

The  
Children's House



*nurturing active minds*

Parent Handbook

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# The Children's House

Website: [www.thechildrenshouse.us](http://www.thechildrenshouse.us)

Telephone: 704.975 6753

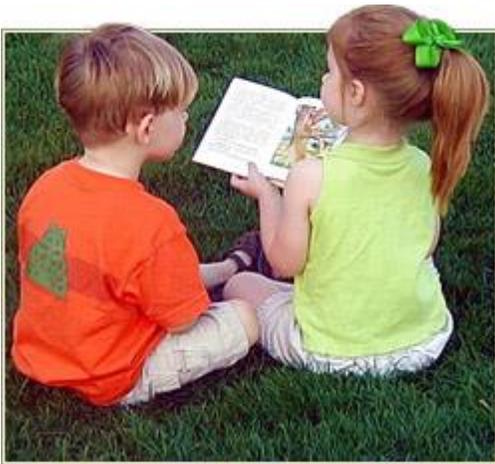


Photo courtesy of Vyvyan Black.

This handbook gives an overview of the policies and procedures of *The Children's House*. All parents are expected to be familiar with it. If you have any questions or suggestions about this guide, please contact us.

## Schedule

7:45	Arrival Full Time Students
8:00	School Day Plus Students
8:30	Arrival Morning Students and School Day Students
8:30 – 9:00	Outside Play
9:00 – 11:30	Individual and Small Group Work Period
11:30 – 11:45	Circle
11:45	Dismissal Morning Students
11:45 – 12:15	Lunch
12:15 – 12: 45	Rest
12:45 – 1:30	Outside Play
1:30 – 2:25	Cultural Activities/Individual Work
2:25	Dismissal School Day Students
3:25	Dismissal School Day Plus Students
3:30	Full Time Students begin after school activities
5:25	Dismissal Full Time Students

## Philosophy

Our School's program is based on the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, and the latest research in child development. Our goal is to provide a carefully prepared environment that meets the needs of each individual child and fosters independent thinkers.

We believe children have an innate curiosity that leads them to explore the world around them. They employ all of their senses to investigate their environment. They learn at their own pace and should be allowed to experience the excitement of learning by their own choice rather than by being forced.

The hand is the chief teacher of the child. In order to learn there must be concentration. The best way the child can concentrate is by fixing his attention on some task he is performing with his hands. All the materials in the classroom invite the child to use his hands for learning. Materials are graded from simple to complex and are introduced sequentially, thus the child integrates new concepts into his present body of knowledge and builds on his previous experiences. For example, he may grade rods that differ only in length from shortest to longest; then go on to grade rods that vary in length and width.

We recognize the importance of your child becoming an independent thinker. When the child solves a problem himself he becomes a more self-confident person and will feel he can attempt things himself and be successful. The more independent your child becomes the more he can participate in life and will have a positive attitude to all its challenges. Our goal is always to help the child build on his skills and show him how to approach problems rather than solving them for him. We do this by asking relevant questions that will lead him to the answer.

Teachers at The Children's House are role models. We listen attentively and think before we speak. We consciously teach our children to be kind and courteous to one another and to treat each other and adults with respect. The child receives specifically directed encouragement rather than blanket praise- this feels more genuine to the child and fosters self-motivation and positive self-regard.

## Curriculum

The classroom is divided into different areas for your child to explore, this includes practical life, such as planting seeds, dramatic play, art, science, math and reading; there will be a healthy dose of outdoor play. Circle time will be an opportunity for children to come together and participate in songs, dance, stories, and other fun activities.

## About Us

2004 was The Children's House inaugural year. We are a private school located in The Community School of Davidson serving staff and families of CSD and the Lake Norman Community. We have a multi-age (3,4,5 year olds) preschool classroom and a toddler classroom (18 months – 3 years).

### **Debbie Richardson** **Owner/Director/Preschool Lead Teacher**

Debbie received her Licentiate in Speech and Drama from Trinity College of Music, London. She obtained her Montessori Primary Diploma, (birth to 6 years) and Montessori Elementary Diploma, (6-9 years) at the London Montessori Center.

## Transition Days

Many parents express apprehension as their young child enters preschool. Starting a new class for a child is much like starting a new job for an adult – exciting but a little bit scary too. Children transferring from another environment can be intimidated by the strange materials and the basic ground-rules that seem so different from other preschools. Our goal is to make this transition into school as smooth and gentle as possible. In order to make the transition easier we will begin the school year with “shortened days” adding an hour each day as the week progresses.

It is sometimes hard to remember time and simplicity are gifts. We live in a fast paced society, which dictates that we are on the go constantly. We prefer a gentler, slow and steady pace and believe it benefits children. Our objective is to create a relaxed and comfortable environment where the children can:

- Experience the routine a little bit at a time, adding on as the routine becomes familiar.
- Become comfortable in the classroom and learn the ground-rules of this new environment.
- Learn some of the basic Grace and Courtesy rules of classroom “etiquette”.

## Suggestions for Separating

- Have lots of discussions with your child on his/her level about your leaving. Make sure that your child understands that you will not be staying with him/her at school. Reassure that you will always come back.
- Give them time words that they can understand. I.e.: “I will play one puzzle with you then I must go.” Or “I will be back at outside time.”
- Tell them you are leaving and say good-bye. (Sudden disappearances make children scared and mistrustful).
- If you say you are leaving – leave. (Lingering, coming back and forth, sends mixed messages to the child.)
- “Lovies” (security items) can sometimes ease the transition from home to school. Talk to the teacher if this is necessary.

## Dropping Your Child Off in the Classroom

Too many adults can greatly affect the energy of our classroom and interfere with our ability as teachers to interact with and get to know the children.

For this reason, we ask that you please follow these guidelines:

- If you are able to leave your child easily, please do so as soon as you can.
- If you feel your child still needs you for moral support, please find a quiet corner, sit down and be as non-intrusive as possible.
- If you are unsure about leaving, you can always wait in the foyer or make sure that we have a number where we can reach you. We always call parents when a child is inconsolable.

- Please take conversations with each other and teachers to the hallway. Serious concerns need to be handled either by phone or conference.
- All conflict resolution (discipline) needs to be handled by the teachers.
- If a behavior occurs at school, we will make every attempt to handle it at school.

## Car Pool and Traffic Safety

No child should arrive prior to their scheduled time. The teachers are involved in planning and preparation until then, and are not ready to give children their full attention. Please walk your child into the classroom and make eye contact with the teacher. When the teacher has acknowledged you/your child then you may leave. For toddlers there will be a sign-in sheet. Please sign beside your child's name and write the time of arrival.

Your child will be ready to leave for afternoon carpool pick up at the same time each day. Please pick up your child promptly at his dismissal time. Your child learns to expect you at certain times each day; your promptness shows respect for this inner rhythm in the child.

Also, if we have circle at the end of the day we time it so your child is sitting and engaged for an appropriate length of time. Asking your child to wait longer is not fair or kind to your child. We also have extended day children needing our attention and supervision.

All children must wear **seatbelts or be in child restraint seats**.

Children are safest in the back seat. We'll help them get in and buckled. If you have several children who need help with seat belts, pull ahead slightly and take time to buckle up while we load the next car.

Children **must be with an adult at all times in the parking lot**.

Please hold your child's hand as you cross the parking lot to your car. If you would like to visit with another parent, please park and remember to **never leave your child/children in a car unattended**.

We cannot accept verbal messages from children. Please write a note if your child is to go home with a friend or different driver.

**PLEASE RESPECT HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES**

## Health Care Policies

### Immunization Policy

The protection of our children's health and safety is among the top priorities of TCH mission. A complete immunization record is required for each student upon enrollment. Students must have proof of up-to-date immunizations. Waivers for new students will be limited to approved medical waivers. TCH reserves the right to decline admission or re-enrollment to any child who is not fully immunized. TCH reserves the right, during outbreaks of illness, to exclude from the school any child who has not been fully immunized. In such cases there will be no refund or adjustment of tuition. Enrolled children are required to keep their immunizations up-to-date in order to remain at the school. In addition to the above, each child at TCH must be in compliance with the requirements of state law and regulation concerning immunizations.

## **Illness**

If your child has any of the following symptoms, you will be asked to pick up your child from school as soon as possible, both for the safety of your child, and to prevent the spread of illness. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, an emergency contact from your emergency card will be called. In case of contagious illness other than a common cold a doctor's note will be required before your child can return to school. We understand that it is difficult for a parent to leave or miss work; therefore it is suggested that if necessary you arrange a backup for children when they are sick.

If your child is sick or unable to come to school, please let us know. Please email or text me at (704-) 975 6753.

If you are taking a vacation, please let us know when we can expect your child's return.

**Children with any of the following symptoms must remain at home** until they have been symptom free without fever, diarrhea or nausea reducing medicine for at least 24 hours:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea or loose stools inconsistent with usual bowel movements
- Any suspicious rash
- Persistent colored nasal discharge (longer than five days)
- Any contagious illness
- Any symptom requiring one-on-one care and/or causing severe discomfort
- Any open, oozing sore, bacterial infection and/or bloody gums

- Surgery (tubes, etc.) your child cannot return to the school until 24 hours have passed since the time of surgery

When returning to school after an illness, please remember the following:

- Your child must be free from all symptoms for 24 hours or longer
- Your child must be able to participate in all activities, including outside and large motor activities
- Chicken Pox lesions must be completely dry and there should be no other symptoms present
- Children taking prescription medicine for a contagious illness must have taken it for at least 24 hours
- Any contagious illness (i.e. pinkeye) requires a doctor's note to return

## Stand-Up Diapering

This practice allows the child to be a more active participant in his care and allows him to gain an understanding of the process of toileting.

Diapering is done in the bathroom, where the child may see and make an association between his body's elimination needs, learning cause and effect. For example, (if I urinate in my diaper I will feel wet and need a dry diaper) and eventually, (if I urinate in the toilet, I will not need a new diaper and can wear underwear.) mastering the process of toilet learning.

## School Closings and Emergencies

**In the event of inclement weather, we follow the policy of CSD.**

For information regarding school closings/cancellations please check TV stations (WSOC-9, WBTV-3, NBC-6) and CSD's website:

<http://www.csdnc.org>

If there is an emergency and we need to close the school early, I will group text TCH parents. Please respond with "Got it." If you do not respond I will phone you and/or your emergency contact to pick up your child.

For information regarding school closings/cancellations please check TV stations (WSOC-9, WBTV-3, NBC-6).

## Conferences and Communication

Conferences are scheduled for each child three times a year, in August, October, and May. A February conference is recommended for parents of rising kindergarten children. Please respect the time allotted for your appointment. If additional time is needed, a further conference may be scheduled.

NOTE: Please do not bring your child to the conference.

### Communication

Newsletters: You will receive regular newsletters containing current class information, as well as offering some ideas of interest to you from a parenting perspective. You will be able to access newsletters, photos, and the calendar on your child's class shutterfly site.

## **Informal and formal conferences**

Formal conferences are scheduled three times a year, however, parents should not feel these are the only times they may speak to their child's teacher. We are always interested in any information providing insight into your child's needs or your specific concerns. Phone, email, or send a note with your child to make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher and we will contact you promptly.

## **Changes at Home**

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform your child's teacher as soon as possible. Common causes of distress include: either one or both parents being away from home for any reason for an extended period of time; new person living in the home; accident or death in the family; new caretaker; moving or a new baby. All information will be regarded as confidential. The teacher/Director will keep you informed of any significant changes in the school environment, which may affect your child as well.

## **Clothing**

Self-care is an important part of the child building his independence; therefore clothing should not only be comfortable but should also allow the child to dress himself independently.

Over-the-shoulder straps, stiff or small zippers and small buttons are frustrating to the child. Elastic waistbands are preferred over pants with zips and belts.

Please dress your child for active play. This means casual, **washable** clothes and **sturdy, soft-soled shoes. Tennis shoes are perfect!**

Please do not send your child in sandals and open toed shoes as mulch sticks can hurt tender feet. We do go outside in drizzly and cold weather, so raincoats and boots are appropriate. (Please, NO UMBRELLAS!) Layers are especially useful in spring and fall, when the weather is much cooler in the morning and warms up quickly as the day goes on.

Put your child's name on all clothes, and be sure to send an extra change of clothing, including socks. Check the extra clothes in your child's cubby and adjust appropriately as the weather changes throughout the seasons.

## Things from Home

Our resources/materials are carefully selected for the development of the child and for group play. We ask that toys from home not be brought to school. We have found that they set up a competitive situation. If you know your child has a real need for a "lovey" please talk it over with his/her teacher.

## Holidays

We believe that holidays are best celebrated within the context of family, homes and places of worship where they can be honored with the respect they so richly deserve. Our classroom is a place where children of all beliefs, cultures, and traditions come together to grow and learn while experiencing traditions common to all.

We encourage children to express themselves using an array of colors and materials without being limited to colors and decorations dictated by the traditions of each holiday. We are a place where children can sing, tell stories, dress up, build blocks, and cook without being confined to songs, stories, and recipes of the "season." As always our caring and nurturing

staff are happy to listen to stories that your children tell and the conversations they have about their own traditions and celebrations.

## Classroom Management Policy

Discipline at our school will take the form of positive classroom management, which will:

- Recognize that children are unique individuals and behave and learn in different ways.
- Strive to establish a warm atmosphere of cooperation and trust.
- Strive to help the child become self-controlled, that is, help him/her to experience the intrinsic pleasure in appropriate behavior as opposed to “behaving” just to please adults.
- Encourage children to be independent and to solve their own problems. The teacher will offer assistance when needed and model along the way.
- Provide age and developmentally appropriate equipment, materials and activities.
- State expectations in the positive form, such as, “walk please” vs. “don’t run.”
- Speak to the behavior, not the child, such as, “hitting hurts; let’s find another way to solve this problem” vs. “you’re a bad girl for hitting.”
- Respect the child and the child’s belongings, artwork, etc.
- Allow the child to experience the natural and logical consequences of his/her behavior whenever possible. For example: the natural consequence of playing too roughly with friends is that they may not want to play with you. The logical consequence of spilled milk is that you clean it up. A natural consequence requires no outside involvement. A logical consequence needs an adult to follow through.

- Allow the child acceptable means of expressing anger, frustration, sadness, hurt or fear—all of which are honest, healthy emotions. Crying, screaming or hitting a pillow are all acceptable outlets.
- If necessary in order to prevent a child from hurting himself or others or from doing damage to equipment, a teacher will calmly but firmly hold a child to prevent such harm. The child will be held as lovingly as possible with a helpful attitude rather than a punishing or admonishing one.
- After other management techniques have been tried the teacher will limit a child's freedom by asking a child to sit within sight of her. The child may determine when he/she is ready to get up or a short (2-3 minute) time limit may be set.
- Use no corporal (physical) punishment.

Teachers will speak to parents whose child exhibits behaviors that are detrimental to the dynamics in the classroom. Together the parents and the teachers will create strategies for improving the situation.

## **Talking About Children**

One aspect of our philosophy is that we try never to talk about children in their presence. We feel that it is disrespectful to the child to behave as if they are not present while discussing them. If you would like to discuss issues about your child, please feel free to call a teacher or choose a moment when your child is otherwise engaged.

For more information on this important topic please see Katherine Reeves article, [\*Talking About Children in Their Presence\*](#).

# Nutritional Food Policy

***Please note that we are a nut free facility.***

Mecklenburg County Health and Sanitation dept has regulated that children's food needs to dated daily. Please write the day's date and stick it on your child's lunch bag. You can do this with a Sharpie on masking tape.

When packing your child's snack and lunch please keep in mind the following:

**Snack needs to consist of at least two food groups:**

- Milk or fruit
- Grain
- Protein

**Lunch needs to consist of at least four food groups:**

- Milk
- Two or more Fruits or Vegetables
- Protein
- Grain

When you pack your child's lunch, please be mindful of your child's health. Please use foods that are as close to their natural state as possible, i.e. fruits and veggies, whole-grain rather than white bread. Pack food in containers your child can easily open. Tupperware is perfect. This helps foster independence in the children, frees the teacher from having to open 10 lunchables, 10 juice boxes, 10 "gogurts" (you get the picture), and allows us to send home any uneaten food, so you are aware of what your child eats.

**Please note:**

- We do not microwave or warm food.
- Please include a napkin, any utensils necessary and a water bottle.
- Make sure your child's name is on everything, e.g. lunch box, tupperware etc.

**Suggestions for Lunches**

- Sandwiches
- Cut up fruits and vegetables
- Canned fruits and vegetables (removed from can)
- Drain the juice from fruit tubs and place in a tupperware your child can open.
- Cut up cheese
- Deviled/boiled eggs
- Crackers
- Pretzels
- Rice cakes
- Dry cereal
- Lunch meat
- Muffins
- Raisins and dried fruits

Please send no more than two (snack) or four (lunch) items. Children generally eat better when they are not overwhelmed with too many choices. Please do not send candy, cookies, etc.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Parents are always welcome in at TCH. If you have a special talent, passion and/or knowledge you want to share with the children, please let us know. For example, you may want to share artifacts and stories about your culture. The children love to learn from you; we appreciate any time you are able to share with us.

We also have a sign up on our class shutterfly site. Some of these volunteer spots require a weekly commitment of 30 minutes and others may be a few hours 1x a year.

### **Family of the Week**

We have a sign-up sheet where children bring flowers to class on Monday, take laundry home on Thursday and provide snack for the whole class on a rotating basis. This will begin in September. The food is specifically used to teach children cooking skills, expose children to new foods and foods that other cultures eat, as it ties into our cultural curriculum. Only sugar-free and chemical-free foods are recommended. We feel it is important to keep nutritional standards high for our children.

Your child should bring bottled water to school everyday. Please label the bottle with his/her name.

## Tuition Policy

- A non-refundable, 10% deposit must be included with the tuition contract to secure your child's place.
- Full tuition less the 10% deposit will be paid in ten monthly installments and is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, August 1 – May 1.
- This applies during winter vacation and other times when we may not have school on the 1st of the month.
- There will be an annual 3% increase in tuition rates.

Please set up automatic bill payment, with your bank, to be paid on the 1st of each month. **Make payable to The Children's House, 205 Aurora Lane, Huntersville, NC 28078.** If your check is late, by more than 3 days, a \$15 late fee will be due. All NSF checks will be charged a \$30 fee.

## Withdrawal

In the event, you wish to withdraw your child from TCH you must give **30 30 days written notice** by email or letter.



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