



*Family Handbook*  
*2024-2025*

Dear Kindernest Families,

Welcome to the Kindernest community!!

Our school is rooted in the Montessori philosophy, which celebrates every child's unique potential and the role of the prepared environment in their development. Maria Montessori described the early years of life as the period of the "**absorbent mind**," when children have an extraordinary ability to absorb knowledge and experiences from their surroundings. At Kindernest, we embrace this critical period by providing a beautiful, engaging environment that supports curiosity, creativity, and learning through hands-on exploration.

Community is at the heart of everything we do at Kindernest. We are committed to creating a space where every family feels welcomed, valued, and heard. The relationships we build with families are vital to helping your child feel secure and confident as they embark on this learning journey.

Please take some time to read this handbook. We have outlined our policies and procedures in an effort to be clear and to set a framework for the school year.

Thank you,  
The Kindernest Montessori Team

## *Our Mission*

### **Preparation for Life, Education for Peace, Joy, and A Community for Children**

#### **Preparation for Life:**

***"A child is a discoverer. He is an amorphous splendid being in search of his own proper form."***

Dr. Maria Montessori

Kindernest Montessori prepares children to thrive, grow, and develop greater independence and self-confidence. Purposeful activities, multi-age classrooms, adult and peer role models, and an exceptional curriculum prepare the students to participate meaningfully and skillfully in an ever-changing world.

#### **Education for Peace, Joy, and A Community for Children:**

The classroom and school community is a place for joy, developing friendships, and understanding how to live and work in a community environment.

- One of our foundations is the belief that children need freedom within limits. This means we have ground rules that govern the school, classrooms, and individual behavior. Each person is an example of how we conduct ourselves within the community. We are a caring community that advocates a peaceful resolution to problems and seeks favorable resolutions in and out of the classroom.

The structure of our day, codes of conduct, and curriculum encourage increased independence by learning to care for themselves and problem-solve. When children gain independence, they feel a natural sense of joy with increased independence and connection to their community. Children can experience the materials and our curriculum, allowing experimentation, exploration, and joyful work.

There will be points in the fall when teachers ask you to allow your child to enter the classroom independently, hang their coat, put on their slippers, and begin their day. This is the first step in taking ownership of developing skills and actively participating in the community.

## **A Community for Children:**

***"Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future."***

Dr. Maria Montessori

The Kinderneest Montessori classrooms are part of a loving community where all members actively support one another while successfully pursuing their development and interests. Children, families, and staff carry this sense of interconnectedness and responsibility into the community.

**We are a community focused on doing that, which serves children best.**

## **Our Core Values**

### **Respect:**

Respect for children and one another is vital. Every day, we embody compassion and integrity—qualities essential to education for peace.

### **Asking What Serves Children:**

Our community exists to serve children; we continually ask how we may better serve each child.

### **Purposeful Work:**

We support children's efforts to improve their world through their work. We honor the many "languages" children learn and innovate.

### **Autonomy and Collaboration:**

A collaborative community of autonomous individuals mirrors the interconnected nature of all things. We give children first-hand experience of how collaboration yields powerful results.

### **Learning and Teaching In Meaningful Contexts:**

We provide a dynamic environment to encourage personal growth, intellectual curiosity, and joy through play.

### **Working within the Framework of the Montessori Education and Emergent Curriculum:**

As an early childhood school dedicated to joy and learning, we value a thoughtful, well-prepared, purposeful, and peaceful learning environment. Each classroom has a full complement of Montessori materials and trained teachers. We combine materials that help and support children's natural sense of wonder and curiosity while supporting the acquisition of skills and knowledge that will serve them as they grow.

**Personnel:**

Our school structure consists of three components: Kindernest, the Early Childhood Director, & the teaching staff.

**Kindernest Montessori Administrative Office:**

Phone: (617) 893-8187

Web: [www.kindernestmontessori.org](http://www.kindernestmontessori.org)

**Kindernest Montessori Facebook Page:**

[www.facebook.com/Kindernestmontessori](https://www.facebook.com/Kindernestmontessori)

Like us on Facebook for daily pictures, articles, and Kindernest Montessori news.

**Kindernest Montessori Tax ID:99-1262153**

## **Kindernest Montessori Programs & Information:**

The school offers early childhood programs for the greater Boston community. It is located in Newton Highlands, at the intersection of Center Street and Rt 9.

### **School Schedule:**

We are open five days a week, 7:30am-5:30pm, except for designated federal holidays, professional development, and school vacations. The regular school year begins in September and ends in June. The summer programs run on a modified schedule for July and August.

Our core program hours are 8:00am-12:00pm for half day or 8:00am-3:00pm for full day.

We offer Before School care from 7:30am-8:00am and Extended Day care from 3:00pm-5:30pm.

### **Calendar:**

Kindernest Montessori follows the Newton Public school calendar for most school closings.

The school will be closed for December winter break, February school vacation week and April school vacation week.

We are happy to provide a Vacation camp option during February and April on a modified schedule. A registration will be sent to all enrolled families. Space will be limited. (There is not a December camp).

The annual calendar is distributed to families during enrollment, is posted on the web and in the school.

The classroom teachers distribute monthly event calendars and email them. These calendars include special events and daily reminders (e.g., Music, art day, field trips, etc.).

### **Summer Programs:**

Kindernest Montessori offers a complete Summer Program from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Care is provided for six weeks. Each week offers a wide variety of experiences in the classroom and outdoors.

Our summer programs are for enrolled families and newly enrolled families for the upcoming year.

Space is limited.

### **School Closings:**

Kindernest Montessori will close when Newton Public Schools call a no school day due to weather. Should the school need to be closed, you will be notified through the ProCare app and information will be on our website. If Newton Public School calls schools to close during the school day, we will notify you through ProCare that we are closing and ask you to arrange pickup within the hour. If the building loses heat and the inside temperature falls lower than 64 degrees, if the building's AC unit fails and the temperature raises higher than 78 degrees, or if

there is a loss of water we will notify you through ProCare that the school is closing and ask you to arrange pickup within the hour.

### **Shelter in Place and Crisis Plan policy:**

Kindernest Montessori will attempt to respond fully and promptly in the event of a crisis within the boundaries of the safety and privacy of the students, staff, and parents. Possible crises to consider are fire, hurricane, bomb threat, explosion, an intruder in the building or an unsafe situation outside the building. If a crisis occurs, parents will be alerted to the situation after the danger has passed and staff members are able to communicate safely via email or ProCare.

### **Enrollment Registration and Deposit:**

At Kindernest Montessori, we offer flexible enrollment options to welcome families into our authentic Montessori environment.

### **Enrollment Options**

#### **1. Late Fall 2024 Enrollment**

- Available for children starting in **November and December 2024**. This late fall entry offers a gentle transition for children joining just before the new year.

#### **2. Winter 2025 Enrollment**

- **January 2025** is a natural time to start after the closure of the winter holiday. Custom start dates are available through winter and spring to best fit your family's needs.

#### **3. Summer 2025 Program**

- Our summer program runs from **July 7 to August 15, 2025, on a modified schedule of 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM**. Summer tuition is prorated, and families can choose enrollment by the month (July, August, or both). Note that our summer program is open only to enrolled families or those enrolled for **Fall 2025**; we do not accept summer-only enrollments.
- Summer registration will begin on February 1, 2025

#### **4. Fall 2025 Enrollment**

- **Fall 2025** marks the start of our regular school year, running from **September 2025 to June 2026**. Our schedule aligns with the Newton Public School calendar for holidays and weather-related closures.

### **Monthly Tuition Payments:**

- Tuition is paid monthly by the first day of each month. A bill will be posted on ProCare two weeks before the due date. ProCare automatic debits will be charged on or about the first of the month.
- You can sign up for an automatic credit card or checking account debit through our app.
- We do not accept cash payments.

**Late Fees:**

- All amounts not paid by the 1st day of the month are delinquent and subject to a late fee of \$40.00 per day after the 5th of each month. Enrollment may be suspended unless payment or payment arrangements are made by the 5th of the month.

**Financial Aid:**

Kindernest is pleased to offer limited financial assistance for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Program Hours**

- **Before-School Care:** 7:30-8:00 AM
- **Core Program:** 8:00-12:00 PM or 8:00-3:00 PM
- **After-School Program:** 3:00-5:30 PM

Our school observes breaks for federal holidays, December break, and school breaks in **February** and **April**. For an extra fee, we offer modified care for families needing additional support during February and April.

**Enrollment Steps**

1. **Submit an Application and Pay the Registration Fee**
  - Complete the application form on our website and pay a **non-refundable registration fee of \$250.00**. After submission, you'll receive instructions to download our Procure app for communication, billing, and updates. For reenrolling families, the registration fee is \$75.00.
2. **Schedule a Consultation**
  - Once we receive your application, we'll contact you to discuss the best start date for your child's enrollment.
3. **One-Month Core Tuition Deposit**
  - A **one-month core tuition deposit** is required to secure your child's program placement. This deposit is due within **7 days of acceptance** into the program. Please note:
    - Families who do not complete this deposit within 7 days will lose their spot and will need to reapply.
    - This deposit is applied to the last month of care in your selected enrollment period.

**Sibling Discounts and Admissions:**

**A 5% discount is given on core tuition for the 2nd and third child enrollment.**

Family is important to us at Kindernest, and we always welcome and encourage sibling applicants. While we give admissions priority to siblings, space must be available in the applicable program.



**Withdrawal:**

If you need to withdraw before the end of the school year (September-June), you must give a 60-day notice. Families that do not give a 60-day withdrawal notice will forfeit their deposit.

**Required School Forms:**

The following forms are required, either by the school or by the State of Massachusetts, for a child's school file. Children may **not** begin school until **all** forms are returned to the school office:

- Application
- Enrollment Agreement
- Emergency Contact Information Form
- Immunization and Health Records
- Parent's Report of Child's Developmental Health History
- All applicable fees

**Policies and Procedures****Door Code:**

Your code will only work during the school day from 7:30am-5:30pm.

For the safety and security of our community, please do not give your code to your child or siblings, friends, or relatives.

**Before School Day Program:**

Kindernest Montessori offers before school care from 7:30am-8:00am. The fee is \$40 per day for the whole month. At drop off, you will walk your child into the building and to their classroom.

**Arrival:**

The smooth flow of our programs largely depends on the children's prompt arrival and departure. This is an essential lesson in grace and courtesy.

Arrival time is between 8:00-8:20. The classroom morning meetings start promptly at 8:30.

**Drop Off:**

We suggest you start your goodbye routine before leaving home for school. Tell your child what is going to happen; you can say something like this:

Once you are on your way, you can remind your child what will happen. We have found that consistency and clarity help children have an easier transition. Please allow plenty of time for your child to get dressed and eat breakfast before coming to school.

At drop off, you will walk your child into the building and to their cubby area outside their classroom. After the transition process, parents should say goodbye outside the door to the classroom, allowing their child to walk in on their own, encouraging a quick goodbye. While we understand that it is difficult to leave if your child is upset, drawing out your departure only makes this process more difficult for them.

### **Late Arrivals:**

Arriving late is disorienting for children, who often feel left out of group activities.

- If arriving late is unavoidable, please say goodbye at the door and let your child walk in or signal a teacher for assistance. Remember to sign your child in ProCare.
- **Please do not make arriving after 8:30 a regular habit; often, children arriving late have difficulty integrating into the classroom and school day.**

### **Absence**

- Generally, students miss a few school days each year because of illness, emergencies, or family vacations. No fee adjustments will be made for these absences, as the child's space is reserved while absent.
- When a child is going to be absent, please let us know through the ProCare app or the main Kindernest Montessori Office.

### **Things to remember:**

- Establish a consistent weekly/daily routine with your child
- Knowing what to expect can help your child's day go smoothly.
- Follow your routine
- Always say goodbye and leave the classroom as soon as possible. The shorter your goodbye, the easier it is for your child to transition into school.
- Always say goodbye to your child; do not sneak away when they are not looking. This can break the child's trust and make future drop-offs very difficult.

Please do not bring strollers into the classroom or leave them in the hallway for the school day.

Let your child walk into the school and the classroom (preschool and walking toddlers). It may take longer, but this helps to establish independence.

While we encourage you to meet other families in the school, we ask that you be mindful of the classroom environment and talk with other parents when you leave the classroom. There is space in the main hallway to sit and have conversations. Many adults in the classroom can make it difficult for children to settle.

**Families are asked to bring the items below on the first day:**

1. Potted herb or bamboo plant for the classroom to care for during the year (Any safe plant like a snake plant)
2. Framed 5x7 family photo (No glass on the frame)
3. Two rolls of paper towel
4. Two boxes of tissue
5. One small bottle of Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap—Lavender. This organic cleaner can be purchased at Whole Foods, Target, and many grocery stores. We use it to clean with the children and maintain a clean environment.
6. Photo of child's face, passport size (we use these for labeling, cubbies and other items along with the child's name to help them recognize their things and begin to recognize their name in print.)
7.
  - Infants and Toddlers should have at least 3 full changes of clothes (including socks) labeled clearly. Exploration at this age is essential, your child WILL get wet and dirty pretty much every day. Soiled/wet clothes will be sent home at the end of the day and we ask that you send in replacements the following day. Teachers will let you know if you are running low on anything in particular. Please send a full package of diapers, wipes, and cream, all labeled. Please no pull ups.
  - Preschoolers should have 2 full changes of clothes (including socks) labeled clearly.

**Toys at Drop off:**

Please do not bring toys or valuable home items to school.

Any items that a child may be attached to, (lovies, or blankets), can be brought to school in a bag where the child cannot see it and can be brought out at nap time. If your child has a strong attachment to an item that they tend to carry throughout the day, the teacher can work with you on a plan to transition them away from it.

## **Departure from Preschool and Curbside Pickup:**

**The mid-day pickup is: 11:50-12:00**

**The afternoon pickup is: 2:50-3:00**

1. Put your child's name card on the passenger side of your dashboard.
2. Pull into the pickup zone in front of the school. If you arrive early, you may need to wait in the lot.
3. Keep your place in line and pull ahead in the pickup zone.
4. Please stay IN your car.
5. Ensure your car seat is on the RIGHT passenger side of the car.
6. WAIT for a teacher to bring your child to the car and buckle them in.
7. Please check to make sure your child is safely buckled in.
8. Pull forward in the pickup zone so another car can take your place.
9. Please do not park and exit your car in the pickup zone during dismissal. If you need to get out of your car, please park in an open space in the main lot.

Children who remain for Extended Day will be dismissed inside the building from 3:00 to 5:30 when their adult comes in to pick them up.

### **Late Pickup:**

Punctuality is a sign of respect for the work we do. While we understand that occasional delays happen and Boston traffic can be unpredictable, we kindly ask that you plan accordingly for your commute from home or work. Please remember that our teachers' schedules are based on the number of children in care by state-mandated ratios. Respecting our teachers' time is essential, as they also have families and commitments outside of school.

Frequent late pickups can cause stress for your child and the teachers and disrupt the flow of our day. While we recognize that late fees don't always change behavior, we will implement a fee structure to address this issue. After the second late pickup, a \$30 fee will be applied following the grace period of 5 minutes, with an additional \$10 charged for each minute thereafter.

Please note that at the school's discretion, families who are habitually late for aftercare (three or more times) may have their child's program and extended days reduced.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### **Car seats:**

- Car seats must be on the right side of the car so teachers can quickly and safely put their child in it. If your car seat is not on the right side, please park and walk to the dismissal area.
- Please do not get out of your car for safety.
- Teachers will put your child in your vehicle and buckle them in their car seat.
- **If you have more than one child to pick up, park in the lot and pick up the children from the teacher.**

- We require that children remain seated while waiting to get picked up in the afternoon so we can expedite the pickup process and ensure children's safety.
- ***We cannot put children in cars without a legally required car seat.***

#### **Consent for Dismissal:**

Children will be released only to those whose names appear on the Emergency Consent Form or for whom the parent/guardian has written a note permitting their child's pickup. is required. Please send a Procure message if someone on your pickup list is picking up.

We will not release your child to anyone on your list without your permission.

#### **Extended Day Program:**

Kindernest Montessori offers extended day care from 3:00pm to 5:30pm. You will come into the building and pick up your child at their classroom. The fee is \$140 per day of the week for the whole month.

#### **Respectful Dialogue:**

##### **Communication Guidelines for Families:**

At Kindernest Montessori, transparent, respectful communication is essential for building a strong partnership between families and the school. Our communication guidelines are rooted in Montessori principles of respect, collaboration, and community and are designed to foster a positive and supportive environment for your child's growth and development.

- **Modeling Grace and Courtesy:**  
Children learn by observing the adults around them in Montessori education. We ask that all communication with staff, other families, and children reflect grace, courtesy, and respect. This includes face-to-face conversations, written communication, and any exchanges on social media.
- **Kindness and Patience:**  
Be mindful that children are observing your interactions. We encourage a calm and thoughtful discussion approach, especially when addressing concerns.
- **Partnership with the School:**  
We value open dialogue and collaboration with families. If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions about your child's experience, please get in touch with your child's teacher or the school administration. We are here to listen and work together to resolve any issues.

- **Problem-Solving Together:**  
Montessori emphasizes cooperation. If challenges arise, let's work together respectfully to find solutions that benefit your child and the community.
- **Concerns and Issues:**  
If you have concerns about your child's classroom, teacher, or school, please communicate directly with us. We are committed to addressing concerns constructively and promptly.
- **Written Communication:**  
Communication should be clear, concise, and respectful, whether through email or other written formats. We encourage you to express your concerns thoughtfully, considering the shared goal of supporting your child's well-being. We are committed to clear and constructive feedback.

#### **Confidentiality and Privacy:**

- **Respect for Privacy:**  
As part of our Montessori values, we ask families to respect the privacy of other children, families, and staff members. Avoid discussing personal information about other students or teachers publicly or on social media. Instead, focus on your child's individual experience.
- **School Policies:**  
When sharing classroom updates or photos, please adhere to the school's communication policies, including confidentiality agreements.

#### **Positive Social Media Engagement:**

- **Supportive Online Presence:**  
We encourage positivity and gratitude when sharing your experience with Kinderneest Montessori on social media. If issues arise, please address them privately with the school rather than publicly on social platforms. This aligns with Montessori's value of respectful, direct communication.
- **School Representation:**  
When posting about the school, you represent Kinderneest Montessori and the wider community. We ask that social media engagement remain respectful and align with our school's values.

### **Grace in Difficult Situations**

- **Handling Conflicts:**

If a disagreement or misunderstanding occurs, approach the situation with a Montessori mindset—respect, grace, and the desire to understand. We believe in addressing conflicts calmly and constructively.

- **Scheduled Meetings:**

If an issue requires further discussion, we may request a meeting with the family. Should concerns persist, we will continue to work together through respectful dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

However, if communication becomes disrespectful or aggressive, we will arrange a meeting to address the situation. If there is a second incident, the school reserves the right to suspend or terminate the child's enrollment.

### **Parent Involvement and Education:**

We believe in strong partnerships between parents and teachers. Regular communication, parent-teacher conferences, and opportunities for observation keep families informed and engaged in their child's learning. We also offer parent education nights and community events to foster connections.

### **Parent visitation:**

Kindernest Montessori supports and encourages unannounced visits by parents to the program and their child's classroom at any time while their child is present. {Ma EEC Reg: FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND PARENT VISITATION 7.08 (4)}

### **Conferences (Fall & Spring):**

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year in December and April. These conferences allow parents to speak individually with their child's teachers to hear about the child's progress and the teacher's goals for the child. Conferences are an opportunity for parents to give teachers additional information about their children. It is best if both parents attend the conferences. Please check the school calendar for the exact dates and keep this time available. Teachers will schedule conferences at any time, with parent requests in mind. All families will receive written conference reports in the fall and Spring.

## **Transitions before you start at Kinderneest:**

**All children must have at least (3-5) 1-hour transitions into the classroom with a familiar adult.** Children starting in the summer program will transition in June, and children starting in the fall will transition in August. We have set aside time for this. Transition hours will gradually increase during the transition week as the child becomes comfortable. Your classroom teacher will contact you to confirm a transition schedule and your availability before you start at Kinderneest.

Some children need a more extended transition period to school. We may ask you to extend the transition until your child is settled. We will work with families on a case-by-case basis.

We have found that extra time during the transition can help set an excellent foundation for your child's time at Kinderneest.

### **Special Transition Considerations:**

If your child does not speak English or has special circumstances when they start school, we will develop a transition plan/schedule based on their needs.

### **Mid-Year Transitions from Infants to Toddlers and Toddlers to Preschool:**

Transitions are made mid-year when space is available. The infant child must be 15mos or older and developmentally ready. Transitions may happen in January, July, or September.

Children transitioning from the toddler to the preschool classroom mid-year must be toilet trained before they do so. A toddler teacher will accompany your child to the classrooms for at least three transition days.

### **Starting School Routine:**

It takes new children 8-12 weeks to feel entirely comfortable with their new environment. We require a transition of 3-5 days before the first full day. We also recommend that you talk with your child about the school and their new routine.

We have found that most children need ample morning transition time. Talk with your child at home about what is happening each day. One example:

"After breakfast we are going to get in the car and go to your classroom. Once we are there I will help you put your backpack away. I will give you a kiss and leave."

Please give your child plenty of time to adjust to the routine of coming to school and give them a consistent routine. We are happy to help with suggestions.



### **Classroom Communities:**

There are three different communities at Kinderneest, each based on mixed-age groupings:

**Infant Community** is for children three months to 14 months

This program enrolls up to 7 children per class with two to three teachers based on usage.

**The Toddler Community** is for children aged 15 months to 2.8 years old.

This program enrolls up to 9 children per class with two to three teachers based on usage.

**The Preschool Community** is for children aged 2.9 to 5 years.

This program enrolls up to 18 children and two to three teachers based on usage.

### **Fully Present Caregivers:**

Our adult caregivers are fully present with the children, focused on interaction and building meaningful relationships. Caregivers guide toddlers through daily routines such as diapering and toileting, which are handled with patience, respect, and consistency. We believe in maintaining predictable routines to help children feel safe and secure.

## **Infant Program (3 months - 15 months)**

Our infant program is designed to create a nurturing, respectful, and responsive environment for your child. Inspired by Montessori and RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) philosophies, we build trusting relationships with each baby through attentive caregiving and observation.

### **Respectful and Responsive Relationships**

Infants thrive when they feel secure and understood. Our caregivers observe and respond to each child's cues, helping them feel seen and respected. We build strong bonds by sensitively and carefully meeting infants' feeding, diapering, and sleep needs.

### **Feeding, Diapering, and Safe Sleep:**

Routines such as feeding, and diapering are approached with care and respect. We explain our actions to the babies, allowing them to feel included in their care. For example, "I see that you are ready for a change. I'm going to change your diaper now." Safe sleep practices are followed according to guidelines, ensuring your child's well-being and safety.

Bottles are necessary for infants, please label them clearly with child's first and last name. If your child is formula fed, please provide a sufficient amount of bottles for the day that will be prefilled with water, along with premeasured formula. Breastmilk is also welcomed. Please send in labeled containers, either storage bags or bottles. Bottles will be warmed under warm running tap water. We encourage the transition from a bottle to a cup with a straw, as well as practice with an open cup at 12 months. When your child is ready to begin solid foods, your

child's teacher is happy to collaborate with you about your plans. If you are a nursing parent, you are welcome to visit the classroom at any time to nurse your child.

**Infant Pacifiers:** For infants, pacifiers are allowed. Teachers will work on transitioning away from their use as the babies approach 12 months (or sooner if the child seems ready). Pacifiers may be used to soothe babies to sleep and will be removed from the sleeping space if it falls from the babies mouth when they are asleep. Pacifiers need to be clearly labeled and will not be left in the play areas for other children to use.

**Gross Motor Development, Play, and Movement:**

Tummy time, free movement, and other motor activities are critical components of our infant program. We provide infants with space to explore and move, encouraging the development of coordination and physical strength. Movement supports not only physical development but also cognitive and emotional growth.

**Language Development:**

Talking, reading, and singing are central to our daily routines. We foster early language development by engaging in conversation with infants, narrating our actions, and reading books. Simple songs and rhymes enrich the language environment and promote early communication skills.

**Responding with Action When Babies Are Ready:**

We practice responsive caregiving, which includes telling babies what is happening and waiting for their response. This approach respects the baby's autonomy and helps them feel involved in their own care. For example, "I see that you are ready to get up. I'm going to pick you up now." We wait for signs of readiness before proceeding, allowing the child to participate in the process.

**Toddler Program (15 months - 3 years)**

The toddler age is a dynamic and vital time for growth and development. It is often the first-time children are in a group setting, and one of our primary goals is to help them navigate this new experience while fostering their growing sense of independence and autonomy.

At Kindernest, we value and honor each child's unique developmental stage, communication style, and needs. Our caregivers observe carefully, ensuring they understand where your child is developmentally and provide the proper support. Consistency in caregiving and a familiar, predictable routine help toddlers feel secure and empowered.

### **Montessori and RIE Approach to Toddlers**

At Kindernest, our toddler curriculum blends Montessori and RIE philosophies, focusing on developing **autonomy, building relationships, and the natural progression of each child's development**. Our curriculum is rich in sensory, language, and social experiences that encourage children to explore, learn, and grow at their own pace. We support toddlers in gaining the skills they need to become independent, confident, and socially aware individuals. We emphasize **independence**, and children are given opportunities to participate actively in their daily routines. From simple tasks like hanging up their coats to more complex activities like setting the table for lunch, toddlers are involved in every aspect of their day. We believe that children thrive when they feel like participants rather than passive observers, so we communicate each step of the way to ensure they understand what is happening.

### **Independence and Problem-Solving**

We create clear and age-appropriate routines for toddlers, providing time for discovery, problem-solving, and the development of resilience. Allowing children to struggle and solve problems with appropriate adult support fosters a sense of self and the confidence to tackle challenges. Toddlers interact and socialize with their peers, and we give them the time and space to understand and respond in their own ways.

### **Supporting Social and Emotional Development:**

Each day, we focus on supporting the growth and development of this sensitive and robust time. Through our rich curriculum, toddlers engage in activities that spark interest and curiosity. Social-emotional learning is integrated into daily interactions, helping toddlers understand how to manage their feelings and communicate effectively with others.

### **Kindernest Biting Policy**

At Kindernest Montessori, we understand that biting is a common and normal behavior during toddler development. Toddlers are in a phase where they are learning to express themselves, and biting can sometimes occur as a result of frustration, teething, or a lack of language skills. Our approach to handling biting is grounded in respect, understanding, and teaching appropriate behaviors.

For Toddlers (12 months to 3 years):

Biting among toddlers is recognized as part of their developmental process. Our response to biting includes:

- **Observation and Adjustment:** We carefully observe the environment to identify triggers for the biting behavior and make necessary adjustments. This could involve modifying the physical space, providing additional language modeling, or offering alternative ways for the child to express themselves.
- **Immediate Response:** The child who is bitten is addressed first, comforted and any necessary first aid administered. When a child bites, we explain that biting hurts and offer alternatives, such as using words to express their feelings or engaging in sensory activities that meet their developmental needs.

- **Communication with Parents:** When biting occurs, both the parents of the child who is bitten, and the child who bites, will be notified. If biting persists or occurs more than three times in a short period, we will communicate with the family to develop a collaborative plan that supports the child in learning new behaviors. This plan may involve additional language support or changes to their daily routine.
- **Maintaining a Safe Environment:** We maintain a close watch on children who are known to bite and work to prevent future incidents by keeping the classroom calm, well-supervised, and developmentally appropriate.

Biting in toddlers is expected and managed with care, understanding that each child develops at their own pace.

### **Outdoor Time and Gross Motor Development:**

Outdoor time and gross motor development are pivotal to our toddler program. Toddlers need time and space to move, play, and explore their physical abilities. We provide ample opportunities for them to engage in gross motor activities, both indoors and outdoors. Sensory activities and language development are central to our curriculum, allowing toddlers to experience new textures, sounds, and words daily.

### **Dressing and Undressing:**

Dressing and undressing are essential parts of the toddler routine. Clothing, such as items with elastic waistbands, should be easy to manipulate to allow toddlers to be as independent as possible. We encourage children to take ownership of their bodies, offering consistent opportunities to practice dressing and undressing independently.

### **Eating in the Toddler Classroom:**

Eating is another favorite part of the day for toddlers. Children are allowed to eat and drink according to their individual needs, and we view the eating experience as an opportunity to foster independence and self-care. Toddlers sit with their caregivers, participating in setting the table, serving themselves, and using utensils. We promote healthy, fresh food; children can explore and enjoy meals without pressure.

### **Cups in the Toddler Classroom:**

When children begin in the toddler class we will help transition them to drink from an open cup while sitting at the table. We will provide each child with their own stainless steel mug labeled with their name and photo, that they can use at any time to get themselves water.

Please send a water bottle with a straw for outdoor play, labeled with child's name. Please do not send sippy cups.

**Pacifiers in the Toddler Classroom:** As children enter the toddler classroom, use of pacifiers will be reduced. When arriving for the day, we ask that pacifiers be stored in the backpacks so they cannot be seen before entering the building. All pacifiers need to be clearly labeled. The

pacifier can be used during rest time, but will be removed from the sleeping space if it falls from their mouth when the child is asleep. Pacifiers will not be allowed in the preschool class.

## **Preschool Community:(2.9 Years-5.0 yr)**

### **Montessori Casa (Preschool) Environment:**

The Montessori Casa, often called the *Children's House* for preschool-aged children (3-6 years), is a thoughtfully prepared environment to support the child's holistic development. Purposeful activity promotes independence, concentration, coordination, and a deep love of learning. Each element in the classroom serves a specific role in fostering cognitive, social-emotional, and physical growth.

### **The Prepared Environment:**

The Montessori classroom, or **prepared environment**, is a carefully structured space designed to empower children to explore, learn, and engage with their surroundings. The room is child-sized, with low shelves, small furniture, and easily accessible materials. The classroom is organized into distinct areas, each focusing on different aspects of learning, and it is aesthetically designed to foster calmness, beauty, and order. The structure of the environment allows children to move freely, make independent choices, and work at their own pace. The environment's layout supports **freedom within limits**, a key Montessori principle. Children can choose activities while adhering to the community's structure and guidelines.

### **Rugs, Mats, and Work:**

- Children use cloth rugs to define their space for working on the floor and tablemats for work that is used at a table.
- We refer to all class activities as "work." We believe that children's work in the classroom is essential and that working is fun and joyful.
- Children must ask before joining another person's work, and it is acceptable to say no politely.
- We use soft voices in the classroom. However, this does not mean that the classrooms are always quiet. Children are talking, working, and collaborating. The classroom has a rhythm and periods of intense work and movement. We encourage children to talk, explore, and experiment in the classroom.

### **Work Period and Daily Schedule for Toddler & Preschool:**

The morning work period is between 2.5 and 3 hours. This allows children to work and make choices for an extended period of time. They are free to choose to work independently or in small groups. Teachers will invite children to work with them individually and in small groups.

### **Morning Meeting:**

Each classroom has a daily schedule posted so you will know the day's formation. The morning meeting starts promptly at 8:30 in all the classrooms. This is a short group time (10 minutes) when children learn about new work in the classroom, sing, dance, have stories, and set the plan for the day.

Please ensure that your child is at school and ready for the morning meeting at 8:30.

### **Outside Time:**

Fresh air and large motor activity is essential to the healthy development of children and is needed every day. In New England, the weather is often unpredictable and can change quickly. Please send your child dressed in case the weather changes.

Children go outside every day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. When the weather is warm, parts of the classroom may be moved outside. Children regularly go on nature walks and explore the areas around Kinderneest Montessori.

### **Areas of the Classroom:**

#### **1. Practical Life:**

Practical Life is the foundation of Montessori education. This classroom area provides children with activities that help them develop life skills such as **pouring, spooning, buttoning, tying, polishing, and washing**. These activities teach practical skills and promote concentration, coordination, independence, and responsibility.

The materials in the Practical Life area are simple yet elegant, often made from natural materials like wood, metal, and glass. They are designed to resemble real-life objects, scaled to a child's size, encouraging children to practice real-world tasks. Practical Life activities foster **fine motor skills, executive function**, sequencing, grace, and courtesy.

#### **2. Sensorial:**

The Sensory area focuses on helping children refine their senses and discriminate between dimensions such as size, shape, color, texture, and sound. The materials in this area are designed to isolate one quality and sharpen a specific sense, such as the **Pink Tower** (for visual discrimination of size), the **Knobbed Cylinders** (for refining tactile perception), and **Color Tablets** (for learning about color gradation).

Sensory activities help children develop classification, pattern recognition, and observation skills, laying the groundwork for later academic work in mathematics, language, and science. These materials also enhance a child's **order, focus, and problem-solving abilities**.

### 3. Mathematics:

Montessori math materials offer children a concrete understanding of numbers, quantities, and the decimal system. The activities in the math area are hands-on and sequenced from simple to complex, giving children a deep and intuitive understanding of mathematical concepts before moving to abstraction.

Essential materials include the **Number Rods** (introducing quantity), the **Golden Beads** (demonstrating the decimal system and place value), and the **Stamp Game** (teaching operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division). Children learn by manipulating these materials, developing a sense of **numeracy** and **spatial awareness**.

### 4. Language:

Children are introduced to the **alphabet**, phonetic sounds, reading, and writing in the language area. Montessori places great emphasis on phonics, and children work with materials such as **Sandpaper Letters**, which help them trace the shapes of letters while learning their corresponding sounds. This tactile experience is essential for building a connection between the physical form of the letters and their sounds, which leads to writing and reading.

**Moveable alphabets**, **classified cards**, and **phonetic objects** are used to construct words and sentences, giving children the tools to communicate effectively. Additionally, the language area nurtures **oral language development** through storytelling, vocabulary-building activities, and conversation.

### 5. Cultural Subjects:

The cultural area encompasses **geography**, **history**, **science**, **art**, and **Music**, exposing children to the world's richness. Montessori materials in this area introduce global awareness, scientific inquiry, and appreciation for art and Music.

Key materials include **puzzle maps** (for geography), **land and water forms** (for understanding physical geography), and **botany and zoology cards** (to study plants and animals). Children engage in activities that connect them to nature, science experiments, and discussions about different cultures and traditions, fostering **curiosity** and **respect for diversity**.

### 6. Art:

In Montessori, art is viewed as a form of self-expression and an opportunity to develop fine motor skills, concentration, and creativity. Children have access to a variety of art materials, such as **paints**, **clay**, **scissors**, and **drawing tools**. They can create art independently, exploring different techniques and materials.

The Montessori approach to art emphasizes the process rather than the final product. Children are encouraged to express themselves without judgment, leading to a deeper appreciation for creativity and beauty. The classroom often includes examples of famous artworks and artists, connecting children to the broader world of art history and aesthetics.

## **7. Music:**

Music is integrated into the daily life of the classroom, exposing children to rhythm, melody, and instruments. Montessori music materials include **bells, rhythm sticks, and tone bars**, helping children explore sound and pitch. Group singing, movement activities, and listening to various types of music also play an essential role in the classroom.

## **Essential Aspects of the Montessori Casa:**

### **1. Independence and Autonomy:**

The Montessori environment is designed to promote independence. Materials are accessible to children, and they can choose activities based on their interests. The child is empowered to make decisions, work at their own pace, and take responsibility for their environment, such as cleaning up after an activity or preparing their own snack.

### **2. Freedom within Limits:**

Children are free to move around the classroom and choose their activities. However, this freedom exists within a framework of clear guidelines that ensure respect for others and the environment. Children learn to navigate social interactions, care for materials, and follow routines that promote individual and collective well-being.

### **3. The Role of the Teacher:**

Montessori teachers are **guides** who observe each child, providing support when needed and stepping back to allow children to discover and learn independently. The teacher's role is to prepare the environment, offer lessons, and connect the child to the materials, allowing them to engage in **self-directed learning**.

### **4. Mixed-Age Groups:**

The Casa classroom is mixed-aged, typically accommodating children aged 3 to 6 years. This allows younger children to learn by observing older peers, while older children develop leadership skills and reinforce their knowledge by helping younger ones. This multi-age setting promotes **collaboration, empathy**, and a strong sense of community.

### **5. Focus on Hands-On Learning:**

Montessori education emphasizes concrete learning through hands-on materials before moving to abstract concepts. Whether in math, language, or science, children manipulate natural objects that help them grasp foundational ideas. This tactile learning approach builds a deep understanding of the subjects they explore.



## **6. Emphasis on Concentration and Focus:**

The Montessori environment is structured to minimize distractions, allowing children to focus on their work. Uninterrupted work periods of 2-3 hours are a hallmark of the Montessori day, providing children the time they need to fully engage with an activity, develop concentration, and experience **flow** in their learning.

## **7. Emotional and Social Development:**

Through **grace and courtesy lessons**, children learn social norms such as greeting one another, taking turns, and resolving conflicts peacefully. They also practice **empathy, self-regulation, and problem-solving**, which are essential emotional and social growth skills. The classroom fosters a respectful, caring community where each child's contributions are valued.

## **8. Joy and Beauty:**

A Montessori classroom is a place for academic learning filled with joy and beauty. The materials themselves are beautiful, often handmade and crafted with care, inviting children to work with them. The emphasis on beauty extends to the natural world, with plants, flowers, and nature tables included in the classroom to bring the outside world in.

The Montessori Casa environment provides a rich, engaging, and thoughtfully prepared space where children can learn and grow at their own pace. The Montessori classroom fosters independence, creativity, social-emotional intelligence, and a lifelong love of learning through self-directed learning, hands-on materials, and a focus on the whole child. It is a place where the child is respected, empowered, and guided toward becoming a confident, self-motivated learner.

## **Art at Kindernest:**

The art experience at Kindernest Montessori is more than mastering techniques; it explores art and art media. We expose children to high-quality materials and allow them to explore and experiment. How the media speaks to the child offers a variety of ways for the child to express themselves.

The curriculum offers art to teach skills, concepts, and aesthetic sensitivity.

### **Art is an experience of:**

- Investigation
- Collaboration
- Relationship
- Observation

Art is a way of visible thinking and expression.

Creativity comes from learning how to use materials in many ways. Once that is mastered, experimentation and the creative process begin to grow in the child.

You may also see materials in the classroom that help the child learn about function and process. One example is a cutting exercise that allows small motor development. The cuttings are used in collages and other projects in the classroom.

**Portfolios:**

Every child has an art portfolio kept at the school with samples and photographs of art development and classroom activity during the year. This portfolio will be reviewed with parents at the conferences in the fall and Spring. Parents may look at it at any time during the year. It will be sent home at the spring conference.

Artwork comes home as children finish projects.

**Art History:**

Each year, we explore the work of two artists. This is a school-wide project and connects to our trips to the MFA.

The children learn about the particular artist and how they developed their thinking, art, and concepts. Children will connect with many other artists while exploring the featured artists for the semester.

## **Toilet Learning:**

### **Toilet Learning in the Toddler Community:**

We approach toilet learning in the toddler classroom naturally and easily. The children have a small toilet that the teachers introduce when they are developmentally ready and in coordination with home. Toilet learning begins by allowing children to observe toileting routines in the classroom, treating the process as a natural part of daily life. Children are never forced into toilet learning but are instead given the support and encouragement to become independent at their own pace.

We watch for signs of readiness, such as:

1. Staying dry during the night or for extended periods during the day
2. Regular bowel movements at consistent times
3. Communicating awareness of needing to use the toilet
4. Physical ability to sit on the toilet and pull pants up and down

We discuss the process with families to ensure we are working together. Toilet learning is supported with small toilets and opportunities for stand-up diapering, allowing children to feel more in control of the process.

### **Preschool Children:**

Children are not required to be toilet trained before entering preschool, but we highly recommend they actively work on independent toileting.

Using the bathroom and independent toileting are essential to the emerging preschool child's work. If your child is still in diapers when you begin at Kindernest, the staff will work with you to develop a plan that can be followed at school in coordination with home.

### **Grace and Courtesy at Kindernest:**

Each classroom's underlying goal is to help children develop a sense of community. It is essential that children learn how to function within a community, and this starts with learning how to be independent.

This begins with the messages we give children as they begin their day at school. We ask that children in the preschool (and walking toddlers) walk into the school and hang up their own things in their cubbies. Transitioning may take longer, but it is essential for developing independent skills.

Please do not carry your child into the classroom.

## **Eating at Kindernest:**

### **Farm-to-Table Food Philosophy at Kindernest Montessori:**

At Kindernest Montessori, we embrace a farm-to-table food philosophy emphasizing fresh, nutritious, locally sourced ingredients to nourish our children. Our commitment to providing high-quality meals is rooted in the belief that what we eat directly impacts our well-being, growth, and learning. By offering wholesome and delicious food, we foster a positive relationship with eating while supporting children's physical development and introducing them to the world's wide variety of flavors.

### **Palate-Expansive Menu:**

Our approach to food is inspired by the diverse cultures that make up our community and the world. We believe in expanding children's palates through a multicultural menu that introduces them to different tastes, textures, and culinary traditions. From Mediterranean flavors and Asian-inspired dishes to Latin American favorites and classic comfort foods, our meals celebrate the diversity of global cuisine.

By exposing children to various ingredients and meal styles, we aim to broaden their food experiences, encourage curiosity about different cultures, and promote healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. We prioritize seasonal ingredients and work with local farms and suppliers to ensure our meals are fresh, sustainable, and aligned with our farm-to-table philosophy.

### **Fresh Fruits, Breads, and Cheeses Always Available:**

At Kindernest, we ensure that fresh fruits, breads, and cheeses are always available in our daily meal offerings. These staples provide children with nutritious, easy-to-eat options that they can enjoy throughout the day, whether at snack time, lunch, or classroom activities. We understand the importance of offering balanced choices, and these simple yet nourishing foods complement our more diverse meal options.

- Fruits: Various seasonal fruits are available daily, allowing children to taste and enjoy everything from apples and berries to tropical fruits and melons.
- Bread: Freshly baked bread, including whole grain, sourdough, and international varieties, is served daily. These breads are delicious and provide a hearty, nutritious base for meals.
- Cheeses: A selection of mild cheeses is offered, catering to children's tastes and nutritional needs. Whether served alongside fruits or as part of a meal, cheeses add a valuable source of calcium and protein.

### **A Joyful and Inclusive Eating Environment:**

Our meal program goes beyond providing nutrition—it is a vital part of our Montessori philosophy, which emphasizes independence, grace, and courtesy. Children are encouraged to set their places at the table, serve themselves, and engage in positive social interactions during mealtimes. Teachers model respectful eating practices, fostering community and connection over food.

**Accommodating Dietary Needs and Allergies:**

Some children may have specific dietary needs due to allergies or cultural and family preferences. Kindernest Montessori is a nut-safe environment, and we work closely with families to better understand if we can meet the dietary needs of children with allergies or other restrictions. We handle this on a case-by-case basis, collaborating with families to create a plan that aligns with the child's health and well-being while maintaining the integrity of our meal program.

By incorporating our farm-to-table philosophy, celebrating multicultural cuisine, and offering a child-centered eating experience, we aim to inspire a lifelong love of good food and a deep appreciation for its role in health, culture, and community.

**Setting the table:**

Children will set their own place at the lunch table each day, which will be set with a complete table setting. This includes putting down a placemat, ceramic dish, and real silverware. Milk and water are served in small containers so children can practice pouring for themselves and their friends. We encourage you to do this at home for meals.

Teachers eat their lunch and share the table with the children; they model grace and courtesy and help to encourage positive conversations.

## **Dressing for School:**

### **Fall attire:**

Please send in a jacket or fleece daily. New England's weather can change very quickly from warm to cool.

### **Winter attire:**

We go outside every day in the winter (temperature permitting), so please make sure that your child has everything they need to stay warm, including correctly fitting snow pants, hats, mittens, warm coats, and boots.

We suggest that mittens are attached to the coat or snowsuit.

We highly recommend having a set of winter clothing for school, including snow pants, a hat, mittens, and boots.

We keep extra winter items at school; please let us know if you need help acquiring the proper outdoor wear. If your child consistently does not have the appropriate outdoor gear, we may send your child home before our outdoor playtime.

Many children have similar mittens, hats, and outerwear; please clearly label your child's clothing. We have a "Lost and Found" in the school's main hallway. Please make sure to check it regularly.

### **Spring/Summer attire:**

Children will have the opportunity to visit outside even on rainy days. Please plan to send in a raincoat and rain pants and waterproof boots. It's also a good idea to come to school with a light jacket, just in case.

During these seasons the temperatures can fluctuate hourly. Shorts and short sleeve shirts or sundresses are appropriate attire, along with a hat. Shoes need to be closed-toe. We follow all temperature advisories for early childhood. We always have water and sunscreen with us when we go out. Per State of Massachusetts child care regulations, children may not wear sandals or shoes that are very slippery when wet.

### **Change of Clothing:**

All children must have at least one complete set of seasonal change of clothes at school; send clean clothes in a small, non-plastic bag with the child's name marked on it.

To prevent loss of clothes, all clothing should be labeled with the child's name. There is a Lost and Found container in each classroom cubby area; parents are advised to check routinely for their child's belongings. Items in the Lost and Found are sent to a charitable agency at the end of each term.

**Clothing:**

**Please send your child in sensible, seasonable play clothes** as if your child were playing at the park for the day. We suggest clothing that can get dirty (paint, dirt, etc.) and is easily manipulated or removed independently by the child, i.e., loose-fitting, elastic waist, etc.

**Please do not send your child in:**

- Party dresses (except for special school activities such as pictures and parties), mini/maxi skirts, and other "fashion statement" clothing are also acceptable.
- Costumes or costume-like clothing.

**This includes "dress-up style" ballet clothing, character clothing such as Spiderman, Batman, Sponge Bob, Dora Disney princesses, etc., and scary or violent images.**

- Party dresses can be problematic for children when moving around and may prevent them from fully participating in the school day.
- Movie and TV characters on clothing often encourage distractibility and silly behavior. Children often compete with one another and even engage in "put-downs" regarding certain characters. We strive to create a peaceful environment free of commercialism. For these reasons, we have imposed these strict guidelines.
- Children wearing these kinds of characters in their attire will be asked to change into clothes from either their extra supply or the school's clothing supply. If a child's clothing hinders them in any way, we may decide to change it.

**Jewelry**

- Please discourage your child from wearing jewelry to school. We cannot be responsible for lost or stolen jewelry.

**Items Brought to School:**

- Children love to bring treasures from home for show and tell. Teachers will inform parents about specific guidelines and procedures for sharing, as they may vary slightly from classroom to classroom.
- Candy or gum, electronic toys or games, toy guns, anything that looks like a weapon, and high-value items are prohibited at school.

**Infant & Toddler Families:**

- Please supply diapers, wipes, and creams if needed.
- Please talk with your child's teacher for more information.

**Slippers:**

Slippers are required for the classrooms year-round, beginning on the first day of the school program. Each student must have one pair of slippers to wear daily in the classroom. Children will change into their slippers during their drop-off routine and wear them for the entire time they are in the classroom. We require a solid bottom on the slipper for safety and evacuation purposes.

- Slippers must be a solid color
- Please ensure that they fit correctly and are in good condition
- **No characters, designs, lights, glitter, or musical slippers.**

**Outside Shoes:**

- Your child will arrive in closed-toed shoes or sturdy sandals securely fastened to the child's foot. They will change into these shoes for outside play.
- Examples are sneakers, rubber-soled shoes and lace-up shoes.
- Please do not send your child in unstable shoes for outside play, such as dress-up or heeled shoes.

**We do not allow:**

- Any shoe that is distracting
- Character shoes
- Light up shoes
- Flip-flops
- Crocs or thong-style shoes that lack a back strap
- Cowboy boots or slick-bottomed party shoes

**Weather Index:****What is too cold?**

Children will play indoors in freezing weather, especially with high winds. Trips outside will be kept very brief. Any combination of wind and cold that results in a wind chill at or below 15° Fahrenheit can pose a significant health risk. We will use this as a guide for outside play.

**Protection from Heat:**

Extreme heat can be as hazardous to children as extreme cold. When playing outdoors in warm weather, children should wear lightweight cotton clothing. Drinking cool beverages, especially those with low sugar content (like water), also helps the body to maintain a comfortable temperature.



**Heat Index:**

The Heat Index indicates how the temperature "feels" and combines actual heat and relative humidity. A heat index of 80° Fahrenheit or below is considered comfortable and safe for children to play outdoors.

A heat index between 80° F and 90° F means that children will be closely observed while outdoors, and outdoor playtime will be limited (10-15 Minutes with water breaks)

Our children will not play outdoors when the heat index exceeds 90° F.

**Sunscreen:**

**Please apply sunscreen before you come to school.** The teachers will reapply it as needed.

**Ticks:**

Ticks can be a problem in New England. We suggest that you screen your child for ticks daily. We will be in the grass during the year and outside regularly.

Check the CDC for more information about ticks: <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/index.html>

## **Celebrations and Holidays:**

The school encourages families to share family celebrations with their children to expand their children's awareness of other cultures.

The staff believes that children need to become aware of rituals and celebrations as part of their experience of the world's cultures; the school does not promote ethnic or religious positions.

Please talk with your child's teacher about celebrations you would like to share in the classroom.

### **Birthdays:**

- A special birthday walk ceremony celebrates each child's birthday at school. Photographs from home often enhance this event. Please talk with your child's teacher about this special event.
- Please do not send food for birthdays.
- If you'd like to do something special, we recommend donating a special book or material to your child's classroom for their birthday. Your classroom teacher can give you suggestions.

**End-of-year class Celebrations.** Each classroom celebrates this milestone differently. The whole community joins together for a family BBQ, face painting, fun activities, and a slide show of the year.

### **End of Year Celebrations**

June 27, 2024

Classroom Celebrations 10:30-11:00, BBQ: 11:00-2:00, School Closed at 2:00

## **Nap and Rest Time:**

At Kinderneest Montessori, we balance active play and relaxation by ensuring children have a designated quiet time each day to rest or nap.

### **Infant Nap Guidelines:**

- Each infant will have their own assigned crib with a school-provided sheet.
- Please send your infant a sleep sack or light wearable blanket to ensure their comfort and safety.
- We follow the MA EEC guidance for safe sleep, and infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep until they are 12 months old (see classroom postings for detailed guidance).
- For safety reasons, lovies, pillows, and comforters are not allowed for infant sleep.
- When infants wake, they will be gently removed from their cribs and held to allow for gradual waking, ensuring a peaceful transition from rest.

### **Toddler and Preschool Nap Guidelines:**

- When they are in care for more than four hours, children are allowed to nap or rest in a calm environment for 45 minutes up to two hours daily.
- Please send a crib-sized blanket and, if desired, a small stuffed toy for comfort. A small travel-size pillow is also acceptable for toddlers and preschoolers.
- The school will provide cots and sheets. Blankets will be sent home weekly for washing.
- We do not allow sleeping bags or cot pads to maintain a uniform, safe, and comfortable environment.
- Children who choose not to sleep or awaken early will be offered quiet activities for the remainder of the rest period, ensuring that they remain calm and relaxed until the rest time concludes.

We respect each child's unique sleep needs and will not force a child to stay awake or wake them unless they sleep for more than two hours. Our goal is to create a restful, supportive environment where every child can relax, rejuvenate, and align with their individual rhythms during the day.

## Emergency Information:

The staff is trained annually in emergency preparedness and safety procedures, including CPR, EPI Pen use, First Aid, AED, and active shooter and environmental emergencies.

If a school emergency involves an evacuation or shelter-in-place situation, the Kinderneest site will be updated with the most up-to-date information.

## Accidents/Injuries:

**Parents will receive an incident/injury report on the day of the incident or injury.**

- When a child experiences an apparent injury, their parents must be notified immediately. You can see an evident injury, like a bruise or cut. If the injury is severe, 911 will be called, and then the parent(s). The child's medical information will be available to paramedics if the child has allergies.
- Staff will always inform the parent if they are concerned that the child has been injured.
- The staff will always call the parent(s) if the child says something hurts.
- Classroom teachers should always be informed if the child has an incident on the playground or elsewhere.
- Staff must always write out and date an incident report detailing the incident and give it to the parent and school director.

## Allergies and Chronic Medical Conditions:

- Kinderneest Montessori has a **No-Nut/Shellfish policy** due to students diagnosed with severe nut/Shellfish and peanut allergies. We post serious/severe allergies in front of all classrooms. We ask that you consider an alternative to the posted item for the safety of all children.
- If your child has an allergy, the school will provide you with the MA EEC-required **"Individual Health Care Plan Form."** This is the only form accepted by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).
- Parents must notify the office and their child's teachers when their child's physician has diagnosed their child with an allergy or medical condition. Please keep us updated as issues arise or change.
- Parents must provide a letter from the child's physician that documents the type of allergy or medical condition, medication, and the current dosage. This information must be updated whenever any changes are made. The school will provide all forms.
- The office compiles and posts information regarding children's allergies so all staff members know these conditions.
- Parents must complete a new Emergency Form each school year, which includes information about allergies and medical conditions.

### Prescription medications:

- They must be in their **original container** and include the following information: the child's name, the name of the medicine, the dosage information, the name of the physician, and the date of expiration.
- Parents must provide medication on-site and emergency supplies storage to be used in the case of a disaster (evacuation, etc.). Parents must know the medication's expiration date and replace on-site and emergency supplies storage before it expires.
- Parents must also provide a list of "Do's and Don'ts" regarding their allergies (e.g., an approved list of foods that are okay and those that are not, indicating if they can be around anyone eating foods they are allergic to, etc.).
- **If your child has a food allergy, you must provide a daily snack that can be brought to school or kept in the classroom in addition to lunch.**

### Sickness at School:

#### Contagious Diseases/Communicable Illness:

- To maintain a healthy and positive atmosphere for all children and staff, children who are ill or becoming ill must be kept at home. We understand that this can be a hardship with busy work schedules, but it will help prevent the ongoing illness that can become part of an early education experience.
- If, for example, your child has vomited or had fever or diarrhea in the last 24 hours, keep them at home for 24 hours (full school day) after the symptoms have been resolved.
- If your child has been ill and seems well after beginning a series of antibiotics, they may return to school with the doctor's permission 24 hours after treatment.
- Children who become ill while at school will be kept apart from the other children and their parents will be called to pick them up.
- We require that you arrive at school **within 60 minutes of a call**. If you cannot be here in a reasonable amount of time, please have a backup plan for your child's pickup.
- If your child is sent home from school with a fever or contagious illness, they must stay home the next day. (No mid-day drop-offs)
- To help protect our community, children with highly contagious respiratory or gastrointestinal illnesses, such as RSV, flu, COVID-19, and norovirus, must stay home for at least 72 hours after being symptom-free. Illnesses can spread quickly in a community of young children, especially since infants have underdeveloped immune systems, and some families may have members with compromised health.
- Please refrain from sending your child to school after administering fever-reducing or symptom-masking medications such as Tylenol. While these medications may alleviate symptoms, children can still be contagious and risk spreading the illness to others, potentially leading to a broader outbreak.
- We understand the difficulty that extended home care can cause, but we ask that you exercise extra caution to prioritize the well-being of our entire community. Your consideration helps protect vulnerable individuals and ensures a healthier, safer environment for everyone.

- **When a child is diagnosed with a communicable illness or condition, the parents must inform the school that an exposure notice can be sent home to all families and posted at school.**

**A child will be sent home:**

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
- The fever registered at the school is the determining factor in sending a child home. Families must follow the protocol even if the fever is not detected once a child is home. We take a temperature three times using different methods before calling a family.

**Any of the following conditions suggesting possible severe illness: fever, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other manifestations of possible severe illness:**

**Fever:** (100°f or higher, we take the temperature three times before calling home)—the child needs to be fever-free for 24 hours (1 school day from the resolution of the fever) without medication.

**Diarrhea:** child must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication, even if they are teething

**Vomiting:** The child must be symptom-free for 24 hours without medication, including an allergy and motion sickness.

**Cold:** yellow nasal discharge with runny eyes, fever, & persistent cough

**Rash:** check with a doctor

**Discharge:** from eyes or ears

**Lice:** A child needs to be treated before returning. If lice are discovered at school, you will be called to pick up your child. Before returning to school, they must be free of active lice/nits for 24 hours.

**Medication:**

These guidelines must be followed for any child who needs to be given medication while at school:

- A teacher or a staff member must administer any medicine the child needs at school. The medicine must be given to the teacher or staff member when the child arrives at school and kept in the teacher's care.
- The parent must deliver the medicine **to the teacher or staff member; it may not be brought in lunch boxes or backpacks.**
- Children who require medication for allergies or are continuing school for a chronic condition must have a completed *Administration of Medication Form* on file.
- This form includes information on the specific condition, the type of medication, the dosage, and the signature and name of the supervising physician.
- **This form must be updated whenever any changes are made**

**Immunizations:**

A person may only be unconditionally admitted to the school in Massachusetts with documentary proof that they have had the required immunizations. If the record is not in English, it must be translated before your child starts school.

**A child may be legally exempted from the immunization requirements if the school receives a statement signed by a physician stating that immunization is unsafe for the child. All other children must be immunized according to the Mass EEC regulations and CDC recommendations for childhood immunizations.**

**Behavior Guidelines:**

The quality of Life at Kindernest Montessori is based on students and teachers working together in a spirit of mutual trust and responsibility. We are committed to fostering a peaceful and collaborative classroom environment. Our approach to behavior is rooted in respect for each child's development and understanding that expectations should align with the child's age and individual needs. We prioritize teaching conflict resolution skills and work closely with families to address challenging behaviors in a supportive, compassionate manner. Rules exist so everyone can work together, feel safe, and be glad they are in school.

**Three primary rules keep the atmosphere of the community pleasant:**

- Respect yourself
- Respect others
- Respect the community

We expect all members of the Kindernest Montessori community to be well-behaved and considerate of others at all times. Appropriate language and behavior in front of the school, on school trips, and outside in the yard matter as much as behavior inside the building. Students, staff, and parents are expected to respond politely to reminders and requests.

**Five Rights That Belong to Everyone:**

1. The right to be treated with courtesy and respect
2. The right to a safe learning environment free of extreme disruptions
3. The right to one's work
4. The right to one's good name
5. The right to one's physical space and safety

**Core Principles:**

Respect for self, others, and the community: Children are guided to respect their own needs, those of their peers, and the shared environment.

**Developmentally appropriate expectations:**

We recognize that children are learning how to navigate social situations, emotions, and boundaries. Behavior expectations are set with this understanding in mind.

**Collaborative problem-solving:**

We partner with families to address behavioral concerns, ensuring consistency between home and school.

**Behavior Guidelines:**

- There are many reasons why a child may lose control or become dysregulated in a group care environment. For some children, it can be the length of the day, the number of children, or overstimulation from the environment.
- We are sensitive to the needs of young children and have created school environments and policies that provide structure, predictability, and consistency.
- However, sometimes, the environment of a large group setting can be challenging for a child.
- We will work with you to find reasonable accommodations within the classroom and school.

**When behavior is consistently beyond typical preschool/toddler developmental guidelines, we will work with you to develop a behavior plan or recommend further testing and examination.**

**Some modifications may be required to continue to work with your child in the classroom environment:**

- 1. Reduction in program time**
- 2. Referral to local public school or Early intervention or other resources**
- 3. Developmental observations from a third-party**
- 4. Withdrawal from the program**

**When a child behaves inappropriately, or their behaviors become a danger to themselves and others, we will:**

- Remind gently and firmly to stop the behavior. Teachers will intervene when necessary and redirect the activity.

We are committed to helping children live peacefully in a community and responding appropriately to their needs.



If a child excessively (2 or more times) bites, hits, spits, kicks, or injures another child or adult, the parent will be called, an incident report written, and the child will be sent home.

Aggressive behavior of any type will not be tolerated and will result in your child being sent home. If the behavior is harmful or dangerous to himself or others and persistent, the teacher will request a meeting with the child's parents and create a behavior plan.

**Behaviors include:**

- Throwing items across the classroom
- Pushing over shelves or destroying work on the shelves
- Destruction of the classroom/school environment
- Physically harming children or teachers
- Biting
- Running away from the teachers in and out of the school

At Kindernest, we do not restrain children and will only hold them for safety reasons.

We are unable to assign one-on-one aid to children's behavior.

**The school reserves the right to ask any child to leave the program for harmful and disruptive behavior.**

If a parent is called to pick up their child at school for behavioral reasons, please arrive as quickly as possible (within 30 minutes).

The parent must have a conference with the child's teachers and is requested to work collaboratively to develop a strategy to help the child.

**Addressing Aggressive Behavior:**

In the event of physical aggression that results in injury (such as drawing blood or requiring medical attention), the following steps will be taken:

1. First Incident:
  - The school will meet with the family to discuss the incident and develop a behavior plan. This plan will outline strategies for supporting the child's social and emotional needs and actions to prevent future incidents.
2. Second Incident:
  - If another incident of physical aggression occurs (resulting in injury, blood, or medical attention), the family will be called to bring the child home for the day.
  - Before the child can return to care, a meeting will be scheduled between the family and the school. The behavior plan will be reassessed during this meeting, and additional support strategies may be implemented.

**Behavior Plan and Accountability:**

- Behavior Plan: In collaboration with the family, we will create a clear action plan detailing how the school and the family will support the child's development.
- Environmental and Program Adjustments: We will observe the child's behavior and may modify the classroom environment or the child's program time to reduce stress or triggers.
- Professional Support: If needed, we will seek professional evaluation or outside resources to support the child further. The family may also be asked to consult with specialists to address the behavior.

**Ongoing Aggressive Behavior:**

- If physical aggression persists after implementing the behavior plan, including more than five documented incidents, the school may temporarily suspend enrollment until further professional consultation occurs.
- Our goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in the classroom. We will only reinstate care once the appropriate measures have been taken to ensure that the environment is safe and supportive for everyone.

**Redirecting and Time Away:**

- Redirection: When appropriate, a child will be redirected to a different activity or location within the classroom that may help them calm and regroup. This allows the child to step away from the source of frustration or overstimulation and engage in a new, more soothing activity.
- Time Away and Regrouping: In situations involving safety concerns or when a child is following an Individual Behavior Plan, the child may be moved to a quieter space outside the classroom for what we refer to as "time away" or "regroup time." This is not a punishment but a supportive measure allowing the child to regain composure on their timetable with staff supervision and gentle guidance.
- Purpose of Time Away: The goal of time away from the classroom is to provide the child with a calm and supportive environment to regain self-control and composure. Once the child feels ready, they will work with their teacher to create a plan for re-entering the classroom. This process ensures that the child returns to the classroom feeling grounded and prepared.

### **Kindernest Biting Policy for Preschool (3 years and older):**

Biting in the preschool years is not considered typical behavior, as children at this stage have developed more advanced language and self-regulation skills. If a preschooler bites:

- **Immediate Response:** We will immediately address the situation by comforting the child who was bitten and calmly but clearly explaining to the child who bit that biting is not acceptable.
- **Parental Involvement:** Parents will be notified right away if their child bites in the preschool classroom. A meeting will be arranged to discuss potential causes and work together on strategies to prevent further incidents.
- Parents will be notified that day with an injury report that their child was bitten

**Behavior Plan:** In cases where biting persists, a behavior plan will be developed with input from teachers, parents, and any necessary specialists. The goal will be to support the child in expressing their emotions and needs in healthier, non-aggressive ways.

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, nurturing environment for all children. While biting is understood to be a normal part of early toddler development, it is addressed promptly and appropriately to ensure the safety and well-being of every child in our care.

### **Therapeutic Approach:**

- **Making It Right:** Rather than asking a child to say, "I'm sorry," we encourage them to think about how they can "make it right" with their classmates or community. This approach helps children understand the impact of their actions and fosters a sense of empathy and responsibility. Apologizing without understanding the underlying emotions or actions does not teach long-lasting repair or accountability.
- **No Time-Outs:** We do not use the term "time-out" or any language that implies punishment for inappropriate behavior. "Time away" is different in both purpose and approach. The goal is to help the child regain self-regulation, not to punish. The length of time away is determined by the child's readiness to return, supported by staff observation of the child's self-control and comfort level.

### **Strict Adherence to EEC Regulations:**

Our center strictly adheres to the guidelines set by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The following disciplinary practices are prohibited:

1. **Corporal Punishment:** Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is strictly forbidden.
2. **Cruel or Severe Punishment:** This includes verbal or physical abuse, threats, humiliation, or any form of treatment that could be abusive or neglectful, including physical hitting, shaking, or derogatory remarks.
3. **Deprivation:** Children will never be deprived of outdoor time, meals, or snacks as a form of discipline.
4. **Force Feeding:** Food will never be used as a consequence, and children will not be forced to eat against their will.

5. Toileting Practices: Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet is prohibited. We will never force a child to remain in soiled clothing or on the toilet, nor will we use any unusual or excessive toileting practices.
6. Confinement: With proper supervision, a child will only be confined to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen, or any other equipment for an extended period.

**The safety and well-being of the children in our care are paramount. If you have any questions regarding the reporting process or your responsibilities as a mandated reporter, please get in touch with the Director for further clarification.**

**All staff and personnel at Kindernest Montessori are mandated reporters under Massachusetts law, which means they are legally required to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the appropriate authorities. The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) mandates that any staff member who has reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering from abuse or neglect must immediately file a report with the Department of Children and Families (DCF).**

### **Guidelines for Parent Involvement and Education:**

- Parents play a vital role in their child's ongoing success in school. Research has shown that children with parental support at home are more likely to experience success at school.
- Children thrive when school and home work together harmoniously. For this reason, we encourage parent-teacher partnerships and offer the following guidelines for parents.

For the most positive impact on your child's experience at Kindernest Montessori, it's essential to model the behavior you wish to see in them. Demonstrating respect for your child, their classmates, teachers, and other school staff helps them understand and embrace the expected values and behaviors.

- Demonstrating respect for all adults, children, the school, and its programs is essential for contributing to a positive school community. It is wise to model the behavior you would like to see in your child. Modeling respect for your child, classmates, teachers, and other school staff helps children understand what is expected of them.
- Respect begins with civility and deepens trust. At Kindernest, we teach children to respect themselves, others, and the environment.
- We expect the same from all adults, at all times and in all relationships throughout the school. This includes speech and outward behavior.
- You can support your child by positively referring to their teachers, classmates, and school, respecting and abiding by school policies, and honoring your commitments.
- We encourage you to look for ways to contribute positively to the Life at Kindernest.
- Through your behavior, you contribute to your child's moral development and the culture and climate of their school.
- Following these guidelines and the ones listed below can ensure a positive experience for you and your child. We welcome your cooperation.

**Guidelines for Supporting Your Child at School:**

- Make sure your child arrives at school on time. Being late by 10 or 15 minutes regularly can make it difficult for a child to settle into the day's routine.
- Support your child's growing independence and responsibility at home in a developmentally appropriate manner. Allow your child to walk into school, hang up their coat and backpack, and practice the independence skills we work on at school.
- Inform the office of any changes in your child's schedule, including pickup arrangements, early dismissals, late arrivals due to doctors' appointments, or any significant family changes.
- Make all after-school social arrangements before your child comes to school.
- Maintain active, direct, and respectful two-way communication with your child's teachers.
- Provide the school with all appropriate information relevant to the health and welfare of your child.
- Inform your child's teachers of any changes at home.
- Respect the class's guidelines and schedule.
- Return paperwork promptly to the school throughout the year.
- Pay attention to reminders, notes, and daily pages.
- Observe the class communication parameters around field trips.
- Attend all school functions, including *Back to School Night* and parent conferences.
- Attend as many parent events as possible, including parent education nights, coffees with the Director, curriculum nights, open classrooms, and the Montessori/Reggio information evenings.
- Observe your child's class once a year.
- Read the Directors letters and all other school communications.
- Provide opportunities for your child to practice self-care (dressing, washing, walking into school, etc.) and care of your home environment.
- Learn about the Kinderneest Montessori curriculum.
- Respectfully address issues.

**Parent Observations and Feedback:**

Parent observation of your child's classroom is encouraged and welcomed. Observations may be scheduled any time after the first six weeks of school.

As we ask all classroom visitors, we ask parents to respect the teachers and the students by making their presence as inconspicuous as possible. Parents are welcome to speak to the Director or the classroom teacher after class if any questions arise due to the visit. Kinderneest Montessori has a collection of relevant books and DVDs that parents can borrow.

**Parent Concerns:**

Kindernest Montessori is dedicated to expediting and professionally resolving parent concerns.

For the child to develop fully, family involvement is crucial.

Together, children, staff, and parents support each other in creating a rich and appropriate environment for learning.

Parents need to know exactly where to go to get information and voice concerns to best support their children and the community.

**Go Direct:**

If you have concerns, communicate directly with your child's teacher by written note, telephone, or email.

Teachers are the best first resource for answering parent questions and resolving concerns. They have the most direct knowledge of the programs and experience with individual students.

Teachers should acknowledge the communication by the end of the day and respond in detail to the concern as soon as possible.

**Meet with Teacher:**

If this communication with the teacher does not resolve the concerns, the parent and teacher should schedule a face-to-face meeting. After the meeting, a written summary may be provided to parents.

**Meet with Teacher and Director:**

If this meeting does not resolve the concern, a meeting with the parent, teacher, and Director may be helpful. After the meeting, the Director will summarize the discussion, which will be shared with the parents.

If the parent is dissatisfied with the resolution, the parent should communicate the dissatisfaction immediately to the Kindernest Montessori directors.

## Core Montessori Books:

1. **The Absorbent Mind** by Maria Montessori
  - A foundational text that explains Montessori's philosophy of child development and the critical early years.
2. **The Secret of Childhood** by Maria Montessori
  - Provides insight into the nature of children and their inner drive to learn.
3. **Montessori: A Modern Approach** by Paula Polk Lillard
  - A great introduction to Montessori education, explaining the philosophy in the context of modern education.
4. **Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius** by Angeline Stoll Lillard
  - Provides scientific research that supports the effectiveness of Montessori education, with an accessible look at how and why the method works.
5. **The Montessori Toddler** by Simone Davies
  - Practical advice and inspiration for parents of toddlers, filled with activities and tips for creating a Montessori-friendly environment at home.
6. **The Montessori Baby** by Simone Davies and Junnifa Uzodike
  - A guide for parents to understand Montessori from the very beginning, focusing on babies' natural development and how parents can support it.
7. **Creative Development in the Child** by Kalakshetra Press
  - A deep exploration of how creativity develops in children and how to foster it, connecting well with Montessori's emphasis on hands-on learning.
8. **How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way** by Tim Seldin
  - Offers easy-to-understand ways for parents to apply Montessori principles at home.

## Parenting and Child Development:

9. **The Whole-Brain Child** by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson
  - Connects Montessori's emphasis on emotional intelligence with the latest brain research, helping parents raise balanced, mindful children.
10. **Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids** by Dr. Laura Markham
  - Aligns with Montessori's focus on respect and independence by offering techniques for calm, positive parenting.
11. **Simplicity Parenting** by Kim John Payne
  - Encourages simplicity and mindfulness in parenting, aligning well with Montessori's values of order and a calm environment.
12. **How Toddlers Thrive** by Tova Klein, PhD
  - A research-based look at toddler development and how parents can support their child's emotional and behavioral growth during this critical time.
13. **The Well-Balanced Child** by Sally Goddard Blythe
  - A book that ties physical development and movement to brain function, aligning with Montessori's focus on whole-child education.

## Magda Gerber's Contributions:

14. **Your Self-Confident Baby** by Magda Gerber
  - Offers insights into respectful caregiving for infants, in line with Montessori's focus on nurturing independence and autonomy.
15. **Dear Parent: Caring for Infants with Respect** by Magda Gerber
  - A collection of Gerber's essays and letters to parents, focusing on how to raise confident and secure babies using a respectful approach.
16. **Infant-Toddler Caregiving: A Guide to RIE Principles** by Magda Gerber and Allison Johnson
  - Provides practical advice on caregiving that aligns with Montessori's focus on observation and responsive interactions.

## For Specific Age Groups:

17. **Child of the World: Montessori, Global Education for Age 3-12+** by Susan Mayclin Stephenson
  - Provides a deeper understanding of Montessori for parents with children in the Primary and Elementary years.
18. **Montessori from the Start: The Child at Home, from Birth to Age Three** by Paula Polk Lillard and Lynn Lillard Jessen
  - Helps parents set up a Montessori-friendly home environment from infancy onward.

## Specialized Montessori Books:

19. **Maria Montessori Speaks to Parents** by Maria Montessori (edited by Lee Havis)
  - A collection of Montessori's lectures aimed at parents, offering insights into how to foster independence and concentration.
20. **The Joyful Child: Montessori, Global Wisdom for Birth to Three** by Susan Mayclin Stephenson
  - Offers guidance for parents of very young children, with Montessori ideas about how to nurture independence and concentration from birth.
21. **The Bilingual Child: Using Montessori Techniques** by Simone Davies
  - A guide by Simone Davies on how to raise bilingual children in a Montessori environment.