



Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Toddler Program at West End Montessori School. Transitioning into a new year is exciting, but sometimes a little bit overwhelming for young children. The best way to have a positive experience is to try to anticipate potential needs and do everything possible to ensure your child's success. The following suggestions are given in this spirit.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival time is at 8:45 am. Please walk your child to the school entrance door to be greeted by a staff member. At dismissal (11:45 am, 2:45 pm, or 5:30 pm), please wait at the school entrance door and your child will be brought to you. Promptness at dismissal helps to eliminate any distress your child may feel.

Orientation

Orientation week is an important time as it gives your child the opportunity to become comfortable and feel safe at school. During this period, it is important that you are available to pick up your child if he or she becomes distressed. We ask that once you leave your child at the entrance with a staff member, you wait in your car in our parking lot or within 10 minutes of the school until pick up time. This will enable you to remain close by if your child needs to leave earlier than scheduled. **Some of the children may need to continue to have shorter hours after Orientation Week. We will develop a schedule with you, if needed, as the week progresses.**

What to Bring

- **Please put 2 complete changes of clothes**, including socks and a pair of shoes in separate Ziploc bags. Place these in your child's WEMS tote bag with your child's name on it. **You will receive a WEMS tote bag during your child's visit or on the first day of school. This bag will remain at school and not travel home each day. Soiled or wet clothes will be sent home in the Ziploc bag that originally contained the clean clothes. Please send a complete set of clothes to school the next day in a clean Ziploc bag with your child's name on it.** Please be sure that the Ziploc bag and all its contents are labeled with your child's name. As the seasons change, please update the extra clothes.
- **If your child is still in diapers**, please bring a bag that contains everything needed to make your child's diaper change self-contained: diapers, baby wipes, and a plastic

changing pad. When you are ready to begin toilet learning with your child please let the teachers know. We have many helpful strategies and want to be your partner in this process.

- **If your child is in the early stages of wearing underwear and in the toilet learning process**, please send baby wipes and at least **5** complete changes of clothes in separate Ziploc bags.
- **Please label all your child's belongings.** The easiest way is to use a permanent marker to put initials on the tags. This is especially important with coats, hats, mittens, etc. which tend to be very similar and are often misplaced.

Extended Day

In an effort to make rest time more efficient and encourage independence in the children, we use nap mats. We have found these mats to be the easiest for the children to set up and provide a cozy way for them to rest. Please see the enclosed notice containing additional information about nap mats. Please purchase a **nap mat** for your child (see Nap Mat Notice) and send it to school on the first day of Extended Day, Tuesday, September 6th.

- A vinyl sleep mat will be provided by WEMS for each child in the Extended Day Program. Your child's nap mat will be placed on top of the vinyl sleep mat. A \$15 rental fee will be charged annually for use of the vinyl sleep mat.
- The nap mat will remain at school and be sent home weekly for laundering.
- Please refer to the WEMS Parent Handbook for additional information about the Extended Day Program.

What to Wear

Developing independence is a very important part of Montessori philosophy. At this age, children are best able to dress themselves and toilet independently in simple clothes such as pants or shorts with elastic waistbands. This will also help teachers when they are diapering.

- **Once your child starts using the toilet, we ask that they not wear overalls, tights, onesies, belts, or pants with snaps and zippers.** This clothing can slow the child just long enough to allow an accident to occur. Our toileting goal for the children is that they be completely independent in the bathroom by the time they enter the early childhood class.
- **We ask that the children wear rubber sole shoes** as they are safer on the playground. Velcro shoes allow a great deal of independence at this age. Open toe sandals are not safe on the playground. Once it's cold, please be sure that your child has a **hat or hood and mittens (not gloves) attached to their coat sleeves.** When choosing coats and jackets, look for details which encourage independence and responsibility. Zippers are usually easier than buttons; pockets are useful places for hat storage. Please remember that hooded jackets with drawstrings are never safe on the playground.
- **Please provide rain boots and a rain suit on the first day of school that will stay at school for use when our playground is wet or we go outside in the rain. Rain suits or rain pants and jackets can be purchased through a variety of online vendors.**
- Upon arriving in the classroom, the children will be changing into **"inside shoes"**. These shoes provide a concrete way for the children to transition from the outdoors into the quiet, peaceful classroom environment. Please send in a pair of shoes for your child to

wear in the classroom which will be stored in their cubby. When choosing “**inside shoes**” please look for shoes that have velcro closures or a soft elastic band around the ankle/heel to aid independence in putting on and removing shoes. The soles of the shoes should be made of a flexible slip resistant material. While there are many good options on the market the examples featured below are from these websites: [See Kai Run](#) and [Starry Knight Design](#)



Items from Home

Toys, jewelry, lip balm, purses etc. are easily lost or broken and can be a distraction in the classroom; therefore, please leave these items at home.

Lunch/ Snacks / Birthdays

- WEMS is a nut-free school. Since we have children with severe allergies to nuts, please do not send a snack or lunch that contains nuts or nut butters. This does not include items that have been processed in a plant containing nuts, such as crackers; just the whole nuts and butters.
- Please provide a snack, lunch, and water bottle for your child in a lunchbox each day. Please also provide an afternoon snack if your child is staying for Extended Day from 3:00 - 5:30. Each should be labeled with your child's name. Please pack each item separately so that it is clear which container is for lunch and which is for snacks. **The lunchbox and water bottle will be the only items traveling to and from school each day.**
- Toddlers are typically too young to understand birthday celebrations at school. Please refrain from sending in any special birthday treats. In order to avoid hurt feelings, please do not distribute birthday invitations at school unless you are inviting every child in the class. WEMS provides a Family Directory online so that invitations may be mailed.

Food Preparation Works

- Food preparation in the classroom is always a favorite activity. The children are excited to practice skills that they have acquired in Practical Life such as stirring, mixing, cutting, juicing, grating, and grinding. Setting the tables, preparing snacks and serving each other allows the children natural practice with Grace and Courtesy lessons while building classroom cooperation and community. Each family will receive a written request to provide specific items needed for food preparation on a designated week during the school year.

Communication

- All notices will be sent via email. They can be returned by mail or given to an administrator at arrival or dismissal. Forms can also be faxed to (804) 740-0285 during school hours or emailed to moderator@westendmontessori.com
- The office staff is available to answer administrative and billing questions at (804) 523-7536 between the hours of 8:30 - 4:30. Billing questions can also be emailed to billing@westendmontessori.com
- Please contact the Lead Teacher listed below with any questions about your child by leaving a message at the office at (804) 523-7536 and your call will be returned as soon as possible. You can also use the emails listed below to contact your child's teachers.

Thank you,

Lauren Vinayak

Laurenvinayak@westendmontessori.com