



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK 2016-17



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). This handbook is intended provide parents with information about our school and GRSP. It contains important information to help you develop an understanding of the program, which will lead to a harmonious experience for your child and family. If you have any questions that are not addressed here, you are encouraged to talk to your child's teacher or the Head of School.

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of Leelanau Montessori to provide an equal education opportunity for all children.

Any person who believes that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin, while at Leelanau Montessori or a Leelanau Montessori activity should immediately contact the Head of School at (231) 271-8609.

VISION STATEMENT

Leelanau Montessori children will attain mastery of essential academic skills, an inner disciplinary drive toward self-fulfillment and actualization while allowing the ongoing development of each child's imagination and creative abilities.

MISSION OF THE ACADEMY

Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy nurtures the whole child in a prepared environment based on respect, individuality, a love of learning, and freedom with responsibility.

HISTORIC INFORMATION

Dr. Maria Montessori

In this brief overview of Dr. Montessori's life, one begins to understand how she developed such a thorough, complete, and therefore successful method of education for children based on the intellectual powers and psychological characteristics of the child in each stage of his/her development.

Maria Montessori was, in many ways, ahead of her time. Born in the town of Chiaravalle, Italy, in 1870, her studies began in engineering, but later led her to psychology, medicine, and education. She became the first female physician in Italy when she graduated from medical school in 1896. Shortly after, she was chosen to represent Italy at a women's conferences in Berlin and London. She partook in world peace conferences as well.

In her medical practice, her detailed clinical observations led her to analyze with great precision how children learn. She concluded that they build themselves from interactions with their environment. Shifting her focus from the body to the mind, she returned to the



university to study philosophy and psychology in 1901. She was made a professor of anthropology in 1904 at the University of Rome.

Dr. Montessori's desire to help children was so strong, that in 1906 she gave up her university chair and medical practice to work with young children of working parents in a housing project in San Lorenzo, a poor section of Rome. It was there she founded her first Children's House and the Montessori method of education. This revolutionary method was based on her scientific observations of the children's' almost effortless ability to absorb knowledge from their surroundings, and their tireless interest in manipulating materials. Every piece of material, every exercise, every method she developed was based on her detailed, accurate observations of what children do naturally and unassisted by adults. This approach renewed their joy of learning. Her powers of observation were so keen, that today's sophisticated diagnostic tools repeatedly validate her research and work.

Maria Montessori made her first visit to the United States in 1913, the same year Alexander Graham Bell and his wife founded the Montessori Educational Foundation at their Washington, D.C. home. Among her other strong American supporters were Thomas Edison and Helen Keller.

Today there are more than a four thousand Montessori schools in the United States, with about three hundred public Montessori schools. How fortunate we are, to host one of them here in Leelanau County.

Leelanau Montessori's History

Throughout its 30-year history, Leelanau Montessori has served many families in the region. Recent brain research supports many of the unique qualities that have been a part of Montessori education for over 100 years, including multi-age groupings, peer teaching, individualized curriculum, the use of hands-on materials, and educating for whole child development.

Leelanau County's Montessori journey began in 1984 with the introduction of the Suttons Bay Children's House at the base of Herman Road just a short distance from our present location. As these children matured, requests for a Montessori elementary arose.

In 1991, Suttons Bay Montessori Elementary opened on East Pine View a 1/2 mile west of the Children's House. Two years later it moved out of its portable classroom into a home of its own, situated next door to the Children's House. Both schools were privately owned and funded through tuition.

In 1996, Leelanau Montessori Elementary was invited to become a part of Suttons Bay Public School. In 2001, the primary program also merged with the Suttons Bay Public School reuniting the Montessori programs.

Now a charter school authorized by Suttons Bay Public Schools, Leelanau Montessori is still deeply engaged with the Suttons Bay community. Leasing space in the former high school building while sharing activities and resources keeps both communities connected

and supportive of each other.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

Maria Montessori believed that the primary goal throughout all stages of development is to increase self-reliance, thereby adding another dimension of independence toward becoming a whole human, an adult capable of directing his/her work toward individual self-development and a collective contribution to society. Our program sets forth physical, socio-emotional, cognitive/intellectual, and creative/spiritual goals for each stage of the child's development. The overarching goal of the Leelanau Montessori program is development of a capable hand and mind for the purpose of joyful lifelong living. Caring, capable, confident, and conscientious global citizens will graduate from the Leelanau Montessori learning community and will challenge themselves to continually strive for growth within themselves and as members of the human race.

Leelanau Montessori Beliefs and Values:

1. To nurture a positive attitude towards learning and foster an abiding sense of curiosity while giving the child an opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge essential for a lifetime of learning and living, including but not limited to Montessori curriculum and the required State standards.
2. To build and encourage habits of initiative, concentration, perseverance, and organization while the children strive for their fullest potentials, learning self-pacing and time awareness.
3. To develop a sense of self-respect, confidence, responsibility, and inner discipline in a caring, cohesive, supportive learning community.
4. To foster hypothesis, experimentation, observation, discovery and application.
5. To foster socially acceptable behavior, from a sense of belonging, service, freedom to choose with responsibility to others, respect for life and the environment, and stewardship of peace.
6. To develop a compassion and reverence for life and the earth's environment, and assume a personal responsibility for stewardship of the earth including world peace.
7. To create caring, cohesive, and supportive learning communities.
8. To foster dynamic partnerships with families for a consistent Montessori framework and educational experience.
9. To provide a creative, aesthetically pleasing, adaptive/dynamic, inspirational environment that responds to the child's needs and interests.



10. To develop sensory and motor skills that enables and sharpens the ability to discriminate, judge, and control.

SCHOOL AND ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

1. To provide families with an excellent public Montessori education option.
2. To provide a carefully planned and stimulating instructional system that enables children to develop a strong academic foundation based on the Montessori philosophy, methods, and practices as well as the Common Core State Standards.
3. To create and sustain continuity and mutual support of learning processes between home and school through an ongoing parent education program.
4. To provide Leelanau Montessori staff the support to refine and extend their skills and talents for delivery of quality instruction, prepared environments, and personal and professional growth.
5. To develop meaningful relationships with local, state, and national educational organizations and agencies, including but not limited to Montessori, for identifying, developing, and maintaining dynamic, responsive, and relevant learning for the community.
6. To maintain Leelanau Montessori as a vibrant leader and community partner in education.

GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM (GSRP)

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is a state-funded preschool program for four-year old children who qualify. The program is administered through the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and incurs no cost for families.

Research on preschool programs and specific research on GSRP indicates that children provided with a high-quality preschool experience show significant positive developmental differences when compared to children from the same backgrounds that did not attend a high-quality preschool program. We are delighted that Leelanau Montessori is able to offer the Great Start Readiness Program to our families.

Eligibility

Three factors are considered when enrolling students into GSRP:

1. Age: Children must be age four on or before September 1.
2. Income: Children are enrolled on a priority basis according to poverty quintiles.
3. Risk Factors:
 - a. Diagnosed disability or identified developmental delay
 - b. Severe or challenging behavior
 - c. Primary home language other than English



- d. Parent(s) with low educational attainment
- e. Abuse/neglect of child or parent
- f. Environmental risk

Families that exceed the income criteria could be eligible for partial tuition funding (sliding-scale fee). Considerations are based on available funds.

Enrollment/Withdrawal

- No child will be discriminated against because of race, national origin, sex, or disability.
- Leelanau Montessori accepts applications for GSRP and will enroll qualified students based on the number of GSRP slots granted to the district.
- A Health Appraisal form must be submitted within 30 days of initial attendance. (Please be sure that this form is signed and dated by your child’s physician.)
 - Failure to comply with immunization standards will result in the termination of your child from our program. (Immunization record must be on file for child to begin.)
 - Licensing requires that ALL sections of all forms be completely filled in.
- Please notify the office in writing if withdrawing your child from our program.

Daily Schedule

Students in the Great Start Readiness Program attend school Mondays-Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. - 3:07 p.m.

Time	Activity	Description
8:00	Arrival	Children are dropped off at school and will undress and sort their things at their hook.
8:15-8:30	Planning Time	Children indicate what they will work on. Adults use an array of strategies to support the child’s initiative and interests.
8:30	Work Snack	Includes planning, choice, cleanup with individual, partner, and small group activities. Breakfast and snack are provided.
10:00	Small Group	Children are offered a small group activity. The goal is open-ended but may focus on exploration, peer collaboration and oral language development.
11:00	Recall	Children may choose to reflect, share or present the work they have accomplished that day. Adults model and use strategies to support this opportunity.
11:00	Large Group	A time that is both teacher and student led to build community ground rules, share, sing songs, and practice educational games and early literacy activities.
11:15	Outdoors	The entire primary community joins for supervised free play and gross motor



		movement.
12:15	Lunch	Family style, hot lunch is provided.
1:00	Indoors/Rest/Nap	Transition activities from outdoors lead to a quiet time each afternoon.
1:15-1:30	Small group/planning	Usually this time is spent doing a literacy activity with a small group. Afterwards, children indicate what they will work on. Adults use an array of strategies to support the child's initiative and interests.
1:30	Work Snack	Includes planning, choice and cleanup with individual, partner and small group activities. Snack is provided.
2:40	Recall	Children may choose to reflect, share or present the work they have accomplished that day. Adults model and use strategies to support this opportunity.
2:40	Group/Prepare for the Next Day	A gathering to reflect and recall on what has occurred in the present day and prepare the environment for the next day.
3:07	Dismissal/Pick-Up	Bus transportation and parent pick-up begins promptly.

Attendance

In order to maintain a high-quality program we rely on regular attendance. If your child is unable to attend school on any given day, please call or email the office by 9:00 AM to let us know. After 2-3 unexcused absences teachers will reach out to families to offer support. Our staff works with families to overcome barriers to participation and ensure success in the program.

Curriculum

A typical day for our GSRP children includes activities and lessons in all of the learning domains and areas of the classroom as outlined in Montessori Methods and the Michigan Early Childhood Standards of Quality-Pre-Kindergarten (ECSQ-PK). The program is focused on specific content areas: Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development and Health; Language, Literacy, and Communication; Mathematics; Creative Arts; Science and Technology; and Social Studies (Culture and Peace), and Practical Life Skills. While learning in these content areas prepares children for later schooling, Montessori takes the learning process beyond traditional academic subjects by applying methods that promote independence, curiosity, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem solving in young children. More information about the Montessori curriculum can be found at <https://amshq.org/>

Screening and Assessment

Leelanau Montessori uses various assessment tools for preschool children. The purpose of assessment is to drive our instruction, identify individual needs of children and to monitor progress in growth and development. The assessment of young children enrolled



in the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) must provide information across all domains identified in the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten (ECSQ-PK): social and emotional development, intellectual development, language and early literacy development, creative development, physical development, health; early learning in math, science, social studies; and use of technology.

LMPSA utilizes the developmental screening tool, The Early Screening Inventory (ESI-R), to help identify children who may need additional services or assessments to determine development/and or health risks. The ESI-R is given at the start of each school year to your child and is administered by the classroom guide.

Teaching strategies GOLD is used to assess children three times/year in the areas of: social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, the arts, and social studies.

Screening and assessment data is shared with parents during conferences, home visits, and upon parent request.

Referral Policy

A teacher or parent refers children experiencing difficulties with educational development to the Leelanau Montessori Student Support Team. The team will then observe in the classroom and will work with the parents to make a referral to the TBAISD Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) team if data from observations indicates the need for an evaluation. The appropriate special education staff members will work with the family and teaching team to assist in the growth and development of the child. The team members will also provide direct services to the child if there is an identifiable need.

If your family is in need of resource and referral assistance in your community, such as housing or heating assistance, health referrals, etc.... your child's teacher would be happy to assist you.

Special Education

It is the policy of Leelanau Montessori to provide Special Education services within the Academy. Children with specific needs have the right to a quality education appropriate to their needs, abilities, and interests. Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services through TBAISD are provided for pre-school children who have a need within the district including children of migrant workers, the homeless, and children in residential facilities. It is the goal of the Special Education staff to act as a resource to the classroom teacher in the development and implementation of appropriate instructional and socialization strategies. Implementation of these strategies will occur within the general educational setting, and through small group and one-on-one remediation. Children will not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support, assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes or apprehension.

Meals/Snacks



Your child is provided lunch and two snacks daily at no cost. Lunch is provided by the school cafeteria and served family-style within our classrooms. The USDA Food Program Form will be provided at the home visit.

Food Policy

We are required to follow all guidance regarding snacks and meals that is contained in the GSRP Implementation Manual. This includes the following:

- Children who have specific dietary needs (allergies, vegetarian, etc...) should be accommodated by the school food program.
- Families of children who have low frequency dietary needs (organic only, Kosher, vegan, etc...) are invited to have a discussion with the lead guide/teacher. We will work together to meet both your family's preferences and the GSRP requirements.
- Shared meals are an important part of the program and whenever possible, all children should learn to enjoy a wide variety of foods in a communal setting.

Rest/sleep

All children have individual sleep and rest needs for health and wellness. A child is offered rest and provided a nap mat and appropriate bedding according to their individual needs. For children who do not sleep, an alternate, quiet activity will be offered during rest time. Those who do rest, do so for an appropriate amount of time. Rest/sleep time will not exceed approximately 60 minutes and will be supervised by staff at all times. We pay attention to the cues and needs of children in an effort to keep resting time a positive experience.

Outside Time

Children need and want a time during the day to engage in self-directed activity. Outside time is provided for that breath of fresh air, a moment of solitude, a private conversation, or other outside activities. When playing games, children are encouraged to include anyone interested in participating. Recess is scheduled every day, weather permitting. If the wind chill is below 0 degrees F, we will have open-ended indoor time. Children are asked to wear hats, gloves, boots, etc. during the winter months. If your child is feeling too ill for gross motor play, please keep your child home so he/she may rest and return to school when feeling well.

Child Discipline

Self-discipline is a necessary life skill that is arrived at through appropriate guidance and individual effort. Montessori environments are designed to aid children in the development of self-discipline within a framework of freedom with responsibility. The developmentally appropriate design of each environment provides a setting in which children can develop the ability to responsibly guide their own choices and behavior. Adults in the environment facilitate and support the development of socially appropriate interactions. Children are guided and expected to behave respectfully toward themselves,



each other, and their physical environment, thereby ensuring a safe and secure learning environment for all. All expectations of behavior, conflict-resolution, and limits are based on an understanding of the development of children in each environment.

At Leelanau Montessori, we believe in natural and logical consequences as opposed to punishment. Natural consequences (an ordinary and automatic result based on the choices one makes) are most effective at redirecting children's behavior. Natural consequences motivate children to analyze situations and make decisions based on wisdom, rather than make decisions based on what they perceive the adult will do to them (punishment) or for them (reward). When a natural consequence is ineffective or unsafe for the child to experience, adults in the environment may design logical consequences to redirect behavior. Logical consequences provide guidance for children's immediate behavior and establish boundaries for future behavior.

Within this framework of discipline, children develop the ability to acknowledge and take responsibility for their actions and to learn from their mistakes. The development of self-discipline is fostered and this crucial life skill is developed for the long-term benefit of the child.

Peace Process (Conflict Resolution)

From time to time, many of us find we have concerns that need to be addressed. This is a natural part of being a community and something we fully support. When working with the children of Leelanau Montessori, we have a peace process that is modeled and supported for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This process includes talking respectfully to the person they have a concern with and expressing their feelings appropriately. The Peace Process promotes the following attributes and skills:

- Treating conflict matter-of-factly
- Diffusing conflict situations before moving to problem-solving
- Communicating calmly
- Acknowledging feelings
- Listening to all children
- Problem-solving collaboratively
- Empowering children
- Providing follow-up support once children act on their decisions

Grievance Policy

As adults, we have our own peace process to facilitate healthy communication in our community. If a parent/guardian has a concern about something happening at school they are asked to follow the protocol laid out below:

1) If the concern is specifically regarding a faculty/staff member or a situation that occurred in their classroom community, the parent/guardian will discuss with the faculty/staff member first. The staff member will inform the Head of School of the issue and what action was/will be taken.



2) If the concern cannot be resolved with this first step, the parent/guardian will discuss it with the involved staff member and their supervisor. The supervisor will inform the Head of School of the issue and what action was/will be taken.

3) If the concern cannot be resolved with this second step, the parent/guardian will submit a written request for a conference to the Head of School. If the concern is regarding the Head of School, the parent/guardian should submit a written request for a conference to the Board. This request should include the following:

- The specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it,
- The respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or the child of the complainant) has been adversely affected,
- The action the complainant wishes to be taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action is needed.

4) If matter is still not resolved, the complainant shall request, in writing, a hearing by the Board

For unresolved grievances pertaining to GSRP policies, a TBAISD Early Childhood Specialist (ECS) will be included in the process. If the grievance is still unresolved, the complainant shall be given contact information for the TBAISD Director of Early Childhood Programs.

Licensing Notebook

The program maintains a "Licensing Notebook" that contains all Inspection Reports, and all Corrective Action Reports. This Notebook is kept in the Leelanau Montessori office and is available to parents or guardians to review during regular business hours

Confidentiality

All information obtained by the LMPSA-GSRP will remain confidential and not be disclosed to parties other than G.S.R.P. staff members and the Michigan Department of Education without prior written consent of parent(s) or guardian(s).

School Calendar

The school calendar is mailed home to parents in August and is available online at the school's website: <http://www.leelanaumontessori.org/event-calendar>

Home Visits

Leelanau Montessori offers two home visits per school year. The goal of the home visit is to enhance your child's educational experience by providing individualized time with each family. The first visit will take place before your child begins school. Your child's guide will contact you to schedule this informal 60-minute visit, which will allow us to begin building a relationship with your family and a bridge for your child between home and school. The second visit will occur in spring. There will be time to answer your questions as well.



Parent Involvement

Children who are successful in school have strong and positive connections between family, school, and community. Parent involvement in the learning process strengthens learning at home and is linked to positive child outcomes. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to participate at the level they are most comfortable. We encourage parents to be involved by:

- Volunteering in the classroom (reading books, interacting in play, helping at cleanup time)
- Attending parent meetings/workshops
- Attending family education events
- Serving on an advisory committee
- Sharing skills, talents, and interests with the class

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year. During these conferences we discuss how your child is doing, ask and answer questions, and develop a plan to address any areas of concern or particular interest. Parent conferences are mandated as part of the Department of Education's GSRP Grant. The program schedules several different days and times for the conferences to ensure that parents are able to attend.

Local Advisory Committee

Every county in Michigan is part of a Great Start Collaborative. Every Collaborative includes parents, service providers, partners and stakeholders who contribute their time and expertise to help make sure children receive the best care and education we can provide.

- Locally the Great Start Collaborative Traverse Bay consists of: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau Counties.

Data Analysis

Our preschool program participates in monthly Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) meetings. This is a process that uses database problem solving to integrate academic and behavioral instruction and intervention for students who are in need of additional supports within the classroom.

- If a parent or teacher has concerns about a child's academic, behavior, or social progress at any time throughout the year, this child may be brought up at MTSS in order to put in place helpful interventions. Parent permission is required to bring up your child at these meetings. **Student names are kept confidential.**

School Readiness Advisory Committee



Due to the rural nature of the 5 county region, this committee consists of multiple collaborative efforts of existing groups including: Great Start Collaborative, 5toOne Parent Groups, Great Start Parent Coalition, Great Start Readiness Program Parent Advisory Committees, Great Start to Quality Northwest Resource Center and continuous opportunities for feedback using technology. The School Readiness Advisory Committee meets as needed for special issues not currently addressed within existing structures.

Great Start Parent Coalition

This is a volunteer group of parents *working to ensure that all families have access to information, programs, and services in their communities.*

If you would like to be involved in any of these committees, please contact TBAISD Early Childhood Office at 231-922-6437 or find us at www.facebook.com/greatstartparents

Parent Notice of Program Measurement

Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy is required to work with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to measure the effect of the statewide GSRP. Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MDE might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers, etc....
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law.

Questions? Contact: mde-grsp@michigan.gov or 517-373-8483

Or MDE, Office of Great Start, 608 W. Allegan, PO Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909

The following policies are found in the Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy Student/Parent Handbook and should be reviewed:

Accident and Emergency Policies
Child Neglect/Abuse
Communication
Medication Policy
Transportation
Weather Policy

We invite you to ask questions and wonder with us about your amazing child whenever you feel moved to do so. We consider our partnership with you an integral part in fostering your child's potential. Thank you for all you do!



Receipt of Parent Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy GSRP Parent Handbook as well as the Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy Parent/Student Handbook. I understand and agree to follow these policies as they pertain to my child's school experience.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian Name(s)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date