



Horme Montessori Microschool
Parent Handbook
(Updated 4/4/26)

717 Los Lovatos Rd
Santa Fe, NM 87501

www.hormemontessori.org
julia@hormemontessori.org
Phone Number: (505) 395-6390

WELCOME

Dear Family,

I am so pleased to have you and your child join the Horne Montessori Microschool.

I first discovered the Montessori method of education back in 2009 by chance. I was looking for a part time job while I waited for the new semester of the Secondary Art Education program to begin. After just my first week of working in a local Montessori school, I was hooked and my life changed.

Over the years, I have seen time and time again the positive impact Montessori has had on both children and their families. I am so excited to share this now with your family as you join the Horne Montessori Microschool.

Horne Montessori school began with the intentions of working with young children in an intimate home setting. Maria Montessori noted at the very beginning of her observations of working with young children the importance of connecting with each child and creating a home-like setting. It is my goal to get back to the roots of the Montessori method and having the school set in a home is key to that mission.

Along with the intimate setting, the purpose of Horne Montessori is to create an environment that nurtures the child's drive and spirit. The prepared environment is filled with activities that will aid in the child's auto-education through a nurturing relationship with each child, and a carefully curated set of activities that call to the child's impulses to interact with their surroundings, in turn setting the foundation for all future education. The interaction with the environment creates all the sensorial impressions the child will later call on for academic success.

Thank you for choosing Horne Montessori. I look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Sincerely,

Julia O'Hara
julia@hormemontessori.org

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ABOUT HORME MONTESSORI MICROSCHOOL

Philosophy

Horme Montessori Microschool adheres to the practices of the Montessori pedagogy. This educational approach is centered on fostering self-motivated growth for children and adolescents in all areas of their development—cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. Typical activities you will find in the prepared environment (classroom) will be:

Toddler

- Self-care: washing, dressing, toileting, and eating, according to each child's individual capacity
- Care of the environment: cleaning, food preparation and food service; plant care and animal care
- Large-motor activities (indoors and out): walking, climbing, running, jumping, balancing, climbing steps, and more
- Fine-motor skills: reaching, grasping, picking up objects, transferring objects, using tools and utensils, doing art work
- Language: naming objects, describing actions and intentions, discussing pictures, conversation, music, and singing
- Social skills: developing manners through interactions with peers, teachers, and adult-led small group games

Primary

- Practical Life - a refinement of self-care and care of the environment explored during the toddler years
- Language - a refinement of skills set in the toddler years, which includes an introduction to the alphabet as a tool for writing and reading, grammar studies, and a deepening of vocabulary, both in words and function of the words
- Sensorial - the most identifiable materials in a montessori setting, this area is designed to give refined sensorial experiences in the 5 senses using games and language to explore the world through their senses
- Math - beginning with simply counting, activities include counting, mathematical operations, and memorization of the math facts with engaging exercises
- Culture - from art to music to puzzle maps and continent cards, the cultural area is where the children explore the varieties of experiences around the world and in their own community

Mission

Providing young children and their families an intimate and nurturing community with an authentic Montessori environment, allowing them to freely explore not only their surroundings, but themselves as well. Creating time and space to allow children to follow their interests and discover the joys of learning alongside others and independently.

Values

Horme Montessori believes that all people learn best through experience. From that standpoint, the Microschool and Studio are learning spaces for children as they auto-educate and for caregivers as they learn more about the children in their care and how to meet each child's individual needs.

We value

- Community - building a cohesive group to work alongside, celebrate our successes together, and support each other through life's challenges.
- Open Mindedness - approach each day and interaction from a point of hearing and experiencing truths beside our own.
- Humanity - recognizing our connection from the very foundation, our humanness - we are interconnected in this world.
- Respect - treating others not just how we want to be treated, but also seeking out and embracing how they want to be treated.
- Integrity - having a strong moral character and adhering to a set of ethics and principles.
- Courage - to do the right thing, even though we know it will be hard.

Certification

- Licensed with ECECD
- Pursuing AMI Accreditation
- AMI Certified Guide in Assistants to Infancy (0-3 years), Primary (3 - 6 years), and Administration

Definition of Family

In this handbook when I use the term family, I am referring to a parent, legal guardian, sponsor, or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of your child in my care.

Hours of Operation

Horme Montessori Microschool will be in operation between 8:00am to 4:00pm, Monday through Thursday, with 15 minute drop-off and pick-up windows (7:45am - 4:15pm)

Emergency Substitute Provider

In the rare case of an emergency situation, I will call my emergency substitute provider (see list of names posted on the bulletin board). The substitute will come to the facility to stay with the children during my absence. In the event that I cannot secure a qualified substitute during an emergency, you or your emergency contact will be asked to make arrangements to pick up your child(ren) and the program will close for the remainder of the day. Should this need arise, you or your emergency contact shall pick up their children within 45 minutes of receiving the call.

I will provide my emergency substitute provider with a brief orientation that will include the names and ages of children present, arrival and departure information for each child, including the names of people authorized to pick up your child, the location of the children's files, including emergency contact information, consent for emergency medical treatment, and any special health care needs. The emergency substitute provider will have appropriate credentials and clearances. Names of approved substitutes will be provided to you and a list will be posted on the bulletin board.

Holidays

Horme Montessori will be closed for certain holidays:

- Labor day
- Indigenous Peoples Day
- Fall Break (last week of October)
- Thanksgiving
- Winter Break (the two weeks surrounding Christmas and New Years Day)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Presidents Day
- Spring Break (the week of Easter)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- All of July

(We follow as closely as possible to the Santa Fe Public Schools Calendar)

Admission & Enrollment

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment fee and first tuition payment paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment fee of \$500 is due at the time of enrollment and will apply to the first month of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Based on the availability and openings, Horme Montessori admits children from 12 mos to 5 (after 9/1) years of age. Children must be walking and down to one afternoon nap in order to begin attending school.

My process for introducing children to Horme Montessori begins with a visit to the child's home so the child can get to know their guide (teacher) first, followed by a family visit to the prepared

environment in which they can explore with the security of their parents. The child will then begin their first day following the schedule for which you have enrolled your child. All children begin attendance on the first Monday of the month. All visits will be completed prior to this start date.

Children are admitted without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. Horne Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

Waiting Pool

Children will be enrolled from the waiting pool based on the needs of the school. HMM works to balance the ages of the children so that every child has a peer close in age. A family with a child already enrolled in Horne Montessori and committed to the three year cycle of the Primary program will be given priority.

Adjustment/Trial Period

Horne Montessori is an inviting and nurturing place for children to experience and learn about their world and make new friends, but it does take time for a child to adjust to a new setting, especially if this is their first time outside of their home. I will try to make the adjustment easier by encouraging your children to discuss feelings, providing extra attention and support, participating in role-playing, and reassuring them of their family's return.

An adjustment period of up to four weeks begins on your child's first day at Horne Montessori. During this time, the family can decide to terminate the signed contract without penalty.

Inclusion

Horne Montessori believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance, and belonging in our environment. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in the program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

If your child has an identified special need, a copy of the child's IEP is required with their enrollment documents. This will enable us to best meet your child's needs. We also welcome your child's OT and ST practitioners to our environment should they be working with any.

Non-Discrimination

Equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Confidentiality

Unless Horne Montessori receives your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released with the exception of that required by regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children enrolled in Horne Montessori are confidential.

Qualifications

Julia has 15 years of experience in the child care industry and exceeds the state requirements and qualifications. Julia holds AMI certification in Assistants to Infancy (0-3 years) and Primary (3-6 years). She is a recognized Master Trainer by the state of New Mexico and is a board member of the Montessori Network of New Mexico.

As part of the licensing requirement of the state of New Mexico, all guides (teachers) will participate in 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.

Staff / Assistant / Substitute Qualifications

Any Staff, Assistants, or Substitutes that are employed by Horne Montessori will have appropriate qualifications in the child care industry and will meet or exceed the state requirements. A list of qualified staff, assistants, and substitutes will be available on the bulletin board.

Communication & Family Partnership

Daily Communications

There will be daily communication while your child is enrolled in the toddler program. The daily communication will be in the form of a half sheet paper that has information regarding your child's eating habits that day, any eliminations, an activity they may have engaged in that day, and any required items from home that may be needed.

Once your child has moved up to the Primary program, communications will shift from daily communications to communicating on an as-needed basis. These communications may be initiated by either the families or the guides. Typically this communication will be via email; however, if a matter is time sensitive, communication in person or by phone may be used.

Bulletin Board

Horme Montessori will have a bulletin board with program news, upcoming events, holiday closing dates, announcements, licensing standards, safety guidelines, etc. posted in the entryway.

Email

Horme Montessori will have communication from time to time through email to send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Conferences

There will be three conference periods per calendar year, one after the first two months of school, one mid year after the winter break, and one the month before school ends for the year. Sign-ups will be made available and there will be up to 2 days of school without the children in attendance to accommodate these conferences.

Family Involvement

Each family is a child's first teacher. Horme Montessori values families as partners in the growth and development of children in its care. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit your child(ren) in their prepared environment, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We encourage families to participate and support their child's learning goals.

Please see the list of Family Activities at the end of this booklet.

CURRICULA & LEARNING

Learning Environment

Horme Montessori provides a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages of the children in my care. Children are offered a flexible day routine that allows them to advance at their own pace. Montessori philosophy has a strong emphasis on learning and exploring with hands-on materials and experiences, and are most effective through following the interest of the child.

Montessori Decalogue

A Decalogue by Dr. Maria Montessori. The following 10 guiding principles are used widely around the world by Montessori guides as touch stones as to how we are to approach our behaviors around the child.

1. Never touch the child unless invited by him (in some form or the other).
2. Never speak ill of the child in his presence or absence.
3. Concentrate on strengthening and helping the development of what is good in the child.
4. Be active in preparing the environment. Take meticulous and constant care of it. Help the child establish constructive relations with it. Show the proper place where the means of development are kept and demonstrate their proper use.
5. Be ever ready to answer the call of the child who stands in need of you and always listen and respond to the child who appeals to you.
6. Respect the child who makes a mistake and can then or later correct himself, but stop firmly and immediately any misuse of the environment and any action which endangers the child, his development or others.
7. Respect the child who takes rest or watches others working or ponders over what he himself has done or will do. Neither call him, nor force him to other forms of activity.
8. Help those who are in search of activity and cannot find it.
9. Be untiring in repeating presentations to the child who refused them earlier, in helping the child acquire what is not yet his own and overcome imperfections. Do this by animating the environment with care, with restraint and silence, with mild words and loving presence. Make your ready presence felt to the child who searches and hides from the child who has found it.
10. Always treat the child with the best of good manners and offer him the best you have in yourself and at your disposal.

- Maria Montessori

TODDLER PROGRAM

When young children are stable walkers and at least 12 months old, they are ready to join the Toddler Community, which consists of up to 5 toddlers and a Montessori trained guide. Toddlers, in their preschool age, are curious, active learners who use their senses to gain information about the world around them. It is a goal of Horme Montessori to develop partnerships with the families and caregivers as we develop a strong sense of community.

The Environment

A beautiful, safe, and orderly environment has been specially prepared to meet the young child's need to move freely, to explore, to make discoveries, to develop language skills, and to grow in independence. The children are drawn to the attractive materials equipped with small tools that provide successful experiences. They often exclaim, "I did it myself!" which expresses their joy and sense of accomplishment.

Morning and afternoon snacks are served, with children bringing a healthy, balanced lunch from home. For children who attend the full day program, there will be an opportunity to nap.

Language

Developing spoken language and learning how to communicate with others is an important part of the toddler's environment. At this age, the child has a natural burst in language. We support this through many different language materials and activities that encourage learning vocabulary and participating in conversations. Every day the children enjoy poems, books, songs, and finger plays together.

Motor Skills

There are many ways that the child is provided opportunities to develop his or her fine motor and large motor skills. Indoors, there are fine motor activities including puzzles, stringing beads, using scissors, playing musical instruments, etc. Children also develop their fine motor skills through many art activities, such as painting at the easel or with watercolors, working with clay, gluing, etc.

The child will also have opportunities each day to spend time outdoors to enjoy a variety of large motor activities such as riding bicycles, playing with balls, walking on a balance beam, enjoying time in the sandbox, etc.

Practical Life

The Toddler Community is divided into several areas in which the children move freely throughout the day. Practical Life activities include sweeping the floor, dusting, caring for plants, shoveling, etc. These activities develop a strong sense of order, self-confidence, concentration, and help to promote the child's need for independence.

Self Care and Toilet Training

The children also learn to care for themselves. In the beginning, loose fitting, easy on and off clothes that are free of zippers, snaps, and buttons, help the children develop their ability to do it themselves. Children are often observed helping one another put on a sock or slipper as they work together to get dressed.

Learning to use the toilet independently is another important part of the child's independence. Many children develop an interest through observing other children. When children are showing signs of readiness, we work closely with the child and family to support the child with a stress-free approach.

PRIMARY PROGRAM

The Children's House is a specially prepared environment for preschool and Kindergarten aged children from three to five years. Horne Montessori's Primary environment has up to 8 children when at full capacity. The environment has an AMI trained guide.

The Primary environment unifies the social, physical, and intellectual functioning of the child. We provide children with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the environment, curiosity, concentration, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility for the self and for the group. Thus, through interacting with the Montessori environment, the child constructs him- or herself in a positive manner. This benefits the child in school and in life.

The Environment

The children have ownership of the environment and take good care of it, returning materials with care.

For much of the children's day they may choose work within the environment. There is also group time for music, stories, movement, and games. All children enrolled will have time to play outside at least once a day after lunch and children enrolled for the full day will have a second outdoor time at the end of the day prior to pick up.

Snack is available daily in the morning and afternoon.

The Work

Instruction occurs one-on-one and in small groups conducted at the child's pace. Montessori materials are organized in a logical, sequential nature, providing a structure that guides a child's discovery. A series of presentations, activities, and developmentally appropriate materials are designed to enable the child to master specific skills. Each series of presentations and material is grouped by broader content areas that complement and interrelate with one another.

Children are free to choose work from the beautiful and well-defined areas of the environment. The adults in the environment serve as guides who show the children how to use the concrete materials. Working with the materials not only helps develop coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order, it also helps the child develop a sense of self-discipline and accomplishment. Children in a Montessori environment usually have healthy self-esteem because they are supported in doing things themselves.

Daily Schedule

Toddler

8:15 - 8:30 Morning drop off
8:30 - 10:30 Morning work period
10:30 - 11:30 Outside play and activities
11:30 - 12:15 Lunch
12:15 - 12:30 Half day dismissal
12:30 - 3:15 Nap time/afternoon work period
3:15 - 4:00 Outside play and activities
4-4:15 Full day dismissal

Primary

8:00 - 8:15 Morning drop off
8:30 - 11:15 Morning work period
11:15 - 12:00 Outside play and activities
12:00 - 12:30 Lunch
12:30 - 12:45 Half day dismissal
12:45 - 3:15 Nap time/afternoon work period
3:15 - 4:00 Outside play and activities
4-4:15 Full day dismissal

A 7:45am drop off may be made in the event of a parent having an early appointment or meeting. This needs to be prearranged, at least by the end of the school day before the requested early drop off.

Outings and Field Trips

Weather permitting, Horne Montessori will conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood with the Primary 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 may be organized group meet-ups with the families of Horne Montessori Microschool. This is done to provide a developmentally appropriate way to explore the community, with friends and family to assist in the care of each child.

Television Time and Electronic Media

The CDC recommends no screen time for children under the age of two and a maximum of 1 hour a day of all screen time combined after 2 years of age. For this reason, there will be no screen time for children under the age of 2 and a maximum of 30 mins per week for children in the primary program. The screen time that may be viewed by the primary program children will be factual, non-animated videos that pertain to the curriculum topics we are discussing. For example, when reptiles and amphibians are the topic of the month, we may watch a video that shows the lifecycle of a frog vs the lifecycle of a lizard. These occasional videos are a way to convey to the children a concept that would otherwise be too abstract for them.

With the goal of the child writing in the future, the guides (teachers) will write notes to families in the presence of children so that they see the purpose of writing and develop an interest in learning how to write. When the children are sleeping or out of school, guides will communicate through email. From time to time, there may be a need for guides to communicate with parents by text if it is an urgent matter such as a child developing a rash and requesting permission to apply topical benadryl.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. Horne Montessori utilizes books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach children respect for our world and the diversity of ways to live life and the life upon it.

Celebrations

Horne Montessori's celebrations and holiday policy encourages an enhanced understanding of and respect for different cultures and beliefs of children, families, staff, and community.

We will recognize, discuss, and integrate the celebrations of the families that are enrolled in our program. If you feel comfortable, please share the holidays and days of importance that are held by your family so that we can incorporate them into our curriculum.

For birthday celebrations, we ask that you bring in photos from your child's life, one to two pictures per year. These will be posted up on our birthday timeline for all the children to look at during the day.

For the toddler program, we will discuss that it is your child's birthday and sing happy birthday to them during our short group time.

In the Primary program, this becomes an indirect lesson on the passing of time. There will be a model of the sun with the days of the month. The child will walk around the sun holding a small globe while the group sings the song "The Earth Goes Around the Sun." The song will be sung up to the age the child is turning as they continue to walk around. This will culminate in the child blowing out a candle and us singing happy birthday.

In the event that you would like to invite the children of your child's environment to a birthday party, we ask that you send evites or mail invitations. We respectfully ask that you do not bring invitations to school.

Rest Time

After lunch, all children younger than 5 years of age participate in quiet rest time. Children are not required to sleep and may be given quiet activities. If a child does not fall asleep after a period of 60 min, they will have the opportunity to put away their sleeping materials and participate in activities in the prepared environment (classroom). Children over 5 years will have sleeping materials available and may choose to sleep, lay down, or continue engaging with activities in the prepared environment (classroom).

Each child will have their own napping mat and sheet provided by Horne Montessori and the family will provide a blanket, pillow and comfort item (i.e. stuffed animal) that is to stay at school during the week, as needed. The napping mats and sleeping materials will be stored separately when not in use and the child's personal belongings will be sent home on the last day of the week to be laundered by the family and returned on the first day of the next week.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a home/child care partnership that supports your child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. Horne Montessori is committed to working with you to make sure that toilet training is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

When you and your child are both ready to take on toilet learning, you will be provided the book "Toilet Awareness" written by Sarah Moudry. We will also have books available to the children for reading about this transition as a group so that they can learn from each other's process.

The toileting process will be met with patience and ownership on behalf of the child. This can mean that in the beginning there are a lot of soiled clothes. At this stage, we will ask the family to provide a higher quantity of extra underwear. The children that are going through the toileting process will be wearing just underwear for the first few weeks as they familiarize themselves with this new routine, which will aid the families with laundering at home.

There will be a point in time in which the child transitions to using the toilet independently, including wiping themselves. Parents and caregivers should be showing children at home how to wipe themselves and giving them opportunities to do so outside of school. At school, we will also show the children how to wipe themselves and give them the opportunity to do this. We will support the child through this process, giving them a final wipe to ensure hygiene when possible. There will be times when the children will use the toilet themselves without us knowing they have eliminated. For this reason, during this time of transition to independence, we ask that families support the teachers through this process by checking their children upon arrival home and having regular bathtime/shower time to assist in the child's health and hygiene.

This process can look different for each child and family. We will be here to support and guide you along the way.

GUIDANCE

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. Horne Montessori encourages children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

We follow and practice the Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom created by Jane Nelsen and Chip DeLorenzo. We have copies of this and Positive Discipline for any family that would like to check it out from our library.

Termination of Enrollment Procedure

Horne Montessori reserves the right to terminate enrollment in situations involving repeated or serious violations of school standards or expectations of student or parent/guardian behavior, serious academic problems, excessive tardiness or absence, any hindrance to the school's instructional purpose and/or ability, or any breach of the Enrollment Contract including failure to uphold financial responsibilities. The school also may counsel a student out of the program if their behavior indicates that they and/or their guardians are not a good fit for the program or for any medical or psychological reasons for which the school is not equipped. Such a decision will be made by Julia O'Hara. Parents/guardians will be given a minimum of 2 weeks to find an alternative program. If the decision to counsel the student out of the program is made by the school, the requirement for 30-day notice for withdrawal and remaining annual tuition due will be waived.

Challenging Behavior

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and respect. When a child becomes physically or verbally aggressive, the guides (teachers) intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

The usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to co-regulate and to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent, and understandable to the child.

There are rare instances when a guide (teacher) may need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and may restrain a child by gently holding them only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

A child who exhibits consistent destructive, physically and/or verbally aggressive behavior which endangers the physical and emotional welfare of others will face suspension for the day. In cases such as this, you will be called and asked to pick up your child immediately. Depending upon the circumstances, the student may be required to stay home for one or two days. If a child's behavior still does not improve, the child will be placed on 'probation' before being dismissed (see Termination of Enrollment section above).

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with your family as the first step to understanding your child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of the program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on Horne Montessori's resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition Rates

Full-Time Rate (Monday - Thursday, 8 - 4 pm):	\$1425 per Month
Part-Time Rate (Monday - Thursday 8:30 - 12:30 pm):	\$975 per Month

Families contract for a specific schedule (PT or FT) as indicated on the Enrollment Agreement Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month, year-round, whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure, or closure due to inclement weather.

Tuition Deposit

A Tuition Deposit of \$500 is required at the time enrollment is confirmed. This deposit is applied to the first month of the enrollment period. In the event of a family leaving the school, we ask that they provide a one month written notice. If a one month written notice is not given when a child has withdrawn from the program, the family will forfeit their remaining tuition for that month.

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due monthly by 9AM on the 5th of the month, as outlined in the Enrollment Agreement.

A non-refundable registration/re-enrollment fee of \$500 will be due on the first Monday of April to hold your child's space for the upcoming school year. This deposit will be applied to the first month of the following school year.

Methods of Payment

Several methods of payment are available for families' convenience. Families can pay by cash, check, or credit card. To set up automatic, recurring payments, please fill out an automatic payment authorization form.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs and as a result, the business does not have the latitude to allow families to accrue a balance. Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees. Failure to pay child care payments will result in child care services being terminated.

If payment is not received by the 5th of the month, a late fee of \$50 will be added to your payment. Repeated late payments will result in your family being required to set up automatic payments or credit card payments.

If payment is more than 25 business days past due, we may attempt to recover payment in small claims court and/or your account may be sent to a 3rd party collections agency. You will be

responsible for all expenses associated with these actions including all court and attorney fees. Additionally, your family may be asked to terminate your attendance.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of \$20. This charge may be collected electronically. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on “cash only” status.

Late Pick-up Fees

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered as an exceptional occurrence. Late fees of \$10 per 5 minutes will be assessed beginning:

- 12:30PM for half day Toddler and 12:45PM for Primary
- 4:15PM for full day

This fee will be due upon arrival. Repeated late pick up may result in child care services being terminated.

Other Fees

- From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.
- A non-refundable enrollment/registration fee of \$500 is due annually on the first Monday of April.

Credits & No Credits

- Families contract for a specific schedule - as agreed on the Enrollment Agreement Form. Payment for this contracted schedule is required every month year-round whether or not your child attends; this enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, holidays, staff training closure or closure due to inclement weather, infectious disease (except as noted below) or public health emergency such as a pandemic, or weather-related or environmental emergencies.
- Credit may be given for Serious Illness/Injury – In the unfortunate event of extenuating circumstances such as your child is hospitalized, absence due to a serious contagious disease or serious illness or injury, credit may be issued. A written doctor’s note is required to receive a credit.
- Credit will not be given for my absence – there are no credits for days when I must close my program for personal reasons. There are 5 personal/sick days that are pre-considered in determining tuition and are not refundable.

ATTENDANCE & WITHDRAWAL

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 8:30 AM, please call or text Horne Montessori at 505-395-6390. I will be concerned about you and your child if I do not hear from you.

Tardiness Procedure

In the event that you and your child are running late and will arrive after 8:30am, you will be required to drop your child off at the door. After contacting the school by phone, a guide will come and greet your child at the door and assist them with putting their belongings away. Arrivals are disruptive to the flow of the morning and to the children's concentration. We are all happy to see the arrival of our classmates and our greeting the person that has arrived breaks the concentration of the children or a lesson that may be in progress.

Guide (teacher) Vacation

Horne Montessori provides personal vacations consisting of the month of July each year. No tuition payments are due during this month.

Families are responsible for finding back-up care for their children during holidays, provider vacations, and planned or unplanned closings.

Withdrawals

A written notice one month in advance is required when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in forfeiture of your remaining tuition for that month.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent Horne Montessori from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced the morning of late arrival or closure by email. We follow the Santa Fe Public School system for these events. [Their website](#) typically makes this decision by 7am. We will email and text as soon as we have this information.

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

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

General Procedure

Horme Montessori opens at 8 AM. Children may be dropped off as early as 7:45am with prearrangement in the event that a parent has an early appointment or meeting. Families are expected to accompany their children to the entryway and sign them in. Please refer to the daily schedule to be in alignment with the drop off and pick up times based on your child's level (toddler or primary).

Horme Montessori closes at 4:15 PM. Please do not pick up your child later than this time. Families are expected to sign their child out and leave by closing time.

Drop-off will occur in our entryway. **There will be a sign-in sheet to fill out daily. This is a requirement by the state of New Mexico.** Your child's cubbies will be in the entry. Here they are encouraged to hang up a bag if they have one, hang up any jacket or hat, take off their outdoor shoes and switch into their indoor shoes. There will be a half door between the entry way and the prepared environment (classroom). The child is to come into the prepared environment independently and parents are asked to keep themselves to the entryway and say their goodbyes there. Once the child enters the prepared environment, we ask that you please leave the premises. Seeing their parents linger or seeing other parents linger can be unsettling to the child and we are all working towards the child's comfort and independence in the school setting. Because we understand the desire to experience your child's environment, we have created opportunities for events and activities in which you can participate in the school in a planned and appropriate manner.

Pick up will in most cases happen outside. We will bring your child's belongings for going home outside with us along with the sign-out sheet for ease of transitioning home. In the event that you need to retrieve anything from the cubbies inside, we ask that you limit your time to just the entryway. There are times when children want to go back into their prepared environment, this is usually an indication that they are happy with their surroundings at school. However, the guides have cleaned the shelves and prepared the environment for the next day by this point, so we respectfully ask that you remind your child to limit themselves to just the entryway.

Use of Cell Phones

Drop-off and pick-up are primary windows of time for us to communicate about your child. In addition, children need your full attention at this time. Therefore, Horme Montessori respectfully requests that you not use cell phones while dropping off or picking up your child.

Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick up your child, you must notify Horme Montessori in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of this policy.

If your child has not been picked up after closing and Horne Montessori has not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. A guide (teacher) will stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 4 hours we have not been able to reach you or any person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Right to Refuse Child Release

Horne Montessori may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger your child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick up your child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from The Horne Montessori program.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What to Bring

A supply list will be provided to each family upon enrollment in Horne Montessori Microschool. Please follow these instructions to be sure that your child is prepared for the day and has what they will need at school. This supply list is curated to prevent families from needing to pack a bag every day and aid in a smoother transition out of the house and to school.

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name (i.e. water bottle, clothes, diapers, blanket, etc.) to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. Horne Montessori is not responsible for lost or damaged items. Sheets and soiled clothing will be sent home on an as-needed basis for laundering and return to the program.

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name and family photo. Please check your child's cubby on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located in the entryway. Please note that Horne Montessori is not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

Horne Montessori requests that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home. Toys of any kind are not allowed at school as they distract the children and often cause conflict and hurt feelings or end up lost or broken. Books, educational materials, nature items, etc., of wide interest are welcome with prior approval from your child's guide.

NUTRITION

Snacks

Horme Montessori will provide both morning and afternoon snacks. The monthly menu will be displayed on the bulletin board for your review. If your child has a food allergy, please support us by reviewing the menu to be sure we haven't added an allergen to the monthly menu.

Lunch Brought from Home

Snack and lunch are an important part of a child's day, from both social and nutritional viewpoints. The following is asked of parents:

- Your child's lunch should be sustaining, with a balance of protein, fibers, and complex carbohydrates.
- Foods should be in consumable portions (pre-cut into safe sizes depending on your child's development) and easily assembled by a child without assistance.
- Limit the amount of foods with added sugar. These foods can cause a burst of energy and then a crash, causing an increased sense of hunger.
- You may send milk (animal or plant based) if you would like your child to consume something other than water at meal time.

Horme Montessori does not believe in excessively encouraging children to eat. We focus on aiding the child to develop an inner sense of gauging their hunger or satiety. We will encourage a couple of times, however, if the child is resistant to eating, we will allow them to finish their meal. Any food not eaten will be kept in the containers it came to school in so that you can see the amount of food they consumed.

This is also met with a limit. If the child doesn't eat, we will attempt to make it to the next meal time. In this way, we are aiding in the creation of an internal awareness of meal times. If the child is very hungry at the next meal, we will be sure to meet their needs and provide extra food as necessary. If the child begins to show signs of distress between meals, we will be sure that they are getting the food they need. Having a body fueled by healthful food is vital to creating a pleasurable learning experience.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify Horme Montessori 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. A copy should be given to Horme Montessori prior to enrollment.

Should any child enrolled at Horme Montessori have a life threatening allergy, we will request that no children bring that particular food to school.

Meal Time

At meal time the table is set with stoneware plates and bowls, as well as flatware. Table manners are modeled and encouraged. Weekly menus are posted for viewing by families.

All staff at Horne Montessori are trained in first-aid for choking and are always present at meal times.

Toddler Foods

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children younger than 3 years of age are not permitted. These foods include: hot dogs, whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

HEALTH

Immunizations

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 June, Horne Montessori will check with the public health department or the American Academy of Pediatrics for updates of the recommended immunization schedule. If a child is not going to be immunized for medical or religious reasons, the parent will be asked to complete a form required by state regulations. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Physicals

Routine physicals are required according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org. A copy of your child's physical should be received prior to attending, but must be received no later than 4 weeks after your child begins attending. Families are responsible for ensuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is provided to Horne Montessori.

Illness

Horne Montessori understands that it is difficult for a family member to leave or miss work; however, to protect other children and the guides from illness, you may not bring a sick child to the program. The guides have the right to refuse a child who appears ill. You will be called and asked to retrieve your child if your child exhibits 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, in order to protect the other children from becoming infected.

- Illness that prevents your child from participating in activities.
- Illness that results in greater need for care than can be provided, **this includes excessively runny nose.**
- Fever (above 100°F under the arm, above 101°F in the mouth and forehead, above 102°F in the ear) accompanied by other symptoms.
- Diarrhea – stools with blood or mucus, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – green or bloody, and/or 2 or more 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 24 hours after treatment.
- Head lice, until treatment and all nits are removed.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment.
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have dried and crusted.
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough), until 5 days of antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A virus, until one week after immune globulin has been administered.

Children who have been ill may return when:

- They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours, without the aid of medications.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic for 24 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 my care is required.

COVID Policies

We follow all state mandated guidelines as described by ECECD and [NMDOH](#). These guidelines change with some frequency and we will be in constant communication as they do. When weather is above 67° classrooms will have all interior doors open, windows open, and air filters on. Under 67° and classrooms will close windows but doors remain open and air filters on.

Communication of Illness

When any child has fallen ill with or been in close contact with others of a highly communicable illness (COVID, flu, vomiting, etc.), a school wide communication will be sent out. This will allow each family to determine the level of contact with the community they are comfortable with. The communication will be made without stating which child has had an illness or been in contact with an illness. We respect each family's privacy as well as each family's comfort level with exposure to highly contagious illnesses.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify Horne Montessori regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide the school with a letter detailing your child's symptoms, reactions, treatments, and care.

Medications

All medications should be handed to your child's guide with specific instructions for administration along with a form giving permission to Horne Montessori for administration of the medication. Medications should never be left in your child's cubby or with your child to administer on their own. We will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

- Prescription medications require a note signed by the family and a written order from your child's physician. The label on the medication meets this requirement. The medication must include your child's name, dosage, current date, frequency, and the name and phone number of the physician. All medications must be in the original

container (you may request pharmacies to fill your prescription in two labeled bottles). Please specify the dosage and time(s) to be administered for each medication.

- Non-prescription medications require a note signed by the family and physician. Non-prescription medication will not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.
- Non-prescription topical ointments (e.g. diaper cream or sunscreen) requires a note signed by the family, specifying frequency and dosage to be administered.

Communicable Diseases

When a child at Horne Montessori has a suspected reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. We will take care to notify families about exposure so children can receive preventive treatments. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Bacterial Meningitis
- Botulism
- Chicken Pox
- COVID-19
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus Influenzae (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)
- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illness

SAFETY

Home Safety

Horme Montessori prides itself in having a warm, loving, and safe environment in which your child can explore, learn, and experience many different things. Some features that help ensure your child's safety are:

- ☐ Working smoke detectors are on each floor and near cooking and sleeping areas.
- ☐ Working carbon monoxide detectors are near the sleeping area.
- ☐ Adequate Ventilation throughout my home.
- ☐ No guns or firearms on premises.
- ☐ Gates are used on stairways when children under [5 years old] are present.
- ☐ Fire extinguishers are maintained properly.
- ☐ Toys are age appropriate, in good repair, and of a non-violent nature.
- ☐ Electrical outlets are covered.
- ☐ Pens, pencils, and office supplies are out of reach.
- ☐ Knives and adult scissors are out of reach.
- ☐ Cleaners, chemicals, matches and fire starters are out of reach.
- ☐ The hot water heater is regulated at 120°F.
- ☐ Medications are out of reach.
- ☐ A well-stocked first aid kit is kept near and expiration dates are observed.
- ☐ Animals are child-friendly, properly immunized, and in good health.
- ☐ I am certified in Infant & Child CPR and Pediatric First Aid.
- ☐ Hot radiator and water pipes are covered or out of reach or not very hot to the touch.
- ☐ Safe grassy areas to play.
- ☐ Yard is free of splinters and harmful objects.
- ☐ Safety approved play equipment and toys.
- ☐ Yard routinely treated to deter insects.
- ☐ Outside areas where children play are fenced and gates are locked.
- ☐ Children do not play outside unsupervised.
- ☐ Ponds, wells, tool sheds, and other hazards are fenced or closed off.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, water, and other sensory activities. Horme Montessori's play yard is used as an extension of the program, and daily activities are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Flip-flops and open-toed shoes are not appropriate for program play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Costumes are appropriate only for certain family gatherings, namely our Halloween Party in October.

Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play

Outdoor play will not occur if the outside temperature is greater than 95 °F or less than 20 °F degrees. Horne Montessori follows the guidelines of [Child Care Weather Watch](#) set forth by Champaign Urbana Public Health District. Additionally, outdoor play will be canceled if the air quality rating by NOAA indicates it is unsafe for at risk groups.

Injuries

First aid will be administered by the guides in the unlikely event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive a report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Horne Montessori is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, your child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while a staff member of Horne Montessori will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, Horne Montessori will care for and help the child who was bitten and help the biter learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. Horne Montessori will work with the families of both to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Pets/Animals

Horne Montessori has 3 pets on the premises. All pets are small dogs: a Pug and 2 Boston terriers. The pets on premises are very friendly, deemed healthy by a veterinarian, and are current on all immunizations.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, Horne Montessori expects the same from all families. Parents/guardians must be aware that adults serve as role models for children. In an effort to protect children and staff of Horne Montessori, we will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, Horne Montessori reserves the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your child from our care. The following actions are grounds for immediate dismissal. Please note, however, that this is not an exhaustive list of

inappropriate behaviors:

- Acts of violence, including assault and battery
- Harassment of or threats against the staff, other parents/guardians, or children
- Possession of illegal substances or firearms
- Verbal or physical abuse of any child
- Profanity
- Indecent exposure

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants' and young children's developing bodies. Therefore, the indoor and outdoor program environments and vehicles used by Horne Montessori are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on school premises.

Prohibited Substances

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on school premises, the police will be called and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

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

Suspected Child Abuse

All childcare providers are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Horne Montessori will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

EMERGENCIES

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from the group during an outing or field trip and is not located within 5 minutes, the family and the police will be notified.

If a child is missing from the school grounds, the following simultaneous actions are taken:

1. 911 is called
2. a parent/guardian is called
3. an immediate search begins of the school, grounds, area, and neighborhood.

Parents may remain on the phone, come to the school, or stay by the phone to await information.

Fire Safety

Horme Montessori is fully equipped with fire alarms and extinguishers as per the state of New Mexico ECECD guidelines.

The fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children on a monthly basis and is posted on the bulletin board in the entryway.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with your child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

From time to time, Horne Montessori Microschool offers an opportunity for families to participate in the activities that help with growth and development of their child's education. Horne Montessori encourages families to take an active role.

Examples of Family Events: Please be sure to look at the Bulletin Board for announcements of these activities and events.

- Fall Festival
- Spring Festival
- End of the Year Picnic

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

- Join us for a lunch date
- Participate in Community Meet-Ups
- Read to the group at arrival time
- Donate requested items
- Contribute to Pot Luck Meal for Festivals and Picnics
- Observation
- Family and Teacher conferences

Family/Parent Workshops: Family workshops change as needed. Below is a list of workshops I may offer. I try to offer these in the early evening or on Saturdays. See the monthly calendar on the Bulletin Board for scheduled topics. I welcome requests for workshop topics.

- Positive Guidance and Loving Discipline
- Toilet Training
- Brain Development
- Nutrition and Exercise for Small Bodies
- Supporting Your Child in Times of Stress
- Food Allergies
- How to Prepare for a Conference
- Warning Signs for Developmental Delays
- Value of Reading to Your Child
- Everyday Math

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to Horne Montessori prior to enrollment.

I may update this handbook from time-to-time and will provide notice as updates are implemented.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures that have been provided for the safety and welfare of all children in my care. I look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received and reviewed the Family Handbook. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask questions if I do not understand any policies, procedures, or information contained in the Family Handbook.

Recipient Signature

Date

Provider's Signature

Date