**PHILOSOPHY & POLICY**

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**The Children’s**

**House of Rochester**

Program Director/Teacher: Heather Gjervik

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*Rochester, Minnesota 55901*

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**License of Olmsted County**

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13. Information for Parents
	1. The Montessori school is licensed for a maximum capacity of 10 children ages 2-5 years. This provides a ratio of 1 adult to every 10 children.
	2. The full-time 9 month program operates Monday through Thursday from 9:00am – 12:00pm. Classes are also offered on a part-time basis and can be discussed with the program director.
	3. A yearly calendar will be provided for parents. The calendar roughly follows the Rochester Public School’s academic calendar. The Children’s House of Rochester allows two full weeks for Christmas Vacation and is also closed on Easter Monday.
	4. I ask that you make every effort to keep arrival and departure as brief as possible as to allow your child easier transition and separation. I will be in the waiting area by 8:45AM. Pick up is by 12:15PM. Please wait in this area for arrival and departure. I ask that the children be allowed to remove and hang up their own coats. When you are at the school with your child, please talk to them and the teachers with a low voice. I have found that if the child expects that the school is a place of quiet and order, he will act accordingly.
	5. Any Messages involving students should be written down and personally handed to the teacher rather than told verbally.
14. Philosophy

The Children’s House of Rochester’s Philosophy focuses on the child’s abilities and independence. My classroom is prepared especially for the child. I offer areas of language, mathematics, science, geography, art, sensorial and practical life.

I feel that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his own periods and readiness. I know that the hand is the chief teacher of the child, and that in order to learn there must be concentration. The best way a child can concentrate is by fixing his attention on some task he is performing with his hands. Montessori said that the hand is the tentacle for the soul. Everything from our practical and sensorial life to our math and language allows the child to concentrate and absorb the materials through his hands and each of his senses rather than being taught solely by hearing.

In the classroom, I never do for a child what the child can do for himself. A dependent child is a demanding child. We maintain order to establish independence. I do not underestimate the abilities of children by doing for them; rather I give them opportunities to take on responsibility. When we as adults give service to children who are able to do things for themselves we are in effect telling them, “You are too small; too lacking in judgment.” We may feel we are giving when we act for the child; in actuality, we are taking away the child’s right to learn and develop.

I encourage independence through order. From the time your child arrives, he will find the school a place of order and respect. He will be working with real tools and real-life equipment, not just toy imitations, which all too often break, depriving a child of independence. He will see beautiful breakable objects to touch and learn to respect.

The child learns by doing. Unlike the adult who encounters a task with the product in mind, the child encounters the task simply for the joy of doing it. The task itself is essential to his development.

And so, another important aspect of our philosophy enters. When the child has had a lesson on some material, he is free to choose it from the shelf, go to a table or rug and be allowed to start, carry through, and finish the cycle of the activity without interruption. Interruption of a child’s work will not be allowed by an adult or another child, for this is a crucial time for his concentration. We also have group time to sing, discover, share and socialize. We have “line-time” every session during which a new lesson is presented to the group. We also use this time to talk about special topics and participate in unit activities.

We as teachers will present the Christian faith in response to the sensitive periods in which the child is passing. In the Montessori environment, such activity is not confined to any particular “period” but becomes an aid in the classroom that develops freely and spontaneously. The students learn the stories of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. The Children’s House of Rochester welcomes people of all faiths and celebrates the diversity of our school.

A preschool/Kindergarten program plan has been developed and is evaluated annually. It is available for parents review at your request.

1. Conferences

We will have two conferences yearly per parent request. The scheduled conferences will be in November and April. There will be a progress report sent home prior to the conference in November. Feel free to contact me with any comments or concerns should the need arise and I will do the same.

1. Observations

In keeping with Montessori tradition, The Children’s House of Rochester welcomes and encourages parental involvement. I want you as a parent to be part of your child’s preschool experience along with us as teachers. Any involvement such as making materials for the classroom or aiding with Christmas party plans would be greatly appreciated.

I encourage observation of the classroom, and parents may observe at any time. When you come to observe, there are some rules we would like you to follow. I will have a chair set for you in a part of the room where you will have full view of activities. I ask that you do not walk around the room while class is in session as the classroom is the child’s environment. The children love, care for, and respect their room. We, as adults, do not want to invade what they thrive in.

The classroom is also a place for quiet voices and feet – never quiet minds. We walk slowly in the room and also speak in soft voices. You will notice, however, that even though the noise level is down, that the children are all busy with individual tasks of concentration, problem solving, enjoying and learning.

While observing, try to be a “fly on the wall” so to speak, taking in what you see without invasion. If we as adults are constantly looking at the child as his work, we may very well interrupt the child’s natural intellect, his natural drive to accomplish through his own motivation, thus creating a false dependency on our praise of his rather than his own joy of learning. After your observation time, you may have questions. I am open to answering any questions that you may have after your observation.

1. Birthdays

Birthdays are our “celebrations of life.” To celebrate your child’s day, please send a picture of them as an infant or toddler to share with the class. Or, you might choose to come in and read a favorite story.

As many parents do, you may wish to give a monetary donation in your child’s name in honor of his/her birthday. This is a popular practice in Montessori schools and is a great way to add to the environment.

Birthday treats must be store bought. Please keep them simple. Fruit, crackers, and cookies are appropriate. Thank you!

1. Health
	1. The health component includes several areas in which the school and parents share responsibility.
		1. All immunizations must be up-to-date. A health form must be filled out and signed by both a parent and a physician and must be kept on file at school.
		2. Parents must provide the school with the name of the child’s doctor and emergency phone numbers in the event of an illness.
		3. If it is necessary to ask the school staff to administer any medicine to your child, the staff must have the medicine in a properly labeled prescription bottle and it must be accompanied by a note from the parents giving permission for administration.
		4. In fairness to your child and to the others here, you must keep your child home if obvious sign of illness, such as inflammation of eyes, ears or throat, a temperature of 101 degrees or above, or if skin rash exists in the morning of a school day.
		5. If a child is ill, parents are requested to call the school and let us know that their child will not be attending that day.
	2. When a child is out of school due to illness, he must be fever and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to the school. Children who are not well do not belong at the school. Children with the following symptoms cannot be accepted.
		* + Open sores - Head lice
			+ Ringworm - Culture proven strep throat
			+ Impetigo - Diarrhea
			+ Scabies - Vomiting
			+ Conjunctivitis
	3. Children with the following contagious diseases can be accepted in the school after they have been treated for the indicated time period:
		1. Impetigo – 48 hours
		2. Culture proven strep throat – 24 hours
	4. Children with a rash of any kind will not be admitted to the school without a slip from a doctor verifying that the rather is not contagious. Please notify the staff if your child has been exposed to or contracts a communicable disease such as measles or chicken pox.
2. School Responsibility
	1. The school will check each child on arrival for obvious signs of illness and will send any sick child back home immediately as a protective measure for that child and the others at school.
	2. The school staff will administer no non-prescription drugs to your child.
	3. Parents will be notified of any exposure to infectious or communicable disease via a prominent, written posted note.
	4. In the event of an accident or onset of illness at the school, the staff will first attempt to contact the parents. One staff person who is trained in first aid will be present at all times. A signed permission slip is required for administering Syrup of Ipecac. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the physician and the emergency number you have provided us. If necessary, we will see to it that the child gets to the hospital for treatment while we continue our efforts to reach you. If transportation to the emergency room is necessary, an ambulance will be called and the child will go to Saint Mary’s Emergency Trauma Unit. If an illness is not an emergency, we will isolate the child and request that you or someone designated by you come to take the child home.
	5. All staff members will have a current health form on file with the school.
	6. Staff and children must wash their hands after going to the bathroom.
	7. Minnesota state law requires that we refer any suspected case of child abuse or neglect to the Olmsted County Department of Human Services.
	8. To insure safety, children will not be released to anyone who is obviously under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Insurance

The Children’s House of Rochester holds liability insurance through a local agency covering each child attending the center in the amount of $1,000,000.

1. Field Trips

There will be no field trips taken during the regular scheduled class time.

1. Snack

Each family will be asked to provide snack items as needed for their assigned month. (1-2 times yearly).

1. Pets

The school is host to a variety of small animals currently including a dog and a guinea pig. If changes are made to this list, parents will be notified.

1. Tuition

Timely tuition is essential and non-negotiable, as fully outlines in our Tuition Policy Statement. **A $50.00 late fee is assessed for payments not received as scheduled.** Tuition fees did not increase from the 2011-2012 academic year. Tuition fees will stay the same.

**PARENT AGREEMENT FORM**



**The Children’s**

**House of Rochester**

Program Director/Teacher: Heather Gjervik

I have received, read and understand the policies and procedure given to me by The Children’s House of Rochester.

Parent’s Signature Date

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I give permission to the staff at The Children’s House of Rochester to act in an emergency if I cannot be reached or am delayed.

Parent’s Signature Date

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PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH YOUR CHILD’S APPLICATION