street entrance after 3pm.

What to bring:

- >Extra change of clothes
- >Backpack or tote bag
- >Outside coat
- >lunch box if staying for Children's Room
- >nap gear if staying for Children's Room

What not to bring:

- >toys
- >pacifiers
- >Sippy cups
- >items from home – may get lost or broken and cause unneeded stress for the child

What to work on this summer

Please refer to the Betsy Flagler article included in your Parent Orientation folder. This article offers several fun suggestions that promote fine and gross motor skills, build self confidence and independence and offer both you and your child a summer filled with enjoyable activities.

SUMMER SUGGESTIONS:

- ✓ *HAVE FUN!!!!*
- ✓ *Pack your child's lunch in his/her new lunch box and play school – let them discover what you've packed inside*
- ✓ *Let your child walk from the car to the store instead of carrying them – this will increase their gross motor skills and coordination*
- ✓ *Teach your child to toilet independently – how to wipe after urinating and having a bowel movement and how to change their clothes if they do have an accident*
- ✓ *Encourage your child to carry his/her own beach toys, towel or bag daily. This gives him/her the opportunity to be responsible for his/her possessions. Great practice when toting all of their gear during the winter months.*
- ✓ *Develop a consistent bedtime routine now. School is very exciting and VERY tiring for preschoolers. Having a consistent routine in place now can alleviate issues in the fall.*
- ✓ *Show your child what his/her name looks like in print (handwritten and in text) using a capital letter for the first letter of their name and lowercase letters for the rest (i.e. James rather than JAMES). Being able to recognize your name on your coat hook on the first day of school is empowering for the child!*
- ✓ *HAVE FUN!!! Remember it's the process not the product that counts!*



The Ocean State Montessori School fosters independence, self esteem and a love of learning by providing an academically excellent and nurturing Montessori environment.