



2024-2025 Preschool Age Family Handbook

Children's House
Early Childhood Program
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www.childrenskiva.org

The Children's House is committed to the policy that no otherwise qualified person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under any program or activity on the basis of ethnicity or race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, or disability.

Further, the Children's House affirms the rights of all students, staff, families/clients, and vendors to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and/or harassment based upon ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, age, or disability.

Avoiding unlawful discrimination requires the collaborative responsibility of each administrator, supervisor, employee, and student to affirm in actions and deeds the intent and spirit of governing laws and regulations. Toward this end, the Children's House will assist management, staff, and students to implement the Children's House good faith intent not to discriminate in the Children's House employment and educational or vendor opportunities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") provides that no qualified disabled person shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to, discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. Persons protected under Section 504 and the ADA include students, applicants for employment, employees, parents of students, and members of the community who come within the definitions of "individual with a disability" under those statutes.

Student/Parent Handbook revised and approved by BOD on 10/29/2024. This handbook is subject to change at any time; notifications of major changes will be posted on school websites and in monthly parent newsletters.

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Abbreviations Guide

Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
Board of Directors (BOD)
Center for Disease Control (CDC)
Children’s House (CH)
Children’s House Director (CHD)
Colorado (CO)
Colorado Child Care Assistance Program(C.C.C.A.P.)
Colorado Department of Education (CDE)
Colorado Exceptional Americans with Disabilities Act (ECEA)
Colorado Growth Model Standard (CGMS)
Colorado League of Charter Schools (CLC)
Colorado Measures for Academic Success (CMAS)
Colorado Preschool Program (CPP)
Director of Curriculum Instruction (DCI)
Finance Director (FD)
Free and Reduced Price School Meals (FRM)
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
Head of School (HOS)
Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Montelores Early Childhood Council (MECC)
Montezuma-Cortez Re-1 School District (Re-1) or (District)
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC)
Physical Education (PE)
Response to Intervention (RtI)
San Juan Board of Cooperative Education Services (SJBoces)
Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and the Arts (STEAM)
Southwest District of the Colorado Association for the Education of the Young Child (SWNAEYC)
Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD)
Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP)

Partnerships, Accreditations and Memberships

Children's House: Children's House Early Childhood Program, the Children's Kiva Montessori School's Early Childhood Program serves students ages 18 months-6 years old including Kindergarten. This program has been in operation in Cortez since 1987 and is currently located at 1204 East Empire Street in Cortez, CO.

Children's House uses Colorado Shines (Colorado's Quality Rating Improvement System) to measure the quality of childcare programs on a Leveled Scale 1-5. Children's House currently holds a level 4 rating.

Children's House also uses the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) national accreditation system to improve our programming and professional development. NAEYC's rigorous standards for high quality early childhood education requires accredited programs to invest in a three-year process of self-study, evaluation, site-visits, and consultations. For more information about NAEYC, go to www.naeyc.org.

Children's House, holds memberships to local and national organizations including Montelores Early Childhood Council (MECC), Colorado Non-Profit Association, Cortez Area Chamber of Commerce, Southwest District of the Colorado Association for the Education of the Young Child (SWNAEYC), the Colorado Montessori Association and American Montessori Association.

Vision, Mission and Academic Guiding Principles

School Vision

The Children's Kiva Montessori School provides a vibrant and engaging learning environment based on the teachings of Dr. Maria Montessori that supports all students' academic excellence and ability to become empowered, creative, lifelong learners responsible for themselves, their community and their environment.

Children's House Mission

The Early Childhood Program at Children's House Montessori School uses authentic Montessori methods in a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment to inspire students' sense of wonder, innate desire to work and learn, and positive engagement with their community.

Children's House Academic Guiding Principles

The Early Childhood Program at Children's House Montessori School mentors, encourages, and guides children to become self-directed, independent, compassionate learners through curriculum and practices that include:

- Authentic Montessori environments: Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language, and Cultural Studies.
- Daily lessons in Graces and Courtesies - Developmentally appropriate instruction and modeling of peaceful conflict resolution with self and others.
- Respectful, nurturing, and supportive classrooms where independence, self-direction, and concentration are fostered.

- Student-centered approaches to introducing lessons based on student interest and readiness balanced with standards-based goals for academic, social, emotional, and physical development.
- Developmentally appropriate academic, social, emotional, and physical challenges to cultivate self-esteem, resilience, and whole-child success.
- Curriculum aligned to and monitored by best practices in Early Childhood Development National and State standards.

Organizational Structure

Boards of Directors:

Children’s House is governed by a Board of Directors (BOD) with up to nine (9) members. These parents or community members are appointed by the standing BOD for three-year terms, unless filling a vacancy and serving out the predecessor’s remaining term. All BOD members are committed to ensuring the success of the Children’s House through alignment of vision and mission with the best practices of professional and quality education.

The role of the BOD is to set policy and direction for the Children’s House and to assure the school is run in compliance with all applicable laws and contractual obligations. In accomplishing its responsibilities, the BOD is supported by a number of committees consisting of parent and non-parent volunteers in areas ranging from financial matters to facilities issues. Children’s House Board generally meets the third Monday of each month, meeting times are posted on the door and/or window of each school and an annual meeting calendar on each program’s website. All community members are welcome to address the BOD at meetings. All other corporate documents (e.g. by-laws, articles of incorporation, BOD policies) are located on the school website and in the front office and all are available for public review. Board members do not have access to confidential files of students, school personnel or other federally or state mandated confidential information.

Administrative Team:

Our Administration Team is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Children’s House.

Children’s House Director (CHD): The CHD is responsible for and accountable to the CH Board of Directors for all aspects of Children’s House operations. These include the broad categories of enrollment, educational programming, community relations, fiscal management, personnel management, and property management. As well as, maintaining accreditations and legal compliance related to early childhood education programs, support in program development and grant-writing and cultivating parent relationships and outreach at the CH level. These responsibilities are administered in a manner consistent with Montessori philosophy and in the best interest of the Children’s House program.

Fiscal Manager: The Finance Director is responsible for and accountable to the Boards of Director for financial records, reporting, accounting oversight of the day to day operations of Children’s House.

Community Partnership Leadership Committees:

School committees are made up of staff, board, parents, and community partners working together on specific projects and goals. For more information about each committee, contact the Board of Directors or school administration.

School Advisory Committee: As required in C.R.S., §§ 22-11-401 to 406, and outlined in School and District policies, this committee will:

1. adopt school goals and objectives for the improvement of education in the school;
2. adopt a plan to improve education achievement, reduce the gaps in performance of groups within the school, increase the ratings on the state accountability report, and assure the school's accreditation status;
3. make recommendations to the CHD regarding the prioritization of expenditures of school monies;
4. determine whether decisions affecting the educational process are advancing or impeding student achievement;
5. report to students, parents, Re-1 Montezuma-Cortez Board of Education on the educational performance of the school and providing data for the appraisal of such performance;
6. make recommendations to the CHD on the expenditure of all school grants; and
7. make recommendations to the CHD on safety issues related to the school environment.

The School Advisory Council will be made up of:

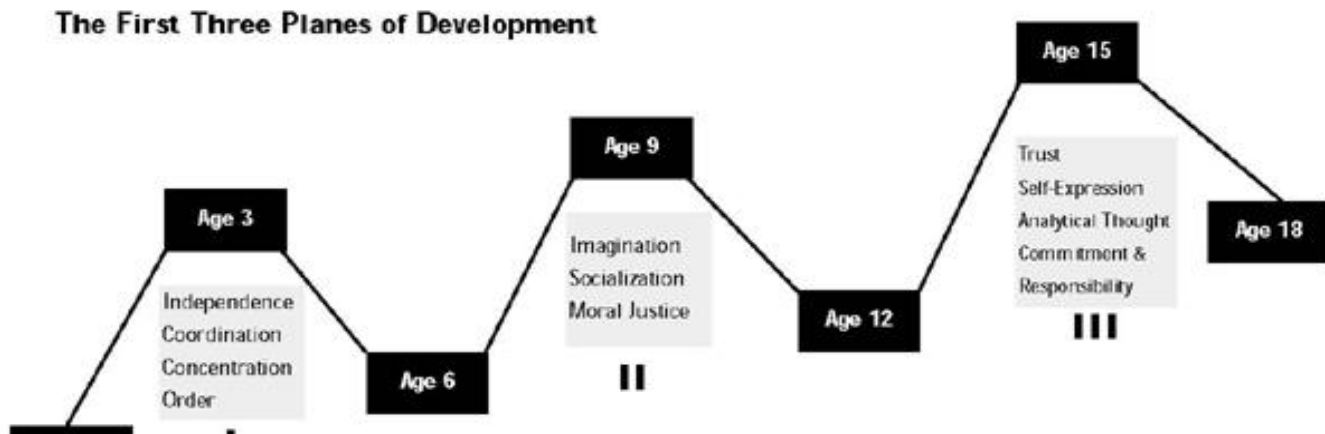
1. The Head of School or the Head of School 's designee;
2. At least one teacher who provides instruction at the school;
3. At least two parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school;
4. At least one adult member of the school's PTO; and
5. At least one person from the community.

Budget and Financial Oversight Committee: This committee will develop and submit an annual balanced budget, an annual report, and audited financial statements to the Boards. The committee will also advise the Boards on other financial matters and business operations of the Children's House.

Parent/Teacher Organization: Our school's Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) is an autonomous partnership of school parents and staff that serves to support school functions through parent outreach and education, volunteer coordination, staff support projects, and fundraising. This group works closely with school administration to support the education, morale, and sustainability of our school community.

Getting Involved: Parents are encouraged to participate in whatever way they can. Participating through Board membership, committee participation, or volunteering with the PTO are all viable ways parents can meet their 20 parent involvement hours. For more information, contact the PTO President.

Academic Programs



Dr. Montessori identified four planes of development that all people, regardless of culture, experience as they grow from infancy to adulthood. Each plane, lasting approximately six years (birth to age 6, ages 6 to 12, ages 12 to 18, and ages 18 to 24), has two sub-planes of three years each. The first sub-plane consists of a time of intense acquisition, followed by the second sub-plane of refinement and internalization. Because she observed characteristics of each sub-plane as so different from the others, Dr. Montessori believed that schools would best serve students by grouping children by these developmental planes rather than by single age or grade levels. Based on this belief, Children's Kiva Montessori School subscribes to mixed-age grouping in its classrooms. The older children at each level naturally help the younger ones, thereby deepening their understanding of concepts as well as developing empathy and leadership. Younger students benefit from seeing higher learning possibilities and working with role models close to their own age.

Children's House – Refinement & Internalization: The Children's House serves children ages 18 months to six. This first plane of development is characterized by the time during which a child's mind is like a sponge, absorbing all that is within the environment. Materials, lessons, and experiences within the Children's House classroom are designed to complement the sensitive periods for development of order, language acquisition, refinement of the senses, and movement. Characterized by concrete thinking and fundamental formation of character, children endeavor to work independently within a structured environment doing real activities with an intelligent purpose and strive for independence, "I can do it myself!"

Multi-year Cycle: Benefits of remaining within the same classroom community for the multi-year grade span served by that classroom include:

- Space and time available for depth of learning in a collaborative community atmosphere;
- Space and time to develop at one's own pace, advancing as ready;
- Development of intrinsic motivation facilitated through broad ranges of ages and ability levels within one classroom.

Teachers at all levels serve as guides, allowing students to pursue studies in areas of interest while ensuring overall broad curricular experiences are met. In Montessori, the teacher provides opportunities for the minimums to be met while maximums are determined solely by each student's imagination, desire to learn, and effort toward realizing their goal.

Within this continuity, there is a healthy dynamic of change affording children the opportunity to work with a

variety of peers and staff. Children are at once novices, masters, and mentors of their learning, where they are open to new experiences, delving into challenges, and sharing their learning with others. The community built from this is the foundation of the multi-age classroom. In general, children remain within the same classroom community for the duration of grade levels served.

General Admissions

Children's House is a school of choice. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies. We strive to meet each child's specific needs through collaboration and partnership with the San Juan Board of Cooperative Educational Services (SJBOCES), Community Connections, and the child's family.

Orientation and Registration: An Orientation meeting is required for all families. The orientation meeting between parents and a member of the administrative team serves to open a direct line of communication between parents and school. Topics covered include school philosophy, policies, and procedures.

Re-enrollment: Subsequent school year enrollment takes place in January. Families wishing to continue enrollment at Children's House must submit an Intent to Re-Enroll Form by the specified deadline in order to reserve their child(ren)'s space for the upcoming school year. If we do not receive the necessary paperwork by the specified deadline, we will release your child's space to be filled by waitlist students.

Montessori Transition Program: The atmosphere of a Montessori classroom is one that requires students to make responsible choices regarding time management, decision-making, and the prioritization of educational responsibilities. It is important to remember that students who are new to this "responsible independence" very often need time to learn its ways.

Each child in our program is expected to complete schoolwork in a timely fashion, to resolve interpersonal difficulties through communication and cooperation, and to function within the parameters of the environment as set forth by the classroom teacher. A spirit of cooperation is required for these criteria to develop. All children considered for transfer enrollment will be evaluated on their potential for successful integration according to the above stated criteria. As part of the enrollment process, a transition meeting will be scheduled for all families transferring from other schools. The participants will include the student, parents, guardians or legal custodians, the CHD, and the Lead teacher. Transcripts from the student's previous school will be required. The student and his/her family will be required to participate in a classroom observation period. Once the student is admitted, the student and their families must agree on an educational plan and sign a Family Commitment Agreement. Throughout the course of the first year, families in the Transitional Program will have progress reviews to verify that their children are succeeding. Teachers will assess students to ensure that they are successfully transitioning into the Montessori program.

Children's House Program Enrollment: Children 18 months to 6 years of age may be admitted to the Children's House Program on a space-available basis. Minimum enrollment for Children's House is four half days. The school operates Monday through Thursday for student programming; Fridays are closed to students.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, children with learning or physical disabilities are accepted. Registration for preschool is offered in May for the following school year. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to 1.) re-enrolling students, 2.) children of full-time faculty or BOD, and 3.) siblings of currently enrolled students. See the Children's House Director for more information.

Readiness for Children's House: Like all preschools, our program requires a degree of independence from

students in order for them to have a positive experience. Even though each of our classrooms is well staffed with a lead teacher and an assistant, students need to be able to manage many self-care tasks on their own. Children enrolled in CH should be able to feed and dress themselves as well as be independent in the toileting process. We ask that children who are enrolled be able to care for their toileting needs, reasonable accommodations will be made for accidents. In general, children starting preschool should be able to work and play independently for short periods, to focus on one task or project for several minutes, to follow simple instructions, and to sit still for a few minutes for lessons and circle time.

Toileting & Self Care Accommodations will be provided for students as needed in accordance with their individual abilities and needs. External rewards will not be given to support toilet training. All successful and unsuccessful toileting attempts will be logged in to Brightwheel. There will be no attempt to toilet train any child until they are able to communicate or otherwise indicate need and help manage their own clothing. Staff will work closely with the family to ensure consistency between home and CH. Families are responsible for ensuring that the child has adequate change of clothing in case of accidents. Soiled clothing will be sent home daily. It is the responsibility of the family to retrieve soiled clothing from the laundry room.

Advanced Placement: Children's House holds to the county/state age-related cut-off date of five (5) years old by August 31st for enrollment into our kindergarten. However, our school policy and structure of mixed-age grouping allows us to meet students at their own instructional level and subsequently advance them according to their level of demonstrated ability. Children's House has basic requirements and expectations for each class level. These important expectations ensure that a class is vibrant and stimulating on all levels of development (cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and work-study skills). Children's House has high academic standards and is dedicated to keeping those standards challenging. Therefore, our staff must assess children who are candidates for advanced placement into a grade beyond their chronological age. For more information, contact the CHD.

Exceptional Student Services

It is Children's House priority to meet the needs of every student enrolled. CH has selected a Montessori approach to its academic practice because of the inherent nature of Montessori to provide individualized instruction that is appropriate, engaging, challenging, and standards-based for every student. Montessori classrooms are set up to create a student-centered environment where each student's needs are addressed individually. Students of all abilities can be productive, important members of Montessori classrooms. To support the School's efforts to meet the needs of all of its students, we will comply with State and RE-1 School District (District) requirements for serving students with special needs. Please see [RE-1 School District](#) for more information.

Responsibility for Exceptional Student Services: Children's House will collaborate with the RE-1 Exceptional Student Director/Teacher (working directly through SJ BOCES) to assure that all students with special educational needs attending the school receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under the IDEA and the ECEA. Children's House will be responsible for providing educational instruction according to the individualized education plans (IEPs), advanced learning plan (ALPs), ESS services and 504 Plans for students with education plans enrolled at the school. Within this framework, Children's House will provide necessary accommodations and instructional/ curricular modifications as required by student educational plan. As a chartered school of the District, San Juan BOCES will serve as the Administrative Unit for Special Education providing identification services, procedural support, and required IEP documentation support. They also provide Related Services personnel, Speech, Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy, Psych, and Social Work services. Children's House has a qualified Special Education teacher on staff to meet each child's academic needs based on the recommendations of the IEP.

Compliance with Federal and State Special Education and Disability Laws: Our school acknowledges and understands that it is subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Colorado Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ESS teacher of the District will ensure Children's House compliance with special education and disability laws through annual audits of the School's special education program. Children's House understands that noncompliance with federal and state special education and disability laws may result in revocation of its charter with the District.

Response to Intervention: Children's House will implement Response to Intervention (RtI) to support its efforts in meeting the needs of all students. The purpose of RtI is to improve educational outcomes for students through a carefully coordinated system of supports and organized sequence of interventions used to support, provide feedback, and data, and bring together resources to ensure student success.

The Colorado Department of Education's *Response to Intervention Practitioner's Guide (2008)* describes six areas significant to RtI implementation:

1. **Leadership** – RtI at the School will be overseen initially by the CHD and Teacher. The role of the HOS, CHD, and/or ESS Staff in relation to RtI will be to help move the community (faculty, support staff, parents, administration) from the philosophical understandings of RtI to actual practice in the School environment.
2. **Curriculum and Instruction** – In order to meet the needs of all students, the School will use standards-based high quality Montessori, STEAM, and Community-based curriculum and instructional strategies. To support all students, we will have systems in place to support instruction at each of the RtI levels recommended by the CDE (*Response to Intervention Practitioner's Guide, 2008*):
 - a. **Tier I** – “Universal Level” high quality, research-based curricula and instructional strategies (Montessori, STEAM, CBE) that support curricular guidelines. Core instruction for all students, flexible grouping that targets specific skills. (In Montessori classroom, this happens daily in large group lessons, grade-level lessons).
 - b. **Tier II** – “Targeted Level” supplemental instruction in addition to standards-based curriculum. Designed to meet the needs of students not progressing as expected in Tier I. (In Montessori classroom, this happens daily in small group lessons, ability-grouping, individualized lessons and work plans.)
 - c. **Tier III** – “Intensive Level” more explicit instruction that is focused on a specific skill need. (In Montessori classrooms, this happens daily in individualized lessons and work plans.)
3. **School Climate and Culture** – At the core of a multi-tiered RtI model is a positive school climate. The four essential elements of this climate include:
 - a. Creating a caring school community
 - b. Teaching appropriate behavior and social problem-solving skills
 - c. Implementing positive behavior support
 - d. Providing rigorous academic instruction.

Each of these elements reflects strongly with the mission and vision of Kiva.
4. **Problem-Solving Process** – This process assists classroom teachers and parents when designing and selecting strategies for improving student academic and behavioral performance. The steps of the Problem-Solving Process include:
 - a. Define problem
 - b. Directly measure behavior/skill
 - c. Analyze the problem
 - d. Validate the problem
 - e. Identify variables that contribute to problem

- f. Develop a plan
- g. Implement plan
- h. Progress monitor
- i. Modify as necessary
- j. Evaluate RtI

Children's House will oversee the Problem-Solving Process when problems are identified by teachers or staff regarding specific student's needs.

5. **Assessment** – The entire RtI system relies on accurate, meaningful data. To support the RtI approach, information must be reliable and ongoing. Assessments help to identify students at risk at the beginning of the year, to monitor students' progress throughout the year, to inform instructional planning, and to evaluate whether interventions are working. The four types of assessments used include:
 - a. Screening assessments
 - b. Progress monitoring assessments
 - c. Diagnostic assessments
 - d. Outcome Assessments
6. **Family and Community Engagement** – Central to the RtI system are strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities. By recognizing shared responsibilities and shared ownerships of student challenges, these partnerships can work to support student educational outcomes. Effective partnerships share information, problem-solve, and celebrate student success. Children's House is committed to cultivating these partnerships and relationships through its teachers, administrators, staff, BOD, and PTO.

Tuition, Fees and Support Services

Children's House Tuition Schedule:

Children's House is a non-profit, private, tuition-based program. Tuition will be invoiced on the 15th day of each month for the following month. Tuition must be paid in full by the 25th or within ten days of invoice receipt to avoid penalty and to ensure continued enrollment for your student. Example: October tuition is billed on September 15th and is due by the September 25th. In the event the 25th falls during a holiday or weekend, payment is due on the first business day following the 25th. Late payment fees will be assessed on the 30th of each month.

Tuition rates for our program are described below. Tuition is based on a full school year enrollment. Payments can be made annually (5% discount) or in 9.25 monthly installments. When using a monthly payment plan, payments are not directly related to the number of attendance days in a month. There are no refunds or deductions if a child missed school due to illness or vacations. No refund or pro-rated credits shall be issued in the event of Pandemic Closure.

Families will receive monthly invoices via Bright Wheel, or in parent folders if requested. Families are welcome to submit payments directly to the office during regular office hours or can leave payments in the "Tuition Payment" folder located in the Children's House office. CH accepts cash in exact amounts, money orders, or checks.

*Monthly tuition is calculated by taking the actual days of instruction in the academic year; multiplying that number by our full or half day rate then dividing the sum by the number of months in the school year. Vacations, holidays, and scheduled school closures are omitted when calculating the days of instruction.

Children’s House Withdrawal:

Withdrawal from Children’s House prior to the end of the school year requires 30 days’ written notice by submitting the Withdrawal & Transfer Form. Parents/guardians are responsible for the 30 days of tuition. No refunds will be given. For those who pre-paid annual tuition, disenrollment will result in a proportion of tuition without discount. No tuition deduction for withdrawal will occur after March 1st of the year enrolled, regardless of the date the Withdrawal & Transfer form is received. Minimum enrollment is four half days.

Preschool/Private Kindergarten Tuition per month for the 2024-2025 School Year is as follows:

Days per week enrolled	Full Day	Half Day
4	\$985.00	\$670.00

Children’s House Fees:

- Annual student registration fee for new and returning students is \$175.00 per child for Preschool aged students.
- A \$75 materials fee will be invoiced at the beginning of fall and spring semester for students.
- A \$25 Snack Fee will be invoiced monthly to your tuition statement, two snacks are provided daily..
- Late pick-up fees are assessed at \$10.00 per ten-minute interval, past the scheduled pick-up time.
- A \$25.00 schedule change or drop enrollment fee will apply to any schedule changes made after the first day of school. Parents must notify The Children’s House Director at least thirty days prior to withdrawing their child to avoid being held liable for the next month’s tuition. Once a child is withdrawn from school, Kiva cannot hold a place for her or him, and the parent will have to re-register the child for enrollment.
- A late fee of \$25.00 shall be assessed for any outstanding account balances not paid by the 30th day of each month. If tuition has not been paid in full by the 5th day of the month; the child will not be permitted to attend until the outstanding balance has been paid. Tuition will not be allowed to carry over into the next month.
- A \$50 fee will be invoiced on returned checks.
- No refunds or credits shall be issued due to Pandemic and/or Weather Closures.
- Annual student registration, material fee and snack fee per contractual agreement with CCCAP will be waived

Children’s House Delinquent Accounts Policy:

Accounts that have not been paid in full by the 30th day of the month will receive a Notice of Delinquency-Notice 1. If upon the 5th day, past due balances are not paid in full, the child will not be permitted to attend until the outstanding balance has been paid. Charges will not be allowed to carry over into the next month. This policy provides flexibility for cases where alternative payment arrangements have been made provided provisions of the payment agreement are being met.

In the case of financial hardship, families may appeal to the Administration and/or Board of Directors prior to the tuition due date. Children's House reserves the right to turn over any outstanding invoices at the end of the school year to a collection agency. The Board of Directors reserves the right to enforce and append this policy as it deems necessary.

Children’s House Tuition Assistance Policy:

Children’s House provides in-house tuition support for families in need. The Tuition Assistance Program is made possible by funding through in-house fundraising efforts, corporate and individual donors, and by major grant funding organizations. Currently over 61 percent of our students are able to attend as a direct result of

these fundraising efforts. We strive to ensure that our school is a place that is accessible to every child, regardless of financial circumstances.

Children's House determines levels of support based on income and family size; award criteria is based on the Federal and State "Application for Free and Reduced Meals" guidelines. Applications for tuition assistance may be obtained in the office or obtained on the school website. Applications must be turned in with all pertinent financial information complete. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Please be sure to complete the application process prior to the first day of your child's attendance. Families must complete a new application each school year. Families will receive notice of acceptance or denial, and award levels in a timely manner. Families may apply and be awarded financial aid at any time during the school year, based on the availability of funds.

Upon acceptance into the Tuition Assistance Program, invoices will reflect your specific support level in the next billing cycle. Tuition assistance will not be applied to past due balances and does not apply to before or after school programming or associated fees. Additional enrollment paperwork is necessary, including an attendance agreement.

Universal Preschool (UPK): Universal Preschool Colorado allows families to choose the right setting for their child, whether it is in a licensed community-based, school-based or home-based preschool setting. Families of children in the year before they are eligible for kindergarten, and qualifying 3-year-olds, can apply now for Universal Preschool Colorado for the 2024-25 school year.

Universal Preschool Colorado is not a first-come, first-served program. Applications are currently being accepted. You can begin your application at any time and return to it as many times as you like before submitting.

Colorado Child Care Assistance Program: We have partnered with the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program. This program offers tuition assistance based on family income. Eligibility is determined by the Montezuma County Department of Social Services.. Families must select Children's House as their program of choice. In compliance with our contract, families utilizing C.C.C.A.P will have all fees outside of tuition waived. For more information and to verify eligibility please visit:

<https://cdec.colorado.gov/colorado-child-care-assistance-program-for-families>

School Hours, Drop-off, Pick-up Procedures

Children's House Daily Schedule - Please see the respective Classroom Daily Schedule for your specific schedules per classroom.

Children's House Drop-Off Procedures: Children's House (Pre-K) opens at 7:45 am for regular programming; exterior doors will remain locked until that time. Early arrivals must be accompanied by an adult; staff members are not available to supervise children until 7:45am. Canyon Room Families, please proceed to the Canyon Room Alcove located at the South-East entrance of the front playground. Mesa Room Families, please use the overflow parking lot located at the north end of the back playground and proceed to the north entrance of Mesa Room.

Daily Health Checks are required prior to your child's entry into the building. Children experiencing any symptoms will not be admitted. Additionally, if any family members are experiencing symptoms of illness,

your child shall be excluded from the program until those symptoms have cleared. Parents are required to wear masks and maintain six-foot distancing while accompanying your child to the Daily Health Check.

When dropping off your child(ren), please be sensitive to their desire to settle into their school environment. The classroom teacher or assistant teacher will greet the children and then assist them in stowing their gear and hanging their coats as they transition into the work period. This procedure enables the children to develop self-direction and maintain concentration within their environment. Consistency is important in setting students up for a day of success. Greet your teachers, give your child a quick, loving hug, and let them start their day. Lingering goodbyes make drop off difficult for children, parents, and teachers! If your child is upset, check in with your classroom teacher about protocol. Typically, it is best for parents to follow their consistent goodbye system and let the classroom teachers work to settle students into their environment.

State law requires that all children be signed-in and out daily by the adult who brings or picks them up. Please be sure to sign in using your full signature as this is also required by the state, initials are no longer acceptable. Sign-in sheets and parent folders are adjacent to your child's classroom entry doors. If carpooling, please sign-in all children you bring and specify who is picking up the children.

Timely drop-off for morning and afternoon work-periods is essential to guarantee that your child benefits the most from our programming. Tardiness disrupts the work period and can be distracting to children who are engrossed in their work. Maria Montessori stressed the importance of an uninterrupted work cycle. Research suggests that these periods of uninterrupted work establish a child's sense of order and contribute to your child's success and comfort in the classroom environment.

In the event that a child arrives late to school and their group is away (e.g., on a field trip), a note will be posted on the front door of the school, including the group's location and time of return. This posting will invite the parent to meet the group at their current location or to return when the group is scheduled to be back in the classroom. Oftentimes, Administrative staff is available on site to answer any questions or to offer directions.

Children's House Pick-Up Procedures:

Please arrive at the Children's House in time to depart with your child by the end of the Montessori program. A charge will be assessed for late pick-up after closing time: \$10.00 for each ten-minute period after scheduled pick up time. Parents must come into the school playground area, for children attending the morning program, greet their children, and sign them out. Parents should check their parent folders stored outside each classroom to pick up important information; most correspondence will be provided in electronic format in observance of Health Mandates. Staff will alert you should there be specific information contained in your folder. Full day or afternoon program children will pick up at the Canyon Room Alcove and Mesa Room. Families should use the North Exit.

Children's House takes the safety of children very seriously. Only persons listed on the emergency card and authorized pick-up list will be allowed to pick up your child from the school. Persons other than the legal parent or guardian picking up your child must present identification and be listed by you on the emergency card and authorized pick-up list. If this required identification is not presented, the child will not be released. In the case of an emergency or change of pickup plans, please notify the staff as soon as possible regarding who will be picking up your child and when. **Students not picked up and whose parent has not contacted the school will stay with the staff member in charge. After thirty minutes, a staff member will notify police.**

Instruction and Assessment & Instruction Road Map

Best practices in Montessori are student-centered. Instead of focusing on what the teacher should teach, the curriculum emphasizes what children will *do* and *accomplish*. Montessori lessons and curricular activities are presented using the “Three-Period Lesson.” This process introduces new material to students and requires them to engage with the material using increasingly complex methods. The Three-Period Lesson, especially as children grow, integrates Bloom’s Taxonomy of Higher Level Thinking - encouraging critical thinking, analysis, and original design, experimentation, or invention.

Montessori Lessons	Bloom’s Ranking of Thinking Skills	Instructional Strategies/Learning experiences	Examples in Montessori Classroom
1 st Period Lessons	Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual, small, large group presentations ● Demonstrations ● Text reading ● Reciting poems Community-Based and STEAM Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● experiential education ● narratives/guest speakers ● field trips ● field observations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children’s House students copy teacher in placing number markers on 1st and 2nd bead chains ● Elementary students trace landform outlines on paper and label ● Middle School students learn to use field guides to classify plants in the classroom
2 nd Period Lessons	Comprehension & Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● small group projects ● peer coaching, students mentoring other students ● models, sketches ● reports ● journals ● learning logs ● jigsaw Community-Based and STEAM Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● field notebooks ● interview questions ● project planning and implementation ● presentations to expert panels ● design cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children’s House students independently place number markers on 3rd-10th bead chains ● Elementary students identify landforms on globes and continent maps ● Middle School students use field guides to identify plants/trees around school

3 rd Period Lessons	Analysis, Synthesis, & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● individual presentations ● research papers/posters ● original works in creative arts and writing ● Socratic seminars ● inventions, designs ● experimental research ● service-projects ● case-studies ● debates <p>Community-Based and STEAM Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reflection/evaluation of projects/impacts ● design cycle (evaluation, redesign) ● future project proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children’s House students write numbers 1-100 on long strips of paper ● Elementary students create games where cards using landform vocabulary direct game pieces to across a student-generated landform map ● Middle School students create a field guide for their school with botanical range maps, background information about specific plants, labeled drawings
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Children’s House Assessments: CH uses Teaching Strategies (TS), an online, authentic, and ongoing assessment of students’ social, emotional, physical, and academic development. TS standards are fully aligned with the Common Core Standards and the Colorado Academic Standards for Early Childhood Education & Development. This state-mandated assessment manages teacher-recorded data online via an accessible parent portal when privacy settings allow. TS assessment is based on teacher observation. Each fall, CH families will be invited to attend a TS training to learn more about accessing this information about their children. TS data will be shared with parents throughout the school year during parent-teacher conferences.

Lead teachers at CH are trained and have passed a Rating Reliability Test in Teaching Strategies, and also in Montessori assessments, ongoing assessments of children’s growth and development. These assessments are used to set goals for students, to identify important lessons that will be introduced, and to help develop the weekly work plans.

Internal Assessments: Children’s House will use an internal program to track students’ progress through the Montessori curriculum as determined by the Montessori Foundation. This system helps teachers collect and organize data based on their observations, assessments, and mastery checklists. This program is also aligned to the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and Language Arts. Our school will use Home Language Surveys to assess the instructional language needs of our students.

- **Teacher observations:** A critical component of the Montessori philosophy includes daily observations made by teachers in regards to students’ work. These observations carefully consider students’: coordination and fluency with the material, concentration levels, repetition of works, work choice order, confidence with and understanding of the material. Observations are carefully recorded daily and studied longitudinally to monitor students’ work habits, choices, and progress.
- **Teacher assessments:** Teachers keep records of specific lessons given, practiced, and mastered.
- **Mastery checklists** – Mastery checklists are created for each grade level and are used to quickly record which lessons at which levels students have mastered. They are used to help teachers monitor daily and weekly progress and set goals for student’s individual weekly work plans. These can be monitored and updated through the online Montessori program.
- **Parent Conferences** – At least twice a year, in October and March, and additionally as requested, parent-teacher-child conferences will be held. These important conversations allow students to share their

work, reflect upon progress, set goals, and identify areas they need to strengthen.

- **Critical Indicators:** Montessori educators have developed 10 “Critical Indicators” that demonstrate student’s healthy and normal development in a Montessori classroom. They believe these personal, social, and emotional skills are foundational skills for learning and should be considered strong indicators for a program’s and a student’s success:
 - a positive attitude toward school
 - inner security/sense of order
 - pride in physical environment
 - curiosity
 - habit of concentration
 - initiative/persistence
 - ability to decide
 - sense of independence/self-confidence
 - self-discipline
 - sense of responsibility to others
 - ability to complete a cycle of activity
 - respect for the earth
 - sense of academic accountability

Longitudinal Data: In order to monitor students’ progress over longer time periods, Children’s House will collect, manage, and analyze a number of data points to compile a comprehensive collection of student information. This effort will allow us to continuously adapt our curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment methods, and content delivery to guide students’ development and success. Data to be collected will include but not be limited to the following:

- Family demographics
- Time at the school
- Attendance record
- Behavior record
- Student portfolios
- Assessment record (PARCC, CMAS, STAR, Montessori Compass, other Montessori assessments)
- Summer self-evaluation questionnaires

Communicating Progress with Parents

Family Conferences: Family conferences are held two times per year, see your school calendar for specific dates. Parents will be notified in the school newsletter to sign up for dates/times.

Special Conferences and Support: Our teachers extend to parents a standing invitation to conference as needed. Please contact your child’s teacher with any questions regarding your child’s development and education. Our teachers will gladly meet with you. If you have a specific challenge or concern and would like to request a more formal RtI meeting, contact your student’s Lead Teacher.

Children’s House Progress Reports: Student data, lesson plans, and observations of your child are available for parents through the Teaching Strategies Parent portal; documentation is loaded a minimum of bi-weekly. Please take advantage of this interactive tool. Family Reports are available upon request and prior to Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Children’s House Newsletter: An all-school newsletter will be emailed and posted to our Facebook Page monthly. Each newsletter will include calendar events for the month, a letter from the CHD, special Montessori features,

Health & Wellness initiatives, and notes from our Board of Directors and PTO.

Classroom Newsletters: Each classroom will send home a monthly newsletter from the Lead Teacher and Assistant detailing classroom progress towards goals, upcoming projects, and studies.

Parent Education Nights: Children's House hosts a number of Parent Education Nights throughout the school year. Organized by staff and community partners, these parent nights explore a number of different topics ranging from Montessori at Home, Easy Lunch Ideas, to In-Depth Focus on Areas of the Classroom.

Nutrition and Food Program

Our school is deeply committed to the health and wellness of our students, staff, and school community. This commitment is demonstrated by our careful procedures and policies related to food and nutrition. **Please read carefully!** Also, please carefully read our procedures for Birthday Celebrations as food cannot be a part of these celebrations.

It is critical that any food allergies are written down on your child's Emergency Card. All children with food allergies should have a Student Health Plan in place.

Children's House Snacks:

Snacks for the children are available during morning and afternoon work periods. Children can choose to take snack as part of the work cycle and are not made to eat snack as a group; snack is an extension of our practical life work. Children typically serve themselves and choose to nourish their bodies as the need arises. Weekly snack menus will be posted outside each classroom; past menus will be archived in the office for future reference by parents and staff. Our morning and afternoon snacks are not a replacement for breakfast and lunch. **Please have children eat breakfast before they arrive at school.**

A \$25.00 monthly Snack Fee will be invoiced in lieu of snack sign up; this practice allows our school to buy in bulk and provide sound nutritional options for your children.

Lunch (Full day program):

Children who attend a full day must provide their own lunch. Lunch bags and boxes should be marked with your child's name. Please provide a healthy and nutritious lunch for your child; save sugary treats and drinks for home. **Children will be asked to keep cookies, candy, or other desserts in their lunch boxes to eat at home, after school.** Recent mandates at the State level have called for eliminating plastic baggies in lunches due to the choking hazard posed to children less than five years of age. We encourage you to purchase reusable containers for lunch items or make use of empty Mason jars, wrap sandwiches in wax paper and so on. These practices are also good for the environment. Understandably this may not be possible for all families; children with plastic baggies in their lunch will be asked to empty the bag's contents onto a plate and store the bag in a sealed lunch box. For more information, please see The Children's Kiva Health Policy; Nutrition for guidelines and resources.

Birthday Celebrations:

At our school, we love to recognize and celebrate life's milestones with each student and incorporate such celebrations into the classroom day. However, celebrations cannot disturb the regular structure and flow of the school day. Parents must consult with their child's teacher **in advance** of planning a birthday celebration. Instead of celebrating with food on birthdays, our school has elected to celebrate through activity or academics. Birthdays are a great time for children to bring their favorite storybooks to share with their classmates or to celebrate their birthday with additional outside time. Please discuss with your child's Lead Teacher.

Student Expectations

Attendance: Consistent attendance is one of the greatest predictors of a student's ability to be successful in school. In addition, many important components of an adults' work ethic are developed based on their childhood school attendance habits. We depend on parents and guardians to support their students' attendance by getting them to school every day, on time and prepared to learn. We are committed to providing a high-quality learning environment that provides children with all the tools necessary to be successful, life-long learners. Our age 3-6 program is not a day-care, to this end CH requires a minimum enrollment of four half days or four full days of enrollment.

We do recognize that circumstances sometimes require a child to be absent from school. Consistent with the Colorado State Board of Education requirements, students can be excused for absences due to funerals, illness, injury, legal obligations, medical procedures, religious observations, and extenuating circumstances determined by the principal. The school must be notified of these absences no later than 24 hours following the beginning of the absence. For multiple day absences, parents must call the school daily. If the school does not receive the notification within this period of time, the school considers the absence unexcused.

Pre-Arranged Absences: Students requesting pre-arranged absences must have prior approval from the CHD and the parents. This approval must occur at least three (3) days but not more than seven (7) days before the extended absence is to occur. In order for the absence to be excused, the parent must complete the *Pre-Arranged Absence Form* available from the office. Criteria taken into consideration when determining whether a pre-arranged absence will be approved/excused or denied/unexcused include:

- Whether the student has any unexcused absences,
- Whether the student has exceeded 4 absences in the semester or 7 or more absences for the school year, and
- Whether the student is in good academic standing.

Our guidelines for determining whether the pre-arranged absence will be approved/excused or denied/unexcused are as follows:

- If the student has no unexcused absences, 4 or fewer absences during the semester and fewer than 7 absences for the school year, the absence will be approved/excused.

If any one of the above criteria is NOT met, situations will be weighed on a case-by- case basis taking all available information into consideration. Ultimately, the decision is based on what is in the best interest of the student's school success. The school is obligated to enforce the written district policy for makeup work. Both excused and unexcused absences are recorded in each student's permanent record.

Truancy: Colorado state law defines chronic truancy when a student misses four or more days in one month or ten or more days in one school year. When a student is absent or tardy more than five (5) days in a semester, parents will be contacted via letter. At eight (8) days of absence in a given semester, a meeting will be required to help remedy the situation. Should a child's absences interfere with his/her educational process and be of an unexcused nature beyond the maximum allowed under compulsory attendance requirements (four (4) days in one month, or ten (10) days in a year), judicial proceedings will be initiated to enforce compulsory attendance. Children's House reserves the right to require a parent conference in order to augment the child's education through additional homework. In an instance of extended absence, CH may reserve the right to require a child to remain at his/her current curriculum level for a period of time before advancing to a higher level.

Field Trips: Field trips are a valuable extension of your child's educational experience serving to enhance not only the curriculum but also your child's ability to act independently, responsibly, and respectfully in new situations. Participation in these events is expected. If you choose not to send your child on a field trip, he/she must be kept at home for the duration of the trip.

Guidance Policy

Positive School Behavior and Guidance: *Montessori education is based on empowering the students to make appropriate decisions about behavior in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.*

Discipline is achieved through engaging in meaningful and purposeful work. When the child is engaged and concentrating on a task of his or her choice he or she is actively developing inner discipline. The adults and children in the prepared environment create expectations for behavior based on the collective need for a safe and mutually respectful community. The ground rules and expectations of respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment, are set up to protect the individual's rights and to develop the classroom community cohesion and order. A famous quote by Maria Montessori is "The undisciplined child enters into discipline by working in the company of others; not by being told he is being naughty." Discipline is primarily seen as a learning experience and less as a punitive experience, if appropriately dealt with. Challenging behaviors offer a valuable, teachable opportunity for social/emotional growth.

To assist the process of developing an inner sense of guidance, all staff members are expected to handle discipline as a positive educational action from which the child will grow. If a child is unable to use self-control, he or she is to be removed from the group of children until able to rejoin the group in a positive manner.

Maria Montessori developed the concept of "normalization" to describe the process by which each child acquires certain characteristics that lead to success in the classroom and throughout life. A "normalized" child will love learning, be kind to others, develop concentration and good work habits, and become independent.

Our goal is to create and maintain an environment in which each child can successfully reach this level of normalization. Normalization of the classroom begins with the modeling of the appropriate behavior by the teacher combined with a high level of respect for each student. Many discipline problems can be avoided by the following proactive strategies practiced in every classroom.

The teacher will:

1. Provide a structured Montessori environment in which a child feels secure and confident to choose his/her work within a limited range of appropriate possibilities.
2. Set behavioral expectations through classroom instruction, role modeling, and class meetings.
3. Post and discuss classroom rules.
4. Redirect a child and use conflict resolution techniques.
5. Work one-on-one with children who need additional guidance.
6. Refer child to Student Success Team (RtI) to discuss ways to help him/her succeed in the classroom.

The Students will:

1. Be Safe, Respectful, & Responsible at ALL times.
2. Respect yourself, others, and our environment.
3. Demonstrate responsibility within our school.
4. Treat all classroom materials with great respect and care.
5. Empower yourself to take great care of your school environment.
6. When in the classroom, be "engaged" in an activity/job at all times.
7. Work with intention, concentration and purpose while in the classroom.

8. Walk except for when in the outdoors for playground time.
9. Use "inside" or "close conversational tones" when around the classrooms and offices.
10. Listen, thoughtfully.

A child's behavior becomes a concern when his/her actions disrupt the school environment and affect the positive values and culture of our community. For the safety and well being of all individuals in the environment, the following are unacceptable behaviors:

1. Talking back and arguing.
2. Intentionally disrupting the learning environment.
3. Misuse of materials or playground equipment.
4. Intentionally not following directions in the classroom, in the lunch area, or on the playground.
5. Encouraging others to misbehave.
6. Disrupting or impeding the work of others.
7. Showing rudeness or disrespect to others.
8. Repeatedly disrupting the learning environment and learning process of classmates.
9. Littering.
10. Use of their body as a means to injure self or others. Hitting, punching, biting, kicking, etc.

Guidance Procedures: If a child exhibits unacceptable behavior, teachers will work with the child individually using strategies listed above. After repeated attempts at discussing the concern with the child, redirecting the child, using conflict resolution techniques or supporting the child in taking quiet alone time, if the behavior continues, the following disciplinary actions will be taken, according to the severity of the misbehavior.

1. The student will discuss their behavioral choices with their teacher and have the opportunity to reflect upon their choice making.
2. The student will be sent outside the immediate environment for a time out or be given a "community improvement" task to perform (litter pick-up, cleaning, heavy-work, etc.).
3. The student will be sent to the Children's House Director, who will discuss the behavior issue with the child and may opt to:
 1. Call the parent/guardian to discuss the issue with the child present, and/or
 2. Place the child in "in-school suspension" and he/she will not be allowed to return to class until the parent/guardian has spoken to the Director; and/or
 3. A parent/guardian will be called to immediately remove the child from school for a specific length of time (Suspension) and conditions will be set for the child's re-admittance.

After three response forms have been sent home that may show a pattern of behavior, the parents will be required to schedule and attend an RTI meeting focused on the child's behavior at school. The team will include the child's teacher, parent/guardian, school administrator, and depending on the situation, specialists from SJBOCES, the child herself, or other behavioral support specialists. At this meeting, specific time-sensitive goals, behavioral supports, and clear consequences for future action will be determined by the RtI team. At the end of the meeting, a follow up meeting will be scheduled to monitor the implementation of the plan and the child's growth. ** Please note that not all response forms are equal in nature**

** At any stage of the disciplinary action plan, a teacher may contact the parent/guardian by phone or e-mail to discuss the student's behavior and work out a home/school plan for improvement. The teacher or parent/guardian may request a conference at any time to discuss behavior issues.

Suspension/Expulsion Procedure: Teachers, staff, and volunteers are required to document any behavior requiring disciplinary action. All witnesses are encouraged to document their concerns and all views will be respected and treated as valid. A copy of the Children's House guidelines for suspension and expulsion are available

for review in the office. Additionally, all staff, students, parents, and volunteers must adhere to the State of Colorado Education Laws and federal guidelines concerning student behavior and discipline. Each child will be treated individually and with respect. Disciplinary action for a student with an Individual Education Plan with stated behavioral objectives will be handled in an appropriate manner.

Behaviors that require immediate suspension or possible expulsion hearings are as follows:

1. Swearing or using abusive sarcasm, directed at another student, staff member, or parent.
2. Intentional abuse and/or vandalism to school property.
3. Repeatedly disrupting the learning environment and learning process of classmates.
4. Bringing on campus any pornography, or explicit photography or written material.
5. Physical harm to another person with the intent to do bodily injury, exhibited by, but not limited to, hitting, stabbing, poking, pushing, slapping, kicking.
6. Bringing on campus any illegal substances or prescription medications for unauthorized use, sale, or intent to disburse.
7. Stealing.
8. Touching another person's private body parts or intentionally exposing one's self for the sole purpose of self-gratification or harming (emotionally or physically) another individual.
9. Bringing guns, knives, or any type of weapon used to intimidate or threaten another person.

Parent/Guardian's Role in Supporting Positive Behavior:

Modeling: A parent is the most important teacher in a child's life. Children observe and imitate the behavioral responses that are used by the significant adults in their environment. Parents who are respectful and kind to others, especially their own children, are likely to see that same behavior develop in their children. Demonstrating a variety of healthy responses to frustration and set-backs, as well as modeling effective problem-solving techniques and non-judgmental communication are especially valuable to young children who are still learning to establish their own self control.

Discussion: While children absorb a great deal by observation, discussing ways to show respect, build trust, show empathy, manage anger, and practice forgiveness can help a child build successful relationships.

Reinforcement: Montessori philosophy does not advocate external rewards for desired behavior, as this tends to reduce intrinsic motivation. However, acknowledging and praising positive behavior is always important and will help shape a child's behavior far better than criticism.

Teaching Values: Children's House is built on the concept of COMMUNITY. A community shares common values. Its members seek to give as much as they are able for the good of the whole, and take only what they really need. At Children's House, we value:

1. Respect for ourselves, others, and the environment.
2. Honesty.
3. Courtesy and exceptional manners.
4. Empathy for others and respect for differences among people and cultures.
5. Accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions.
6. Working cooperatively with others, which include: listening, sharing opinions, negotiating, compromising, helping the group reach consensus, and taking a stand.
7. Seeking one's share of the workload.
8. Creating a balance between the needs of individual students and families and the needs of the school population as a whole.

9. Pride in our school.

Student Code of Conduct:

- Students will be safe, respectful, and responsible at school in everything they do.
- Students will understand that our school is a place of work and productivity; they will contribute positively to our school community through respectful, productive behaviors at all times.
- Students will take responsibility for their own learning by following directions, setting appropriate goals, meeting challenges with a positive attitude, and reflecting honestly and productively on their work.
- Students will come to school ready to work, learn, and be a positive member of our school community.
- Students will not leave the buildings without an adult at ANY TIME.

Loss or Damage of School Materials: Students are expected to accept responsibility for books and other instructional materials. If such items are lost or damaged, the student will be charged the current replacement price, or if possible, be asked to repair the item.

Additional Information on Clothing:

- Label everything! Regardless of your child's age, please write your child's first and last name on all belongings that come to school. Clothing for school should be comfortable and promote your child's independence.
- Children must be able to use the toilet facilities independently before attending school. We understand accidents do happen. However, parents of preschool and Kindergarten age children are requested to provide a complete change of clothing for their child, with the child's first and last name clearly labeled inside each article of clothing. If a change of clothing is necessary due to an accident, a teacher/aide will assist the child to change his/her clothes. Soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed bag and sent home with the child that day. A fresh change of appropriately labeled clothing must be provided the next day.
- Children will always go outside for fresh air and exercise if the temperature is above 20 degrees and it is not raining. Please assume your child will go outside every day and provide all necessary clothing appropriate for the weather – boots, gloves, snow pants, hat, and coat. All outerwear should also be labeled. CH is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.

Special Note: Colorado weather changes quickly. During chilly days, all children will wear coats outside. They will be instructed to watch the teacher for guidance as to necessary clothing. If the teacher unzips his/her jacket/coat, children may unzip... and so forth. It is important that you speak to your child about the importance of dressing appropriately for the weather.

Family Partnerships

Parent Expectations: Some of the most important principles upon which Children's House is founded are respect for others and personal responsibility. Parents play a formative role in the development of their child's sense of justice, equity, and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. As one of the most influential role models in a child's life, one of the best ways for a parent to teach is to lead by example. Accordingly, Children's House expects the behavior of each parent and responsible adult with children enrolled in our school to adhere to the standards of conduct set forth below:

- When visiting or volunteering at the school, parents should observe the rules of the school, including checking in at the office and wearing a visitor's badge.
- Ours is a Colorado School of Choice committed to academic excellence, Montessori and cultivating students' responsibility and independence. Families have made a deliberate choice to send their children to our school. Parents are partners of Children's House and expected to work together with

the school to support their children's academic, social, emotional, and physical wellness and success. Parents are expected to follow all school policies and procedures.

- Understand that desks and offices are private spaces. Due to issues of confidentiality and out of professional respect, please do not look through items on desks or in mailboxes or enter an office without being invited. Notes to staff members should be given to the School's Front Office to deliver.
- If a parent feels that the actions of another child have infringed upon the rights of his or her child, under no circumstances shall the parent or guardian approach another child or that child's parent or guardian to discuss or chastise them. The parents may approach the classroom teacher to seek a peaceful resolution to the situation. If necessary, parents may also work with the CHD to resolve a concern.
- If a parent has questions or issues relating to the classroom or a class, they should first be addressed directly with the staff member in question. Parents are requested to set up a private meeting where their concerns can be discussed and the actions giving rise to such concern explained. Faculty will not hold discussions in the hallway or in public areas with respect to parent concerns.
- Please be mindful of the time and place of communication. Teachers are not available to address concerns at drop off, in the hallway, or outside of the classroom. ***Please make an appointment so the teacher can be present in both mind and body to address your concerns.***
- All communications regarding issues with other parents or staff at the school or school events shall remain respectful and address the issues at hand. Yelling, taunting, threatening, or abusive behavior, cursing, foul language, or derogatory remarks are not acceptable means of communication. Parents are expected to resolve issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved while respecting the dignity of others.
- Parents shall protect the reputation and good name of people involved. Problems, differences of opinion, and personality clashes are not resolved by involving other people in the disagreement or by taking sides in the argument. Problems should not be casually discussed with other parents in the school, but should be dealt with one on one with the person or persons whom the parent has an issue. Maintaining confidentiality is vital in creating and maintaining a respectful learning environment.
- It is easy for opinion to be mistaken for fact and rumors to be perpetrated by inaccurate information. Parents are expected to approach the relevant personnel within the school to verify the factual basis of a story should they have any questions. This approach can quickly and simply clarify the events in question and the intent involved and will minimize inaccurate information being passed throughout the community.
- Parents are expected and required to follow Children's House conflict resolution policy in order to resolve an issue with a staff member at CH. This policy requires that the issue first be addressed with the staff member directly and an attempt be made to resolve the same. If the parent does not reach a satisfactory resolution, they shall proceed through the appropriate supervisory personnel, as necessary. A full copy of the policy can be obtained on the school website.
- Respectful communication requires that we address questions and/or concerns with those who can adequately answer them. In most cases, this would be your child's teacher; however, know that the CHD has an open door policy and will mediate difficulties if direct discussion has not been successful. Further difficulties are handled through Children's House Conflict Resolution Policy as outlined in the BOD Policies Manual, which are available in the administrative offices and on the school website. Refer to the chart below as a guide on whom to address with questions or concerns.

Professionalism and Privacy: As required by federal privacy laws, no student, parent, or visitor is allowed in the staff lounge, staff workroom, staff offices, or other staff private areas, including teacher/staff desk areas and work spaces in classrooms, offices, and other locations unless accompanied by the appropriate staff member.

Parent Initiated Communication: Personal relationship and direct communication are key elements in developing a positive partnership between home and school. In general, please use this chart to guide your line of communication:

Educational Concerns & Classroom Discipline	1st go to Lead Teacher	2nd go to the Children’s House Director
Bullying/Peer Conflict Resolution Concerns	1st go to Lead Teacher	2nd go to the Children’s House Director
School-Wide Programs & Policy	1st go to the Children’s House Director	2nd go to the Board of Directors
Faculty or Human Resource Issues	1st go to the person directly involved	2nd go to the Children’s House Director, last go to the Board of Directors
Facility, Safety, & Security Issues	1st go to the Children’s House Director	2nd go to the Board of Directors
Governing Policies & Procedures	1 st go to the Children’s House Director	2nd go to the Board of Directors
Before & Aftercare Issues	1st go to the specific Program Director	2nd go to the Children’s House Director
Fundraising or Community Involvement Ideas or Issues	1st go to the Fundraising Committee or PTO	2nd go to the Children’s House Director

Parent Involvement Hours: Children’s House recognizes the importance of cooperative family-school partnerships. We know that children whose parents are present, engaged, and participating in the school community are more successful academically, socially, and emotionally than those whose families are not engaged. In addition, as a public charter school and a non-profit preschool, our programs operate on limited budgets. Parent participation through volunteerism, fundraising, and to support that participation, Children’s House strongly encourages parents to complete a minimum number of Parent Involvement Hours each school year.

- Children’s House Parent Involvement Hours – 10 hours/year/family

These hours can be fulfilled in the following ways:

- Classroom observation
- Classroom volunteerism
- School volunteerism
- Parent education nights
- School special events
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Fundraising projects (PTO)
- PTO or Board of Directors Membership
- New family mentorship program

Classroom Observation: Parent presence and participation at school is vital to your child’s success. A simple way of expressing this value is to observe your child’s classroom. We encourage parents to visit the

classroom at least one time per year beginning in October. To visit a room, please check the class calendar or call your child's teacher. We allow a maximum of two parents to be either visiting or volunteering in a class at a time.

Parent-Teacher Organization: Our school's PTO supports the academic, social, educational, and celebratory efforts of our school community. This group works on school fundraisers, parent-education nights, special programs, and volunteer coordination. Run by a volunteer group of officers, they meet monthly and all parents and teachers of our school are encouraged to attend (attendance counts for Parent Involvement Hours). Many special events, school and classroom volunteer efforts, and fundraising efforts are coordinated by the PTO.

Board Leadership & Committees: Opportunities for school leadership arise each year on the Children's House Board of Directors. The best way to get involved is to join one of the leadership committees (described in previous sections: School Accountability Committee, Finance Committee, etc.). For more information regarding needs, roles, responsibilities, and meeting times, please see the Board of Directors link on the school's webpage. These meetings are open to the public.

Room Parent: This vital position directly supports the teacher in creating a link between school and home. There is typically one or two room parent(s) per classroom. For more information, contact the PTO.

Parent Assistants: Within the classroom, this volunteer time is used to read with children, make materials, give unit related assessments, work on portfolios, and much more. Working directly with students requires training and this is offered two times each year. Consistent with Children's House policy, completion of training is required prior to assisting in the classroom. This practical training covers topics including school philosophy, classroom expectations, basic materials, as well as confidentiality. A refresher session is required every two (2) years. Watch the newsletter for sign-up information.

Parents as Resources: Many parents have great talents, interests, or are well traveled. Sharing these resources in our school expands the child's world and helps us to foster curiosity. Contact your classroom teachers or the CHD.

Special Events: Various events are held periodically throughout the school year. They are typically school-wide, but sometimes relate to specific classrooms. Please read the school newsletter for a list of upcoming events and to find out how to get involved. Contact the PTO for more information.

Recording Hours: Upon volunteering, we ask that parents record their Parent Involvement Hours in the lobby of each school location or on Google Docs form. Please remember that while 10-20 hours is the minimum expectation, most families contribute far more than the minimum. Please continue logging hours after you meet our target as this helps us to document our community support and increases grant opportunities. Please note that only volunteer efforts that take place at or that directly benefit our school count toward the Parent Involvement Hours. Please contact our CHD if you have questions or would like clarification. Families who are unable to volunteer are welcome to make a tax-deductible financial contribution to the school. Please contact our CHD for more information about that option.

Childcare during Evening Meetings: As a convenience to parents, arrangements for childcare are made available to Children's House families during some meetings and events that happen outside of regular school hours. Because the Children's House is a licensed facility, all Department of Human Services rules and regulations we must follow during the school day must also be followed whenever childcare is provided on our premises.

Transportation: When transporting children to and from school, current Colorado Law requires that all children under 40 pounds be in a child safety seat. Additionally, as of August 1, 2010, Colorado law also requires that children who are over age 4 but under age 8 ride in a forward-facing car seat or a booster car seat, unless they are over 4'9" tall or weigh more than 80 pounds. Children who are not required to be in a car seat or booster seat, but are under 16 years old, must be buckled in a seat belt. Parents are required to provide these child safety seats, booster seats, or seat belt positioning devices for field trips when children will be transported in private vehicles. Older and larger children are required to wear seat belts.

Only staff members and parents who have a valid Colorado driver's license and proof of insurance may transport children. Your personal liability insurance covers children when you drive. The school's insurance covers any injuries at the field trip site or at the school. If you wish to help with field trips, please provide the office with a copy of your insurance policy card, driver's license, cell phone number, and complete Children's House Driver Authorization Form. **Please note that siblings and other children who are not enrolled in the traveling class are not permitted to attend field trips regardless of their age.**

When accompanying a group of students on a field trip, please remember that all school policies and procedures remain in effect. For safety and equity reasons, we cannot allow field trip drivers to make unscheduled stops or purchase items for their own or any of the children in their care without prior permission from the supervising staff member. Any trips planned other than short-walking trips will be announced in advance. Signed permission slips must be returned before your child will be allowed to go on any field trip.

Carpools: Parents interested in carpooling options can view the carpool sign up in the office. Contact the PTO for more information. A family directory is published by the fall (written permission is required for inclusion). We hope this directory assists in scheduling carpools, emergency pickup, and childcare exchange. All members of a carpool must have a written release from their parent/guardian on the Emergency Card to show to whom a child is to be released.

Health Plan

If an illness or emergency arises, we will contact you immediately and the following procedures will occur:

- Your child will be taken to the front office where he/she will remain until picked up.
- Parents need to pick up a sick child within one (1) hour after being informed of illness.

Exclusion/Inclusion Due to Illness: If your child is sick (see below), please do not bring him/her to school. With so many children, it is easy to transfer illnesses. If a sick child is dropped off, we will call you to pick him/her up immediately. We thank you for helping keep our community healthy by following these guidelines for students returning to school after an illness:

- **Bronchitis:** on antibiotics for 24 hours or more.
- **Chicken Pox:** when all lesions are crusted over (approximately one (1) week).
- **Colds:** no presence of yellow or green mucus, no elevated temperature (100°), sore throat, or severe cough.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** when discharge from eyes has stopped; for bacterial conjunctivitis, usually 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops.
- **Diarrhea:** free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- **Fever:** free of symptoms for 24 hours without medication.
- **Head Lice:** when completely lice and nit-free following prescribed treatment (minimum 24 hours).
- **Strep Throat:** after treatment with antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

- **Vomiting:** free from symptoms for 24 hours.
- **Inability to fully participate in school activities whether inside or outside.**
- Immediate household members exhibiting COVID like symptoms or other communicable illnesses.

Daily Student Health Inspections: CH: For the safety and protection of the children, each classroom will follow the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Child Care Centers ¹by providing each child with a health check prior to his/her entering the group. Each child/parent will be checked for the following:

- Temperature
- COVID-19 Symptoms
- Severe coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye (tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling, discharge, etc.)
- Infected skin patches or a rash accompanied by a fever
- Feverish appearance
- Unusual behavior - crying more than usual, lethargy, generally feeling unwell

All students should have at least two emergency contacts listed on your emergency contact form. If a serious illness or emergency occurs and we are unable to reach you, we will contact your personal physician, or if necessary, call an ambulance or paramedic. ***Please keep your students' and family's contact information up to date!***

COVID-19 Related Mandates: Due to evolving and changing mandates, please see Colorado Department of Public Health Website for specific information. Children's House abides by all Orders & Mandates. Additionally, due to the potential of contagion spread, Children's House will exclude children from programming when any immediate family member exhibits COVID like symptoms or unrelated communicable illnesses.

- [Review Executive Health Orders](#)
- [Public Guidance & Resources for COVID-19-See Child Care Centers](#)

Emergency Medical Treatment: The school will maintain a parent's signed consent form agreeing to the provision for emergency medical treatment in case of accidental injury. Please keep us informed of current phone numbers of where you will be when your child is at school and changes of medical providers.

Health Consultant: Children's House Nurse Consultant, Kirsten Howell, N.P., reviews changes to health policies before implementation and makes monthly visits to the school. If you wish to contact our consultant, please see the office and arrangements can be made for you. The qualifications of a health consultant may include pediatrician, pediatric nurse practitioner, or an R.N. or Ph.D. who is experienced in pediatric health.

Reporting Communicable Illness: When children have been diagnosed with a communicable illness -- such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia, shigella, or chicken pox, Children's House must immediately notify the Health Department or the State Department of Public Health and Environment. Children's confidentiality will be maintained to the extent required by law.²

¹ Centers for Disease Control: <http://cdc.gov> and Safety Performance Standards for Child Care Centers Standard 3.001

² Safety Performance Standards for Child Care Centers Standard 8.063

Documentation: Children’s House shall document that a child’s parent or guardian was immediately notified following an event which resulted in the death, injury, or illness of their child requiring professional medical attention.

Children’s House in accordance with National Standards,³ shall notify The Colorado Department of Human Service, Early Learning Division and/or The Montezuma County Health Department within the next working day in the event of the following:

- Injury or illness that required medical attention.
- Reportable communicable diseases.
- Death.
- Any other significant event relating to health and safety (such as lost child, fire or other structural damage, work stoppage or closure).

Medications at School: No medication of any kind will be dispensed without a doctor’s permission *and* can only be dispensed by those who are given delegation by parents and school administration. **Under no circumstances should ANY medication (including vitamins, cough drops, and herbal supplements) be sent with students in pockets, backpacks, or lunch boxes!** This presents a serious health and safety hazard for other students, and they will be confiscated.

- A doctor must prescribe in writing any medication, both prescription and nonprescription, dispersed to your child while at school with the exception of acetaminophen. A school Medication Agreement must be completed by the student’s physician, parents and/or guardians.
- **Prescription medication** must remain in the original container bearing the original label that shows the prescription number, name of medication, date filled, physician’s name, child’s name, and directions for dosage.
- **Over the counter medication** must remain in its original package with label, uses, dosage instructions, and expiration date intact and clearly labeled with your child’s name.
- An adult must pick up the medication directly from the school as it cannot be sent home with your child.
- All medication will be locked at school. The only exception to this rule is when all conditions outlined in the Colorado School Children’s Asthma and Anaphylaxis Health Management Act of 2005 are met.

Student Health Plans: Parents of students with diagnosed, ongoing, or chronic health concerns requiring medication to be available and/or administered during school hours for more than fourteen (14) days, or any potentially life-threatening condition such as severe food allergies, diabetes, asthma, or history of anaphylaxis, shall work with the CHD and our consulting Nurse to develop a Student Health Plan. The Student Health Plan shall outline specific procedures to address the student’s ongoing health needs and guide Children’s House staff in providing for those needs.

Immunization Disclosure: The State of Colorado allows Personal, Religious, or Medical Exemptions for Immunization Requirements. Children’s House, as required by state law, allows children who are exempt to attend school. This policy applies to all schools and care centers in the State of Colorado. A statement of “Exemption to Immunization Law” must be on file in the office and it is the parent’s responsibility to provide documentation of the exemption requirements. This must be completed annually. In the event of outbreak, exempted children may be subject to school exclusion and to quarantine.

Animals at School: Only classroom pets approved by the Director may be present on school property. Personal pets should not be brought to school without pre-approval from both the classroom teacher and the Director.

³ Safety Performance Standards for Child Care Centers Standard

Sun Protection: Children’s House joins the American Cancer Society and the Colorado Department of Human Services in recommending the use of sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) by all children. Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes prior to sun exposure as a method of sun protection. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen on their child prior to their arrival at school. During the day, all children will be provided the opportunity to reapply sunscreen at appropriate times during the day.

CH parents must sign the Sunscreen Permission Form to allow staff to apply sunscreen. We supply SPF50 Sunscreen (at a minimum) with titanium dioxide that is PABA-free. Children age four (4) and older will be encouraged to apply their own sunscreen under the supervision of an adult. A staff member will assist children under the age of four (4) with applying sunscreen. Parents must supply sunscreen for their child’s use at school, clearly labeled with their child’s first and last name. Students are encouraged to bring other sun protection as appropriate, such as, hat and sunglasses. Please make sure all such items are clearly labeled with your child’s first and last name.

Emergency and Safety Plan

Children’s house follows the Re-1 School District policies for dealing with all emergencies and school closures. Staff is explicitly trained to handle emergency situations each year with clear lines of command to deal with hazardous or dangerous situations. In the event of an emergency at school, we will follow our emergency plan modeled after the Standard Response Protocol and the National Incident Management System. While your first inclination as a parent understandably might be to call or come to the school, it might interfere with emergency agencies that are dealing with the situation. Instead of calling or coming to the school, we ask that you get information from the following sources: Montezuma County Sheriff’s “Everbridge” Site:

<https://montezumacounty.org/montezuma-county-emergency-alert-system/>. You may sign up for free alerts in the event of Lockout or other advisory alerts that affect our county. You can choose to receive a text message or voice recording. This site has the latest information on when protocols go into effect and when they are lifted. Parents will be alerted immediately if the building must be evacuated. Parents will not be informed during drills.

As soon as it is safely possible, we will notify parents of pertinent information. **It is vital that you notify the school of any changes in your contact information so that you receive these important communications.**

Entrance and Security: When school is in session, parents and visitors must enter using the main entrance at the school and sign in at the front office with the Children’s House Director or Office Staff. All visitors and parents entering the school during school hours must wear a visitor badge. These will be available when you sign in. To assure safety and security, we have closed campuses.

Fire and/or Emergency Evacuation Plan: In the event of a fire or needed evacuation, the building alarm system will sound. Children will be escorted to designated areas away from harm’s way. Lead staff will have cell phones and emergency cards to contact parents and guide them in retrieving their children. Students at the Children’s House will walk to the Cortez Recreation Center and congregate near the tennis courts. Staff will stay with their students until all have been picked up and we ask that parents come within one hour of contact time. Identification will be required from parents and must be presented to staff members in charge of each group. No student will be released without such identification. Note: if an emergency contact person picked up your child, it is that person’s responsibility to contact parents. We ask that parents check the radio or television for updated information. Briefing parents about a situation will be shared on a systematic basis which does not allow staff to field incoming calls from parents during a time of crisis. Safety for students is of utmost importance during these times.

In-School Emergencies: CH has three different types of in-building emergency responses depending on the situation:

- **Lockout** means there is danger outside of the school and all students/staff/visitors must stay inside of the building and no person may enter or leave the building. Activities resume as normal within the school.
- **Lockdown** means that there is danger inside of the school and all students/staff/visitors are required to stay within their classrooms, out of sight, silent, and away from windows.
- **Shelter in Place** means there is a danger requiring students/staff/visitors to follow specific directions in taking shelter. In the event of a tornado warning, all children will be escorted to the central hallways where we will play quiet games while awaiting an all clear sign from the radio or police.

Injured Child:

- **Minor injury or accident:** In the case of a minor scrape, cut, or bruising, the wound will be cleaned, iced (if necessary), bandaged, and of course your child given tender, loving care. If your child incurs an injury that requires further assistance, an Incident Report will be completed describing the accident and care given and parents are required to sign receipt of such form when picking up their child from school.
- **Major injury or accident:** After emergency first aid is given, all efforts will be made to reach parents first, then your emergency contacts. It is imperative that your child's Emergency Card is updated regularly to reflect any changes.

Supervision of Children: All classrooms take attendance upon entering the school on clipboards, again half-way through the school day, and re-checked after all transitions (to specials classes, lunch, recess, driving to and from field trips, etc.). Parents picking up students during the school day must sign them out through the front office. After-School staff will take attendance and track attendance throughout the after-school hours. All classrooms have attendance/emergency books that are taken as part of all emergency drills. These binders hold important health and contact information in the event of an actual emergency. Closing staff members hold responsibility for checking attendance sheets as well as checking every school area to assure that all students have been picked up before closing the school. Students not picked up and whose parent has not contacted the school will stay with the staff member in charge who will notify police and/or social services after thirty (30) minutes of no contact from parent.

Missing child: In the event that a child is missing, either on school grounds or on a field trip, at least one (1) staff member will stay with the group and one (1) staff member will search for the child. Other steps are as follows:

- Report to the School Administration and do an immediate search of all areas of the school. If on a field trip, one teacher will retrace the steps of the group while another adult is to stay with the class.
- Phone the parent (guardian) or the emergency contacts (should we not be able to contact the parent/guardian) and alert them to the situation and circumstances surrounding the situation.
- Phone the police if parent/guardian or emergency contacts cannot be reached or the child has been missing for more than 10 minutes.

Kidnapped Child: The Teacher or Assistant will:

- Call another staff member for assistance.
- Get the description of the person and a license plate number.
- Let the child go if bodily harm or injury is imminent to the child or other children.
- Call the police immediately.
- Call the custodial parent(s) or authorized pick-up person immediately to inform them of the events and steps taken by the Kiva.

Safety and Recess: Student safety is of utmost concern to all Children’s House staff. In an effort to support this, Children’s House has specific toys and activities permitted during the recess period. **No personal toys are permitted on the school grounds.** This includes, but is not limited to skateboards, rollerblades, hockey sticks, electronic games, fidgets not prescribed by a Healthcare Provider or documented in an IEP, and cell phones. Children’s House offers a variety of individual and group activities that promote fun, creativity, strength, agility, and endurance. We are sure that each student will have ample opportunity to explore and expand their physical abilities during recess as well as during their daily PE periods.

Suspicious Activity: In the case of a stranger, and/or suspicious activity while children are on the playground, the staff may accompany the children into the building, lock the doors, and call the police. Should a stranger or suspicious activity enter or occur in the building, the police will be called immediately.

Fire, Weapons, Alcohol, Illegal Substances, and Tobacco: Possession or the use of fire, weapons of any kind, illegal substances, liquor, or tobacco products within the school building, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses is prohibited at all times. In addition, alcohol is prohibited at any school-related function at which children are present. When school-related functions where children are present are held in venues that have alcoholic beverage service available, such service must be closed during events at which the attendance of children is planned or expected.

Weather Guidelines

Outdoor Play and Work: At the Children’s House, we know that there is significant benefit to students having the opportunity to have time outdoors every day. Outside time is built into the daily schedule for all students. Please send children to school with all clothing and gear to keep them comfortable during these times.

- If the temperature is 23 °F or higher, children will go outdoors unless it is raining or we are experiencing a significant snowstorm or other extreme weather conditions.
- We consult weather.com to get current temperature readings prior to outside time.
- Wind chill is not considered due to the great variance by location.
- Teachers determine for their own classroom whether their class will go outside or stay inside as well as whether outside time is shortened. This decision is for all students in the class – partial classrooms do not stay in.

School Closure: Children’s House will be closed if RE-1 schools close for weather or other emergency situations. If the District determines that the weather has deteriorated to the point that requires mid-day closure, we will do the same. In the event of a mid-day closure, parents will be notified by telephone of the early dismissal time and procedure. You can visit the district website to view delayed schedule or school closure information: www.cortez.k12.co.us or visit our Facebook Page, as well as by viewing your email and our website. CH reserves the right to enact school closures for weather or other emergency situations independently from RE-1’s decisions.

Tornado: In the event of a tornado, the classroom teacher or assistant teacher will escort the children to doorways and windowless rooms where they will lie down on the floor and cover their heads.

Reporting of Abuse and Neglect

Colorado law and Re-1 requires that any staff member of the Children’s House who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which could reasonably result in abuse or neglect, shall immediately report the same to the Colorado Department of Social Services or to local law enforcement.

A description of these policies is as follows.

- Each child is generally viewed each day for unusual cuts or bruises. If there is a question, another staff member will be asked to give their opinion. All comments will be documented, along with descriptions of unusual behavior and comments made by the child.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect by a Staff Member: All staff members at Children’s House undergo fingerprinting and a background check by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and/or FBI as a requirement that must be fulfilled prior to and as a condition of employment.

- If a staff member is suspected of child abuse, parents must personally contact the CHD regarding such concern.
- The staff member will automatically be suspended from entering or working at the school until the charge has been fully dropped with no charges pending.
- The staff member will be reported to the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents should immediately request assistance from:

Montezuma – Department of Social Services

Phone: (970) 565-3769

After Hours: Sheriff Office (970) 565-8441

109 West Main, Room 203

Cortez, CO 81321

Reporting of Licensing Complaints: CH is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services - Early Learning Division. The license indicates that the facility has met the required standards for the operation of childcare services. You can ask to see the license and the most recent report of inspection at any time. Childcare services play an important role in supporting families and strong families are the basis of a thriving community. Your child’s education, physical, emotional, and social development will be nurtured in a well-planned and run program. Remember to observe the program regularly, especially with regard to children’ health and safety, equipment, play materials, and staff.

Complaints concerning suspected licensing violations shall be handled as follows:

- The concern will be discussed with the classroom teacher, if appropriate, and the CHD.
- If the concern is not thereby resolved, the complainant and the CHD may present the issue to the Board of Directors for resolution.
- Additionally, the Colorado Department of Human Services - Early Learning Division may be contacted at:
Division of Early Learning
The Colorado Department of Human Services
1575 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203-1714
Telephone 303-866-5958 or 1-800-799-5876

Additional Guidelines

Cell Phones: Our school is a cell phone-free zone in all areas accessible to students. This rule is for all members of our community and includes classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and common areas. We request that all adults refrain from using cell phones within the school. Please end all cell phone calls before dropping off or picking up your children.

Holidays and Celebrations: Children’s House is fortunate to have students of diverse racial, religious, and

cultural backgrounds. We consider our school and community diversity an asset that provides valuable learning experiences. If parents wish to share their family's cultural traditions with their child's classrooms, we welcome you with advanced arrangements. We do not subscribe to or promote any specific religious beliefs. We respect and value the many cultural traditions of our diverse community. Decisions regarding celebrations are made by teachers and administration based on a number of factors including but not limited to curricular relevance and developmental considerations. Parents will be informed about these celebrations and their role in the curriculum throughout the school year.

In order to avoid hurt feelings and lost invitations, party invitations may not be brought to the school or distributed at school. Teachers cannot distribute invitations or provide contact information for students in the classroom. You are welcome to use the School Directory to help facilitate party plans.

Children's House "News": Children are invited to formally share interesting information, stories, or objects from home with their classmates. This is called "News." Each classroom will share with families their respective "News" schedule. Educational objects from nature, books, pictures, audio or video tapes make great "News" items. **Toys are not considered appropriate items for "News".** As children share their special items from home, they learn to talk in front of a group. This is an excellent way of gaining self-confidence with speaking skills at an early age.

Items from Home: No toys are allowed at school, even for sharing. This includes iPods, iPads, cell phones, and all other personal media devices. Their presence is distracting to our classroom environments and items are subject to confiscation until the end of the school year. If students would like to share an object of nature, something educational, or something created with their classmates, please check with your teacher first to ensure items are appropriate.

Lost and Found: It is important that valuable items be kept at home. We encourage children to be responsible for themselves, their outdoor clothing, and any other item they might bring to school. **We ask parents to check the lost and found weekly for items that belong to their child(ren).** Please claim only those items belonging to your family. Upon the last day of each month, all remaining items are donated to families in need. The lost and found is located in the Front Lobby.

Rest Period: Full day friends will enjoy the benefit of a daily rest period after afternoon outside time, children may choose to "nap" during this rest period. The rest period coincides with afternoon "Line" or group time; our blinds will be turned and the environment prepared to allow the children a time of quiet and contemplation.

2024-2025 Family Handbook Acknowledgement

By my signature below, I confirm that I have reviewed or will review the Children's House *Family Handbook, 2024-2025*. I affirm my understanding of all parent and student expectations, including all policies and procedures as outlined herein, and agree to abide by them.

I further commit to supporting the mission and vision and philosophy of open and respectful communication between home and school as well as active participation in order to enhance the learning of all students enrolled at the Children's House. To that

end I will endeavor to become an involved participant (working collaboratively with the student’s teacher and supporting school sponsored activities) and in so doing build a school of excellence for all.

I also agree that I have read or will read and will comply with the rights, responsibilities, policies, and procedures as outlined in the Children’s House Parent Code of Conduct and Communication Guidelines published in the Family Handbook.

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

2024-2025 Conduct and Discipline Agreement

It is important for you and your student to read and discuss the rights, responsibilities, and consequences outlined in the Positive School Behavior and Disciplinary Procedures and in the Student Code of Conduct as written in the Family Handbook. After reviewing these sections with your student, please sign and return this page to the school office. If your student is enrolled in the Children’s House Program, we ask that parents discuss the appropriate sections with their student and sign as the parent/legal guardian that you have read and understand Children’s House policies concerning conduct and discipline and return this page to the school office. We thank you and look forward to a safe, productive year.

Student Code of Conduct:

- I will be safe, respectful, and responsible at school in everything I do.
- I understand that our school is a place of work and productivity; I will contribute positively to our school community through respectful, productive behaviors at all times.
- I will take responsibility for my own learning by following directions, setting appropriate goals, meeting challenges with a positive attitude, and reflecting honestly and productively on my work.
- I will come to school ready to work, learn, and be a positive member of our school community.

We have read and understand the expectations and consequences as outlined and agree to abide by them.

Student’s Printed Name and Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date