

# Parent Handbook



# Kids USA Montessori

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## **Kids USA Montessori Mission Statement**

Kids USA Montessori's goal is to be the North Texas leading preschool program. Our program gives children ages 6-weeks through 5-years enriching opportunities to develop the whole child. We focus on learning through child-directed play experiences and curriculum time. We believe a balance of play and preschool enhances growth and development in all areas: physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. This is achieved in a safe and loving faith-based environment with caregivers who are dedicated to enriching children's lives.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:**

Kids USA Montessori does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

## **Required Policies from The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services**

Kids USA Montessori is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The follow policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501.

### **1. HOURS OF OPERATION**

Kids USA Montessori is open from 7:00am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday, year-round. We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the following Friday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, Kids USA Montessori may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule in January.

### **2. RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. However, we request that parents drop off their children by 9:00 am each day so that the child can take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor under the age of 18. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

### **3. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Kids USA Montessori observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in childcare activities, **including outdoor play**. If a child is too ill to go outside, they must stay at home on this day. Per childcare licensing 746.3601(1)
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. Oral temperature of 101, tympanic (ear) temperature of 100, or axillary (armpit) temperature of 100 accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of *severe* illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Kids USA Montessori may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home sick from our program, they may not return until the child is symptom-free without medication for 24-hours.

If a statement is provided by the child's health care professional, the document must state that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.

#### **4. MEDICATION**

Please inform your physician that your child is in full-day or part-day preschool and that you prefer to give medications at home, morning and evening. Knowing this, many doctors will order longer acting medications. Limiting medications dispensed away from home prevents medication errors. Please remember, Kids USA Montessori is designed for **well** children.

If medications need to be administered at school, the following conditions must be met:

- ❑ **Prescription medication can only be accepted only if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**
- ❑ Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. A note from the child's health care professional must be provided if manufacturer's recommendations are not listed.
- ❑ Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen, we must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication forms and enter instructions into the Daily Medication Log Book. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- ❑ Medication must be sent home at the end of each day. Medication is not to remain in the center overnight.
- ❑ **Medication will only be given if prescribed three or more times a day.** If your child is prescribed medication once or twice a day, parents must administer this before dropping off and after picking up at home.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing any allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

Medication may be given to children with a signed medical information sheet. These are in the front lobby.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES**

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. **All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.**

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance, the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1.800.222.1222.

## **6. PARENT NOTIFICATIONS**

Open Communication with parents is very important to a child's success. Kids USA Montessori has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to

sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Kids USA Montessori may communicate with parents:

- Through weekly email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/kidsusaplano](http://www.facebook.com/kidsusaplano)
- Text Message to [kidsusaplano@icloud.com](mailto:kidsusaplano@icloud.com)
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year in the Spring and Fall. Parents are encouraged to attend. Your partnership and understanding of our curriculum and expectations is imperative for the success of your child.

### **7. DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE POLICY**

Kids USA Montessori staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Kids USA Montessori does not use "time out" as a form of managing behavior. Kids USA Montessori staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues.

### **8. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN**

The safety of all children and employees is important to us. While our goal is to work with children and families, aggressive behavior may place others at risk. Kids USA Montessori reserves the right to terminate care for aggressive behavior at any time. No reduction or refund of tuition fees will be given in these situations.

### **9. SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES FOR INFANTS**

Kids USA Montessori follows the Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as listed in the Child Care Minimum Standards and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib but the infant, including blankets and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited



unless instructed by the child's health care professional. An "Infant Sleep Exception" form must be completed by the health care professional. All cribs at Kids USA Montessori meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file in the front office. Pacifiers are allowed, however straps that attached to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited.

## **10. FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION**

Kids USA Montessori is a participant of the USDA's Special Nutrition Program. We do not charge an extra fee for meals or snacks. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272.

Kids USA Montessori supplies cereal, baby foods, and iron fortified formula for infants. Parents are asked to complete an "Infant Feeding Sheet" at the beginning of each month. This instructs us on how to feed your baby according to your directions.

Kids USA Montessori provides breakfast for all children present at 8:00am. Lunch is served at 11:30am. Afternoon snack is served after the rest period around 2:30pm, and again at 3:30pm for the school-age kids as they arrive after school. Menus are sent home at the beginning of the month. Please advise the center of any allergies. **Kids USA Montessori is a Nut-Free School.** If a child requires an alternative meal, milk or substitution, a note from a doctor may be required. The doctor's note must include a recommended substitution.

Kids USA Montessori must be notified of all known food allergies. A Food Allergy Emergency Plan must be completed by the child health care provider. Children with known food allergies will not be allowed to attend until the Food Allergy Emergency Plan is completed and on file.

Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Food Allergy Emergency Plan must be posted where food is served and prepared.

The Food Allergy Emergency Plan must include:

- The child's name
- What food the child is allergic to
- Sign of allergic reaction if given the food
- How to treat this reaction
- Alternative food to be given when substituting
- Signature from the child's health care professional



## **11. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Immunization records must be current for all children enrolled in the Infant-Toddler, Preschool and Pre-K programs. A copy must be in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

From time to time Kids USA Montessori may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children. Per federal law, child care programs are prohibited from discriminating against a family's personal belief, including immunizations.

## **12. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING**

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. Kids USA Montessori will schedule annual screenings at our school. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.

## **13. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Upon selecting Kids USA Montessori to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required 3 days before the child is allowed to start our program.** Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted. Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Physician's Statement
- Tuition Agreement
- Tuition Express Form (ACH Draft)
- Food Program Enrollment Form
- CACFP Meal Benefit Income Eligibility Form
- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)
- Food Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)
- Infant Sleep Exception Form (if applicable)
- Parent Share of Cost Agreement (if applicable)

Parents will be notified within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

Parents must notify Kids USA Montessori in writing of any change in enrollment information, such as telephone numbers and home addresses.

#### **14. TRANSPORTATION**

School-age children will not be transported to and from public school. Kids USA Montessori does not transport children under the age of 5, except in emergency situations.

State law requires:

- Vehicles transporting children shall be in safe operating condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Driver's License.
- Children shall be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle, or in a protected parking area.
- School age children are always required to wear seat belts, while being transported. Failure to maintain this safety requirement may lead to dismissal of care.

#### **15. WATER ACTIVITIES AND SWIMMING POOL**

Children will use age appropriate swimming pools Such as Wading pool, inflatable pool, inflatable water slides located at Kids USA Montessori during summer months. Parents will be notified in advance of swimming and other water play activities.

#### **16. ANIMALS**

From time to time, Kids USA Montessori may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care Licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any classroom door when a pet is present.

#### **17. SUNSCREEN AND BUG REPELLANT**

Kids USA Montessori will apply sunscreen and/or bug repellent as needed. Sunscreen and bug repellent must be provided by the parent, must be in the original container, and must not have expired. A "Sunscreen/Bug Repellent Permission Slip" must be completed by the parent before these items can be applied.

#### **18. QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Center Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a "Parent Concern Form". Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.





## **19. PARENT PARTICIPATION**

We encourage parent involvement, especially on helping with classroom parties. Before having direct access to children, Kids USA Montessori will run a criminal background check on all volunteers. Parents must complete a “Volunteer Orientation” before participating in center events.

## **20. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS**

Kids USA Montessori is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and we follow the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp)

Kids USA Montessori encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection is posted on our parent communication board or you may view this at:

[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Search\\_Texas\\_Child\\_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp)

Parents may also contact our local child care licensing office at 214-583-4253.

## **21. STATE CONTACTS**

Parents may contact childcare licensing’s local office at 469-229-6900 ext. 6901.

Parents may access the Texas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.

Parents may access the Department of Family and Protective Services and Health and Human Services website at [www.dfpd.state.tx.us/child\\_care](http://www.dfpd.state.tx.us/child_care)

## **22. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Below is the Emergency Preparedness Plan designed for Kids USA Montessori. Parents are encouraged to read this information carefully. In the event a parent is present in the building during an emergency, Kids USA Montessori will ask parents to participate accordingly.

During any emergency, the best course of action is to BREATHE AND STAY CALM, know how many children you have, and have your sign-in and -out log and transition sheet in your hands.

If you have children of your own in the facility, but in another classroom, trust that their teachers will take care of them just as you are taking care of the children in your care.

*In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, "Director" refers to the director on duty. In the Director's absence, the Assistant Director on duty assumes the role of Director and then designates another staff member to assume the responsibilities of the Assistant Director. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge will notify Child Care Licensing and/or the Health Department and/or call 911 as each situation*



*dictates. In all situations in this Emergency Preparedness Plan, the Director or designated person in charge may delegate any portion of his/her duties to other staff members, volunteers or emergency personnel as he/she deems necessary.*

*Sign in and out sheets from all classrooms are to stay with each caregiver responsible for the group. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the caregiver and director will use the sign in and out sheets along with the emergency binder to contact each parent and verify authorized release of children once reunited.*

### **TORNADO/SEVERE WEATHER**

- Stay calm. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet and stuff it in your clothing. Grab your flashlight.
- Take all your children to the center hallway. Have the children sit as close together as possible and have the children duck and cover. This will be familiar to the children since you practice this each time you have a severe weather drill.
- Infant classroom: Place your babies in two cribs and cover the top with a mattress from another crib. Place mattress sideways across top of the crib and huddle next to it. Role the cribs to the center hallways.
- Stay there until advised that the severe weather has passed.
- It can be helpful to quietly sing songs with the children to help them keep calm.
- The Director in charge will monitor local weather stations and the weather alert radio for updates.

### **COMMUNICABLE DISEASE OUTBREAK**

- All staff members will vigilantly follow policies and procedures regarding diaper changes, toileting, hand-washing, food preparation and general common-sense measures such as keeping surfaces clean, changing bedding, teaching children how to cover coughs and sneezes, etc., to prevent the spread of germs that cause illness in the first place.
- In the event of an outbreak, the Director, or person in charge, will notify the Health Department and Child Care Licensing to inform them of the situation and ask for instructions and guidelines to follow for specific illness or outbreak.
- The Director, or person in charge, will inform all staff members of instructions and guidelines and require them to follow the same.



- The Director, or person in charge, will also notify all parents about the situation in writing within 48-hours as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and Child Care Licensing.
- All staff is to follow the school's confidentiality policies when speaking of the above outbreak. Any violation of the confidentiality policy is grounds for immediate termination.

**LOCK DOWN**

**(INCLUDES WEAPON, HOSTAGE INCIDENT, INTRUDER, TRESPASSING, DISTURBANCE)**

- The Director, or person in charge, will announce over the intercom, "Lock Down" or other discrete code and will call 911. The director, or designated person, will always supervise the front desk during the incident, if possible.
- Upon hearing this, or sooner if you are aware that an intruder has entered the building or immediate vicinity, say calmly to the children a discrete phrase, such as "Rabbits in the Hole"; the children will know what to do because you practice this every month.
- Infant classroom: Place babies in two or three cribs with a few quiet toys. Place another empty crib or two in front of your classroom door. This might cause an intruder to change his/her mind about entering your classroom.
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet in your hands and stuff them into your clothing.
- Close all your classroom doors and lock them if possible.
- Turn off the lights.
- If you have reason to believe that no one else in the center is aware of the danger, and you can safely do so, use the intercom to calmly announce the secret code for "Lock Down".
- Whisper and remind the children that "we are to be very quiet."
- Do a name/face check silently.
- Keep the children and yourself safe, in place, and away from all interior and exterior windows.
- Watch the children, not the situation!
- If the intruder enters your classroom, do not argue with him.
- The Director, or person in charge, will ensure that all building entrances and exits are locked and that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.
- Await further instructions from the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.



### **ACCIDENT**

- Breathe and stay calm.
- Make sure all children are supervised. If you are alone, tell them to sit down near you.
- Comfort the child by speaking in a low, quiet voice.
- Apply first aid as needed.
- Call the office if you need further assistance and/or the Director, or person in charge to call 911.
- If the child is bleeding profusely, apply pressure to stop the bleeding. (In an extreme case, take off the child's shirt and use that.)
- If injury is to the head or face, report it to the office immediately - even if it is minor.
- Complete an Accident/Incident Report, have the Director sign it immediately, and have the parent sign it when the child is picked up.
- Turn in the Accident/Incident Report to the Director, or person in charge, before you leave on the same day.
- Keep the Accident/Incident Report confidential while in your presence.
- In the event of serious illness or injury involving an adult, contact the office and a Director, or the designated person in charge, will call 911 and/or the person's emergency contact.

### **ILLNESS**

- Ask the child, "What doesn't feel good?"
- Contact the front office and have the child's temperature taken. If the fever is over 100 degrees, the Director, or person in charge, will contact the parent.
- If no fever, make the child comfortable and keep an eye on him.
- If the child complains of pain, ask him to point with one finger where it hurts the most and then investigate that spot for injury or discoloration and call the office.
- Light vomiting or mild diarrhea: If no pain, call the office after the third episode.

### **EXPLOSION, CHEMICAL SPILL OR GAS LEAK**

#### ***That occurs INSIDE the facility***

- See procedures for FIRE and OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION

#### ***That occurs OUTSIDE the facility***

- Close doors and lock if possible.
- Turn off air conditioner/heater.
- Turn off lights, computers, TV, radio, CD player, aquarium pump or anything else that may cause a spark.



- Keep children seated on the floor and calm. Sing quiet songs or read stories.
- Be prepared to evacuate if told to do so by the Director, or person in charge, or emergency personnel.
- If you detect a strong odor, show the children how to lift and breathe through their shirts.
- If told to evacuate, consider crawling to avoid strong fumes that are floating higher in the air. If you have time, ask for clarification.

### **BOMB THREAT OR OTHER THREAT**

- Write down everything the person says.
- Ask where the bomb is.
- Ask when the bomb (or other threat) will "go off" or "happen".
- Write that down, too.
- Notify Director, or person in charge, to call 911 immediately.

### **OFF-SITE EVACUATION AND RELOCATION**

- Your primary responsibility is to keep the children safe.
- Keep your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet in your hands or stuff them into your clothing.
- If time allows, gather children's diaper bags, bottles, baby formula/food, and coats.
- Children will be evacuated in the center's buses and vans from oldest to youngest so that older children can assist with keeping children seated at the evacuation site. Depending on the situation, the city may also send transportation vehicles. The school will use car seats and infant carriers left by the parents when evacuating applicable children.
- The Director is responsible for keeping a charged cell phone with him/her and overseeing and directing the evacuation process. She/he is the last person to leave the building.
- The Assistant Director is responsible for taking the emergency binder (of permission slips and parent contact information), the first aid kit, emergency medication (i.e. insulin, EPI pens, asthma medications), and a charged cell phone and accompany the first vehicle to the evacuation site so that he/she can be in charge of the evacuation site.
- The Director and Assistant Directors are aware of each cell phone number.
- Evacuation and relocation site for Kids USA Montessori is Grassy area at the side of school and/or Children's Hospital Plano if necessary or elsewhere if advised by safety rescue. Parents will be notified.



- After all children and staff have been relocated to the evacuation site and are safe and have had all needs taken care of, the Director and Assistant Director will designate staff to contact parents and notify them of the situation.
- Staff members will continue to supervise and take care of the children including entertaining them with songs, stories, games, etc. at the evacuation site. Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The Assistant Director will continue to supervise and take care of the needs of the staff.
- The Director will be the contact person for emergency personnel and parents.
- The center's usual verification process for allowing adults to pick up children from the center will be used at the evacuation site. (i.e. only persons listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized to pick up will be allowed to do so after showing photo ID.)

### **FIRE**

- When aware of fire or when alarm sounds, quietly say, "Fire drill boys and girls; line up at the door, please." This should be familiar to them since you say it every month when you practice monthly fire drills. *Your primary responsibility is to get the children safely out of the building. Do not attempt to put out the fire unless it is between you and a child or preventing exit.*
- Get your sign-in/out sheet and your transition sheet and keep it with you.
- Make a quick head count.
- Make sure you have everyone.
- Infants: Place all the children in two cribs.
- Proceed to the proper fire exit and exterior meeting place as designated on the floor plan in the classroom. This is the same spot you take the children each month during your fire drill.
- Do a name/face check once you are outside and check it against your sign-in/out sheet and transition sheet. If anyone is missing, tell the Director, or person in charge, or a fire fighter immediately, but never leave the children unsupervised.
- The children must always be safe (out of the way of emergency vehicles and the fire) and supervised. Watch out for anthills, broken glass and other hazards.
- Watch the kids, not the situation.
- The fire department, Director, or person in charge will tell you when you and the children can re-enter the building or begin off-site evacuation procedures.

### **COOK AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- When aware of a fire, the Director sounds the alarm, if necessary, thus alerting everyone and notifying the fire department.



- She/he then proceeds to each classroom to ensure that everyone is out of the building.
- When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, the Assistant Director takes possession of the emergency binder and says aloud, "I have the binder!" and then proceeds to assist the infant classrooms to safely exit the building.
- When aware of fire, or when alarm sounds, if the cook is in the building (and not when already counted in child/staff ratio), she will assist the young toddler classroom.

### **23. BREASTFEEDING**

Kids USA Montessori will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care.

### **24. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS**

Kids USA Montessori staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to **suspect** the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. Kids USA Montessori has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Kids USA Montessori will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect.

The staff is prohibited under Texas law to notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police.

Some examples of abuse and neglect are: leaving a child in a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues.

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit [www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html](http://www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html)

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

### **25. WELL CHECKS**

Kids USA Montessori staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual they are required to point this out to the parent at that



time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects. A Kids USA Montessori staff member may complete a “Incident Report” to document these situations.

## **26. VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES**

All Kids USA Montessori employees are encouraged to receive an annual flu shot and are required to be current on their Pertussis vaccine to help protect children from illnesses.

## **27. OPEN DOOR POLICY**

Kids USA Montessori has an open-door policy. Parents and legal guardians may visit the center at any time to discuss the care and education of their child with the center director and staff or to observe their child.

## **28. GANG-FREE ZONE**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a licensed childcare center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

## **29. FIREARMS**

Firearms are prohibited in an educational facility serving minors. Individuals who have an Open Carry or Concealed Handgun License may not bring these firearms into our facility. Firearms may be kept in the licensed individuals’ personal vehicle while on our premises.

# **Kids USA Montessori Policies**

## **30. TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition is paid by ACH draft. **All accounts are required to be set up on ACH draft.** We will only draft the balance on the account. If a family does not want tuition drafted, they may make a payment by check or credit card prior to 6:00am on Monday to avoid a draft. **Kids USA Montessori cannot turn drafts “on and off”.** Drafts or checks returned NSF will be charged \$35. A \$10 per day late fee will be added for all non-payments.

Changes in schedules must be requested in writing 30 days in advance. Part time schedules must be consistent each week in order to properly schedule staffing and supplies.

## **31. EXTRA FEES**

A non-refundable annual registration fee is due at the time of enrollment and every September. During summer months and holiday times, an activity fee may be charged. Activity fees are for



additional activities outside our normal planned curriculum. Parents will be notified 30 days in advance of activity fee options. School-age children will be charged a \$175.00 per week summer fee at the beginning of each summer.

Our program is open Monday through Friday from 7:00am to 6:00pm. Kids USA Montessori is only licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to care for children during these specified times. If you are late picking up your child, a \$1 PER MINUTE late penalty will be charged to your account. Late penalties must be paid to Kids USA Montessori before the child can return to care.

### **32. ARRIVAL TIME**

Children need to be in attendance by 9:00am each day so that they may benefit from our curriculum, routines, and rituals. Exceptions can be made when children have appointments with health care professionals or related services.

### **33. ABSENT/VACATION CREDIT**

If your child is absent for five consecutive days, you may request an absent credit equal to one half your weekly tuition. **Parents must request an absent credit in writing by email prior to the absence.** Parents are granted 2 weeks of free vacation time. If your child will be absent from school, we ask that you notify the front office by 8:30am each day. Failure to notify the front office of an absence may result in a \$5 no call penalty per occurrence.

### **34. PARENT REFERRALS**

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be so pleased with our service that you will tell all your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child(ren), we will credit your account the amount of 1 week's tuition after that family has been with us for 90 days. The referred family must mention the referral at the time of the initial visit to our program. Our greatest advertising asset is you!!

### **35. CONFIDENTIALITY**

While your child is enrolled in our program, parents may come across confidential information about our program, our staff, and sometimes other children. All information received from Kids USA Montessori must remain confidential at all times. This includes, but not limited to, posting confidential information about Kids USA Montessori, our children, staff and/or families on social media. Breaching confidentiality may lead to disenrollment.



### **36. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Kids USA Montessori prohibits swearing or cursing on our property.

Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Kids USA Montessori has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.

Kids USA Montessori must follow rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. Failure to follow discipline and guidance rules will lead to immediate termination of care.

If a parent is dissatisfied with any situation at Kids USA Montessori, parents are to maintain composure and handle issues professionally with the center director. Conversations that take place in the classroom must be developmentally appropriate for the children who are observing and must not be aggressive in tone. Any behavior that places a child at risk will lead to immediate dismissal from the program.

### **37. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Children must be signed in and out** by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Parents who fail to sign children in or out may be charged a \$5 penalty for each occurrence. Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of Kids USA Montessori is not permitted to take children home from our center. Kids USA Montessori employees may not be added as an authorized pick up or emergency contact for any child enrolled but their own.

**In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home.** Kids USA Montessori staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime by full-day preschool children and for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Shown & Tell.

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to center director.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder and/or posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, or in e-mail.



- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled meal times of breakfast and lunch and make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals. Meals cannot be saved for children who arrive after these times.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services do not allow smoking, vaping, or the use of any tobacco product on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

### **38. WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

**A Thirty (14) day written notice** must be given for withdrawing a child from Kids USA Montessori. If a family fails to give a thirty-day notice, Kids USA Montessori has a right to draft the remaining weeks from the family's bank account. Kids USA Montessori has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason.

### **39. CUSTODY SITUATIONS**

Kids USA Montessori prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes. Kids USA Montessori will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.* With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, Kids USA Montessori has the right to terminate care. This included, but not limited to, decisions about the child's care, health, and education. Parents must have these conversations at home and notify the center of any mutual decisions made by both parties involved.

### **40. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICIES**

Kids USA Montessori will open most days during inclement weather. In the event that the school closes due to inclement weather related issues, such as a loss of electricity or water, the closure will be posted on our school's Facebook page. Full tuition is due during inclement weather times.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency

contacts arrive. Please refer to our Emergency Preparedness Plan for more information on evacuations and relocation of children.

#### **41. CURRICULUM**

Kids USA Montessori uses Montessori Curriculum in all classrooms. This state recognized curriculum believes that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. Kids USA Montessori is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

Kids USA Montessori also practices Conscious Discipline in all classrooms. Conscious Discipline techniques focusses on building assertiveness and a healthy self-esteem. Children are taught active calming techniques to help regulate themselves while learning about empathy and problem-solving skills. For more information on Conscious Discipline, visit [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com)

#### **42. CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. Kids USA Montessori typically will transition children to new classrooms twice a year, however from time to time we may request a transition sooner based on the individual child's needs.

#### **43. CHILD TO STAFF RATIOS**

Kids USA Montessori follows national ratios set by the Association for Early Learning Leaders. These ratios exceed state ratios and licensing expectations. From time to time, we may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

#### **44. NAP TIME**

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at Kids USA Montessori for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Your child will be provided a mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket and sheet for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing. You may also bring in a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in your child's cubby. Childcare licensing requires that all children be offered a nap or rest period.

#### **45. CLOTHING**

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at Kids USA Montessori. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. Boots, sandals and flip flops are prohibited at Kids USA Montessori for safety reasons.

#### **46. PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Parents must supply all bottles for their child. Kids USA Montessori provides toddler training cups, diapers and wipes. Please label everything with your child's first and last name. Childcare licensing prohibits children from walking with or sleeping with cups or bottles. During drop off time, parents are to ensure that children are sitting at a table if they are leaving their child with cups.

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since Kids USA Montessori cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

#### **47. OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may not wear flip flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground.

#### **48. BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS**

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a "store bought" treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance. If parents wish to invite children in the classroom to private parties, teacher will only be able to pass these out if an invitation is provided for all children in the class.

#### **49. SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES**

Parents need to personally escort their child(ren) inside the building to sign in and out when their children enter and leave the facility. Each classroom has a window for viewing activities



from the hallway. Parents are welcome to visit the center any time during the day to observe their child without prior approval. However, if you would like to stay and spend time with your child during activities, please see the office so we can do a proper criminal history check, as required by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly. If a parent is present in the building when the alarm system is activated, parents are asked to assist the center in emergency preparedness.

You will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. We will also give you a written report at pick up time. A signature from the parent or responsible individual will be required acknowledging that this information was shared. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

#### **50. CAMERAS**

Kids USA Montessori has closed circuit cameras in all classrooms. Director and Owner are the only ones with access and may review these footages for privacy of the children. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet.

#### **51. PHOTOGRAPHS**

Kids USA Montessori believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent. Please note during certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs, and Carnivals, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

#### **52. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Employees of Kids USA Montessori are prohibited from outside employment with parents of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs.

#### **53. SOCIAL NETWORKING WEB SITES**

Cyber identity and social networking is very exciting these days. However, please understand that employees of Kids USA Montessori are prohibited from participating in social networking with parents and children. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace.

#### **54. BITING**

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. Kids USA Montessori will work with parents when biting becomes a problem. We will make every effort to solve the issue as soon as possible.

#### **55. CELL PHONES**

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building so that our Kids USA Montessori staff can properly communicate with you.

*We, at Kids USA Montessori, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in preschool education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Kids USA Montessori.*