



TOTH
MONTESSORI
NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, DC



Part-Time Toddler Parent Handbook

2019-2020

Updated July 2019

Welcome from the Head of School

Dear parents,

Welcome to the 2019–2020 school year, and to the current edition of the ToTH Montessori Toddler Parent Handbook. We hope that you find it both useful and accessible.

We are honored to begin a journey with you, our new ToTH families who are eagerly awaiting their very first day of school. Please use the month of July to communicate with us about anything you may need as you prepare for this new experience, and congratulations on your choice to give your toddler a Montessori experience this early in life! For those of you who's child is already in our program this year and just taking a short break this summer, changes will be minimal so relax and enjoy your summer!

The natural light, the close proximity to the playground, and the togetherness of all ToTH staff in our new location has heightened our level of achievement and functionality as a school. This is our eighth year welcoming toddlers, but this is our first year starting with a full time administrator, all ToTH classes under one roof, and four MACTE trained teachers on staff with 100% retention.

We've learned a lot over the years. We are adjusting our tone, our ground rules, our priorities, and our assessment of what exactly it is DC parents really want and need from us and what we need from them. It is our mission, as you will read in this handbook, to be the right school for DC. This year, our focus will be on communication, using Montessori Compass more wisely, revamping parent workshops, restructuring how and when information flows to parents, and fine tuning our voice. Help us succeed in this by communicating openly and honestly throughout the year and please give timely feedback if there is anything we could be doing better.

Sincerely,

Natalie Baginski

Head of School

Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook provides an overview of policies, philosophies, and procedures for the community, parents, teachers, au pairs, nannies, board members, and other invested adults supporting toddlers enrolled at ToTH Montessori. It is meant to be read in its entirety.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to offer DC families an authentic Montessori experience that is right for our community. We aim to make every day count and we prepare our environment to maximize the children's independence and success. Our hope is that joy, curiosity, creativity, and friendship are the predominant experiences.

Who We Are

ToTH Montessori is a private Montessori School licensed by the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE). Our toddler program engages children ages approximately 18 months to approximately 3 years old in a learning environment lead by trained, credentialed guides, according to the International Montessori Council (IMC) standards. We are families on Capitol Hill and beyond. We are passionate about giving the children in our community the best early learning experience possible and we adhere to what we believe are authentic Montessori principles and guidelines.

What We Believe

We believe that children are worthy of deep respect. We believe that during this important developmental time, it is imperative that children are given a peaceful environment in which to explore their curiosities with self-correcting, multi-sensory materials through self-directed learning. We believe in uninterrupted work and play. We believe our children learn best when the school environment is a collaboration between teachers and children and parents, working together as a warm and supportive community.

Our Guiding Principles

1. Children learn best in a child-centered, multi-age environment.
2. Praise and extrinsic motivation are not necessary.
3. Teachers must be spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually prepared to work with children and should receive ongoing professional development.
4. All interactions between the child and adult should be positive, without reward or punishment.
5. We must not hurry development, earlier is not better.
6. There is no average and we hold space for the child to be who she is and develop at her own pace.
7. What the children “learn” is not about a product. We refer to predicted educational outcomes for Montessori education and observe to assess growth.
8. It’s not about the “stuff”; the toddler is the curriculum.
9. Routine, structure, organization, beauty, logic, choice, friendship, and predictability are essential components of any strong early childhood program.
10. Activity should be self-guided and the adults are there to assist.

Management and Administration

Head of School: Natalie Baginski, responsible for recruitment and retention of qualified staff, credentialing and licensing of staff, implementation of board approved 3-Year Strategic Plan, owner/board partnership, managing professional development and training for staff, expansion and growth of program, open houses, policies and procedures, phase in schedules, quality of Montessori materials, end of year parent surveys, school culture, social media, content creation, and parent workshop planning and evaluation. Parents may contact Natalie at:

natalie@toddlersonthehill.org

Admissions Director: Ila Furman, responsible for open houses, admissions, enrollment, June Welcome packets, enrollment forms, tuition payments, observation appointments and schedules. Parents may contact Ila at:

ila@toddlersonthehill.org

Administrative Director: Stephanie Sarvana, responsible for all administration, Montessori Compass data, general communication with parents, editing, HR and benefits, licensing and overall management of parent committees.

Parents can learn more about all of our teaching staff on our [website](#).

ToTH maintains a Board of Advisors to provide oversight and support for Head of School and Administration. The Board includes ToTH's founders Sara Agarwal, Joy Wilder and Anya Landau French. The Board will review its policies each year and make any necessary changes accordingly. Parents will be informed of any changes. ToTH reserves the right to alter its policies and program at any time.

Calendar, Logistics, and Daily Schedule

Location

Our toddler program is located inside of the Department of Parks and Rec Capper Recreation Center at 1000 5th Street SE, Washington, D.C. 20003. ToTH has a private entrance located at the north end of the building. All guests must sign-in at the front entrance.

Dates of operation

School begins August 5, 2019 and ends July 3, 2020. The last day of school is always a half day and so there will be no toddler afternoon session. The last day for afternoon families is July 2nd. For dates of holidays and breaks please view [our calendar](#). Closures and weather days are built into the program.

Hours of operation

Morning session toddlers meet from 9:15 AM to 12:15 PM and afternoon session toddlers meet from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Children picked up late will be subject to our White Rabbit (late) policy, which is posted at the end of this handbook.

Drop-Off Procedures

Morning drop off is 9:10-9:20 AM

Afternoon drop off is 2:25-2:35 PM

ToTH encourages parents to pick up and drop off children at the start and end time of the sessions. There is a 5-10 minute window at the start of each session when teachers are available to receive children. If you are running late, please text the teachers on the classroom phone at (202) 836-3365 so they are aware.

Our classroom environment is child-centered. For the benefit of the children, we prefer that the only adults in the classroom are the teachers. In the beginning, when a child is new to school and still needs a parent during **phase-in**, a parent is permitted to sit in the classroom until the teacher determines that the child is ready for the parent to leave. After phase in, we ask that parents use the following drop off procedure:

Car Drop Offs: Parking can be challenging near the school and we understand that many parents are rushing to get to work. There are several 15 minutes drop-off spaces near the entrance to ToTH at the north end of the Capper Community Center building. Our administrators will be ready and waiting to take children out of car seats and into the classroom for you at 9:10am and 2:25pm. Please pull up to the front entrance and put on your flashers. Give your child a brief and cheerful goodbye and a staff member will approach the car and help remove the child.

Walking/Strolling/Biking Drop-Offs: You may bring your child up to the front entrance of the building and say a brief goodbye. A teacher or administrator will take your child into the classroom. If your child is having a rough morning, we encourage you to give a brief and cheerful goodbye and head out the door. Our administrators and teachers are well prepared to deal with children who are crying or upset. Once the child enters the classroom and is welcomed by Javacia, they will begin to calm down and start the classroom routine. We understand other schools do it differently.

When you've successfully completed phase-in, we ask that you have a clear and consistent separation routine with your child. It's easier when the same person drops off each day, rather than taking turns between parents, grandma and nanny. **Goodbye should take just a few moments, please say, "I love you, have fun at school, I'll pick you up soon" then confidently walk away.** Please refrain from putting us in the position to have to pull a crying child out of your arms, children should be walking into the foyer, not carried. You should walk away from them, not ask us to pull them from you.

The foyer is echoey, if you must talk in the foyer during drop off, please whisper. Booming voices in this closed space during a moment of separation anxiety is not kind or gentle for the toddler; this is a child's environment first and foremost. Chat with other parents outside of the foyer please, especially if a child is crying.

Pick-Up Procedure

At dismissal we put on backpacks and wait at the door. We tell the children that their families are waiting for them and to please go find your family and offer a big hug or a kiss when the door is opened. It is important for the children's psyche that after this build up about finding a loved one, there is an adult waiting in the foyer to greet the child. We try to open the doors on time, to the minute when possible. For mornings, we open the doors for dismissal at 12:15 PM and for afternoon it's 5:30 PM. Please be in the foyer waiting for your child 1-2 minutes early, so that no children are left feeling insecure. A late fee is incurred for parents who are more than five minutes late for pick up (please see our White Rabbit policy on the last page of this document). If you are running late for pick-up, please text the classroom phone to let the teacher know. If someone is picking up your child who you have not already listed as an authorized pick-up person on your enrollment paperwork, please notify your child's teacher ahead of time with the person's name and phone number. The person must bring a photo ID with them to pick up and show it to the lead teacher. If you would like to permanently add to or change your list of authorized pick up persons, please reach out to Stephanie Stephanie at stephanie@toddlersonthehill.org.

Before and Aftercare

There is currently no before or after care option with ToTH's part-time toddler program.

Adult to child ratios

ToTH's toddler program adheres to a Montessori adult/student ratio and currently OSSE has approved our classroom to have up to 12 students with 2 trained teachers.

Inclement weather and other unscheduled closings

We will attempt to follow the DCPS calendar for emergency closings and weather but cannot guarantee decisions will align; please check your email and Montessori Compass early in the morning on days there is a weather event or other

emergency that might result in school closures. We have built in three extra weeks of school so weather days are covered. *ToTH does not make up days for closures.*

Immunizations and Health Forms

Each child must be current on immunizations, as a condition of enrollment. We must receive each child's up-to-date immunization record and health forms by the enrollment forms deadline. Health forms expire annually and must be completed again and resubmitted upon expiration. This is a requirement of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. All questions related to the immunization requirement should be discussed with our Admissions Director, Ila Furman.

Payments

Late payments. When payment is not received in full by 5 days after the deadline, it will be considered late and subject to a late fee in the amount of \$50.00. When not received 10 days after the deadline, an additional late fee of \$100.00 will be applied. After 14 days ToTH reserves the right to refuse to admit the child to the program and may offer the child's opening to another family. If a check is returned by the bank for any reason, the parents will be subject to a returned check fee of \$35.00.

All checks must be payable to Toddlers on the Hill. We are happy to accept Visa or MasterCard payments with a 2.09% processing fee from the company. Please use the online payment link provided for each tuition payment or call Ila Furman in the office with your payment information.

****Teachers are not authorized to accept checks or health forms or other important documents for administration; please deliver your items to Ila. For mail, please use Toddlers on the Hill, PO Box 15560, Washington DC 20003.*

Refunds and Cancellations

Elective termination

For elective termination ToTH requests that families give 30 days' notice prior to the next trimester. All application fees and deposits are nonrefundable. With the exception of families called away for active military duty, ToTH is unable to refund program fee payments already made for a given session.

Termination with cause

The Head of School reserves the right to immediately de-enroll a family with due cause. In this case, refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any dispute or claim arising out of the de-enrollment of a child or any other related matter that cannot be resolved between the parent and the Head of School should first be elevated to the Board. If an agreement can still not be reached, it shall be submitted to non-binding mediation.

Summer Preparations

During the summer there are things you can do to help your child normalize in a Montessori environment. Aside from talking about school and coming to summer socials and the Barracks Row 4th of July parade with your new ToTH community, you can:

- Allow your child to walk, ride a balance bike or scooter; use the stroller less
- Eat snack and meals sitting down and refrain from inviting your child to walk around with food
- Practice slipping velcro/snap shoes on and off at home
- When you go on an outing, use your child's backpack and allow her to carry her own snack and water bottle.
- When a toy is no longer being used at home, model putting it back in its place.
- Support the ground rule that "we throw balls and frisbees", but not random objects in the house. At school, we do not throw work inside; we only throw balls and frisbees outside.
- If your child likes to jump and run, offer opportunities for running and jumping outside and verbally reinforce that we jump and run outside. Inside we walk.
- Instead of using words like "good job" and "I like how you...", practice offering a smile or a non-judgmental observation, such as, "What bright colors you used!". If your child is reliant on extrinsic motivation at home she will seek for it at school, and intrinsic motivation is an important predicted educational outcome for Montessori programs.

Phase-In / Back to School

Every Montessori school has a phase in system to ensure that children new to school are welcomed in a very peaceful way and first impressions are as positive as possible. The “first day of school” is not necessarily the first day of school for everyone. It’s important that our returning children are able to reintroduce themselves to school without a group of young, new toddlers. It’s equally important that our new friends have the attention from the guides that they will need to have good first experiences. For this reason, we phase in students slowly for the first month of school. Specific start dates for brand new ToTH children will be sent out in June. If your child has attended ToTH previously, your child will start on the very first date of your chosen session. If your child is starting the year new to ToTH, plan on not starting the first week.

****We do not prorate tuition for later start dates****

Phase-In For New Parents

In the beginning, please plan to accompany your child to school at least the first few sessions unless you are told otherwise (each child’s adjustment experience is different). Please make arrangements for you or someone who is close to your child (caregiver, relative) to be available for this process. Only one parent/caregiver is invited into the class with the child during phase in and we ask it’s the same parent for the whole multi-day process. We will offer guidelines for the parents’ role during phase-in.

We have phased-in many toddlers; we are trained to support your child through separation anxiety.

Parent Communication

ToTH is a small, neighborhood school. We believe in honesty, flexibility, kindness, and we have an open-door policy when it comes to discussing the program, a family’s needs, or a specific concern. If a question or a concern arises please

seek out friendly dialogues. We suggest that if the question or concern directly pertains to your child's experience in the program, speak with your child's lead teacher. If the question or concern is of a broader nature, it's best to reach out to the Head of School. In all regards, we are friendly with error.

Resources for self study

Parents will receive occasional articles or announcements from Head of School on rationale, Montessori philosophy, and practical information relevant to parents. Parents will also receive [resources](#) such as blogs, podcasts, apps, websites, and other avenues for self-study via our website, Montessori Compass and parent workshops. Montessori school/parent partnerships requires active engagement from both sides and we encourage parents to engage in a basic study of Montessori education so that you understand the core values and principles of Montessori education.

Montessori Compass

ToTH uses an online record-keeping and communication system called Montessori Compass. Parents will receive information for logging on before school starts and parents will have access to the portal all year. ToTH staff and teachers use Montessori Compass to share important news like emergency and weather-related closures, classroom reports, pictures, events, and observations. We hope you find this portal helpful. We are a non-traditional Montessori school so we do not track, checklist, test or monitor in the traditional preschool way with progress reports. We observe and record keep the Montessori way and this requires trust in the child, the process, and the teacher. If you find our level of detail and communication is not enough, please reach out to us for more. At no time should a parent feel their questions about what's happening in the classroom are not being answered.

Google Group

ToTH maintains a closed Google Group for all current parents, and we will use this group for whole school communications from administration (Ila and Stephanie). Parents must join this group and will be contacted by email for any program updates. Teachers will not be included in this group. Parents are also encouraged to use this group to reach out to other parents in the community to schedule playdates, share childcare during ToTH breaks, or any other way that would support the parent community.

Instagram

Follow ToTH on Instagram at @tothmontessori. ToTH administrators upload videos, pictures, stories, reposts, articles, weblinks, ideas, memes and other little tidbits quite often, and the purpose of our IG page is to give the community a glimpse of our Montessori world. It's a window into the school. Please join us!

Parent Workshops

Parents and neighbors will be invited to attend workshops and talks given by Head of School and Lead Teachers at ToTH on relevant topics.

Bi-annual Parent Teacher Conferences

Teachers will meet with parents twice each year in the months of November and May. If you find yourself needing more, please reach out to your child's teacher for a sit down conference any time; you are not limited to November and May.

Parent Concerns

We cannot act on concerns we are not aware of. Please be open and honest with us at all times with timely and direct feedback.

Children's Daily Supplies

It is our goal that the arrival and dismissal routines at ToTH are smooth for the children, and we encourage children to be independent with their belongings throughout the session. For this reason, we ask that parents send **only** the following items to school each day:

- 1 labeled backpack per child (cartoon free): The backpack should be large enough to comfortably fit the following items:
- 1 labeled diaper envelope per child, provided by ToTH.
- 1 labeled bento box-style snack container per child (for example, the Sugarbooger Good Lunch Bento: https://www.amazon.com/Sugarbooger-Good-Lunch-Bento-What/dp/B01552K9YY/ref=asc_df_B01552K9YY/?tag=hyprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=312133207663&hvpos=102&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=13045440021930446672&h

[vpone=&hvptwo=&hvtqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmld=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9061284&hvtargid=pla-570556153858&psc=1](#)

- 1 labeled water bottle (cartoon free)
- 1 labeled Ziploc bag with one complete set of seasonally appropriate clothes, including shoes

Classroom Support Week

Parents are requested to send the following supplies (or similar supplies as requested by the teachers) during a specific week of the year (dates will be given in August 2019)

- 2-3 large packages of wipes for toileting (100 wipes per package minimum)
- 2 boxes of tissue paper for noses
- 1 box of medium sized, latex free gloves for diapering (only if your child is still in diapers)
- 1 bunch of purchased or picked flowers for flower arranging

Dress Code

Children may wear the following at ToTH:

- Sweat Pants, Leggings, or Stretchy Shorts - no dresses, no shirt dresses, no jeans, no khakis, no overalls. Shirts must not hang down lower than the hips (for the purposes of toileting).
- Please visit primary.com to view some sweatpants, leggings, or stretchy shorts.
- Close-toed shoes that are designed for toddlers without laces, multiple straps, or other needless complications. Velcro is your friend.
- Label clothing, shoes, snack boxes, water bottles, hats, jackets, accessories (basically, label EVERYTHING!) with your child's first and last name. [Mabel's Labels](#) is a good option for ordering labels that are high quality, dishwasher safe, and long-lasting.
- We play outside in the winter and in rain; please check weather in the morning before getting dressed for school. Please apply sunscreen to your child's body BEFORE you drop them off.

If your child is not successful at school with any item of clothing, we will ask that particular item of clothing is enjoyed at home. We paint, we play in the mud, and we roll on the floor so please save expensive clothing for non-ToTH time.

Allergies

If your child has an allergy to any food, we need to receive a list of allergies in writing, and we need you to tell us verbally as well. We will post a list of all the allergies and those foods will not be allowed into the classroom. If your child requires an epi-pen or other medication, please supply your teachers with a labeled ziplock bag of required meds and detailed instructions on how to administer them. We will refer to OSSE regulations concerning meds at school.

Support from Home to School

It is our hope that the majority of adult / toddler interaction at school is reserved for lessons, conversations, social/emotional support, and friendship. It is helpful for everyone in the session if children are mostly independent with their bodies and possessions. The Montessori motto is “help me do it myself”. Please never do for your child what she can do for herself. Autonomy and independence are predicted educational outcomes of Montessori education and the following will help us achieve these:

- Allow your child to walk, ride a balance bike or scooter instead of stroll. Please do not carry your child into school, let your child walk from outside to inside. Carrying a toddler to Montessori school is counter to the intended outcome of balance, gross motor development, autonomy and independence.
- No laces - Please send children to school with shoes that zip, snap, or velcro. Children cannot tie their shoes at this age and we prefer that children are not interrupted in their work and socialization for adult intervention for help with shoe laces. Practice putting shoes off and on at home once you can see motor skills are ready for that task.
- No toys, stuffed animals, or security blankets - Please send children to school with only essential items, as toys and other precious items can cause frustration and tears.

Nannies and Other Caregivers

If your child will be dressed by a nanny, au pair, or other caregiver, and the snack is prepared by the caregiver, and if it is the caregiver who will be dropping off or picking up, etc., it is necessary that your caregiver be on our email distribution list so she can get updates about school. It's important that your caregiver read this handbook. She is an integral part of the team and when nannies are unaware of ToTH policies and class requirements it creates disharmony and stress and puts your child at a disadvantage. Please involve your nanny, share this handbook, make an introduction, and support her ability to set your child up for a successful time at school. We recommend nannies come in for a one hour observation in Primary.

Behavior in the Classroom

Living peacefully with others is an overwhelming challenge for toddlers when their strongest impulse is to express language through their bodies and not their words. Cognitively, motor messages such as the urge to push or hit another child—override verbal messages at this developmental age. Even when words do come, sometimes they do not accurately or effectively express what the child is trying to say.

Toddlers expend enormous amounts of energy getting their bodies to do what they want them to do and to go where they want them to go. Frustration can precipitate tears or whining and even biting, pushing, or pinching. These responses are effective toddler ways of communicating frustration and this year at school we will move on from these ways to more mature ways.

Persistent Disruption/Aggression

When a toddler persists in disruptive or aggressive behavior, the teacher will shadow the child until the child has calmed and can refocus his/her attention positively. During more extended periods of unacceptable behavior, which can last for several days or even weeks, the teacher will continue to interact with the child using gentle but firm, positive support and clear, simple language. The teacher may meet with parents to discuss ways to replace the aggression with positive coping mechanisms, both inside and outside of the classroom. Parents concerned about their child's coping with their own or other children's behavior—in or out of the program—are encouraged to consult the teacher.

Remember that we are all working together to encourage the children to absorb social and emotional skills. Although we will have some bumps along the road, with modeling and consistency children will be able to express themselves effectively and appropriately, eventually.

Ongoing Disruption/Lack of Success

It can happen that a child's personality, in conjunction with developmental/sensorial issues, makes it hard for a child to normalize into a social environment. Although this is rather rare and we believe Montessori works for most children, it is important that parents understand that not every child who is 18-36 months is ready for a three hour session with eleven other children. Children who are lacking in autonomy, delayed in orderliness and maturity, extremely introverted, presenting with spectrum disorders, or experiencing a sensorial integration issue can sometimes find it overwhelming to be in a large group.

Whatever the case may be in each individual circumstance, the lead teacher will make any and all adaptations she can to do everything possible so that the child can reap the benefits of the environment and gain independence, orderliness, autonomy, etc. She will inform parents of any issues/adaptations and also give recommendations for support from home.

It is ToTH's policy to be inclusive with any special needs when we can adequately meet the child's needs. If a) adaptations have been made and b) parents have supported the teacher by following through with recommendations at home, and the child is still not gaining from the environment, the lead teacher and Head of School will meet with the parents and help them find a more suitable environment, or suggest the child take a break from school. Under this circumstance whereby the criteria a) and b) have been met, ToTH will refund any money for tuition for the days not used and offer the space to another family. If any specific issue is detected and we feel a specialist is needed, we will recommend a specialist and are available to communicate with any specialists, even if the child is no longer at ToTH.

It is our belief that if the ground rules are consistently followed and positively reinforced, the necessity of external discipline will be diminished.

Biting

Biting often results from frustrated, inadequate communication and/or lack of impulse control—two developmental tasks for young children. Toddlers are in the process of mastering language and often lack the words to fully express their needs, feelings, and thoughts. In the absence of words, toddlers employ their bodies; they push, grab, scratch, and sometimes bite.

Because impulse control is still being developed in young children, there can be a lag between what a young child wants and learning to be calm and wait for something. Often giving words to children who have bitten once or teaching them to take turns will help with the behavior and typically there will not be another bite. It is not unusual however, for a toddler to bite once or twice.

When a child bites another child at ToTH, our policy is that both sets of parents are informed of the incident at pickup without using the other child's name. The parents of the child who has bitten are given some advice by the classroom teaching team that speaks to the developmental tasks discussed above.

Right after the biting incident, the child who has bitten is told that biting hurts, and that biting is not OK. The biter helps the hurt child by giving the hurt child an ice pack after the wound is washed with soap and water. If there is a mark a picture is taken.

If the biting behavior continues, and this means after three bites, a meeting is then set up between the lead teacher and the parents of the child who is biting. Every subsequent bite after the third bite occurs, the parents are called by the lead teacher to pick up their child. The lead teacher and Head of School will have a meeting with the parents to discuss how best the child can be supported at school and at home. Sometimes we suggest that the parents consider having their child evaluated for oral/motor sensory therapy and/or play therapy.

If the above procedures are not successful, the Head of School will discuss other alternatives with the parents, including the option of the child taking a break from school.

Observations in the Classroom

Parents who wish to observe the toddler Montessori classroom may do so by coming into the building via appointment and watching the session discreetly through the window. Most toddlers simply cannot handle their parent's presence at school, the power and lure of abandoning all social norms and work to engage with mom/dad is too great! So we do not do the same kinds of observations that will be available to you when your child graduates to the 3-6 class. We encourage all toddler parents to sign up for a 9:15AM observation in Primary; to see where children are developmentally at ages three and four will give toddler parents a broad perspective that heightens your level of enjoyment and trust during your time in toddler.

The Urban Playground

Safety / Monitoring on the Playground

We play outside on the ToTH/Capper playground adjacent to the entrance of the school. Adults are strategically placed on the playground so that every area is visible by a teacher at any given time. We go up the slide, climb on fences, and take risks. Teachers are there 'loitering with intent' and keeping the children safe. There is a gate with a lock on the playground. We take walks in the neighborhood and sometimes visit Canal Park or Joy Evans.

Toileting

In a toddler classroom, toileting is just as much a part of the curriculum as sitting to eat snack or using work from the shelves. There is no perfect time for all children to begin toileting and what works is different for every family. At ToTH we support a family's right to decide when they are ready and we support families by having a positive and easygoing toileting routine at school. If your child is transitioning to underwear, please inform your lead teacher ahead of time via email and let us know how it's going, and wait for an acknowledgement that your child's teacher knows you are potty training. *Have conversation before your child shows up in underwear.* Your teachers will want to talk with you about your set up at home, share observations with you, and make sure we are on the same page and ready for success before the first day in undies. Give us a chance to be prepared to support you. [Read up on toileting the Montessori Way](#) so you have an understanding of the Montessori approach. Please understand that if your child is coming to school in clothes that are not conducive to toileting (tight leggings, long dress shirts, etc) we will not be able to give your child the Montessori toileting experience at school. Please follow the dress code.

Three Year Old Phase-Out Policy

For existing ToTH families that return for a second year and those whose child will be turning three in our toddler program, the lead teacher might want to talk with you about how your child is doing. Not all three year olds should remain in toddler. If your child is regressing, we will discuss a way to peacefully and smoothly phase out your child. Parents and teachers together will decide the best course of action and a date will be chosen for a phase-out. It is our intention to keep every child in toddler until the end of the year if we can

Professional Conduct

Babysitting and Outside Care

It is a ToTH policy that school staff does not work for parents for child care. This policy is furnished in order to maintain the professional integrity of our school program and relationships. Therefore, employees of ToTH may not provide babysitting or child care for ToTH School students at any time.

Discussing School Outside of a Planned Meeting

Staff must refrain from discussing ToTH School's students or issues when they are in the company of ToTH parents outside of school hours, e.g., birthday parties, sports events, public encounters and school functions. Teachers will request a parent make an appointment for a phone call or meeting at school. This includes the playground.

Social Media

For the purposes of maintaining professional integrity and negating the possibility of conflicts of interests we ask that parents do not invite ToTH teachers to join them on social media, and vice versa. We do however maintain a very active ToTH presence on social media and we encourage parents and teachers alike to join ToTH on Instagram and Facebook.

Illness Policy

If a child is unwell, sick, or possibly contagious, ToTH asks that parents/caregivers keep them home so that they do not disrupt the program and/or make other children ill. When children are fighting an illness, overly tired, or recovering, they are often grumpy and sensitive, making a full school day a challenge. Please keep lice, fevers, excessive mucus, and unsightly and worrisome rashes at home.

If your child needs to miss school due to illness, please send a text message to the classroom phone (202) 836-3365 to notify the teacher of the absence. You may also send a message to the teacher through Montessori Compass.

If your child has mucus that is not contained at school and causing your child difficulty and putting others at risk we will ask you to come and pick up your child.

Children must be fever free for at least 24 hours before they can return to school. In the cases of vomiting and diarrhea, it is recommended that children wait at least 48 hours before returning to school and for certain viruses it can be 72 hours. Please consult your pediatrician.

Medicines. If a child requires medicine at ToTH, this should be discussed with the lead teacher in advance. In general, our teachers do not administer medication (exceptions may include epi-pens or Benadryl). Please talk to your child's lead teacher if your child requires medication while at school.

Emergency Plan

- Evacuate building.
- Take attendance sheet, walking rope, and first aid kit when leaving the building.
- Walk up K Street, toward Canal Park, away from the building.
- Call 911.
- If necessary, continue on to our safe haven
- Safe haven: 400 M Street SE Washington DC 20003
- No children will be released to parents outside or on the way to the safe haven.
- No one may re-enter the building until approved by the fire department or police.

Sheltering in place plan:

- All doors will remain locked.

- No one will be admitted or allowed to leave the premises until the threat is alleviated.

Parent notification. All parents will be notified of any emergency as quickly as possible, first via Montessori Compass, then via email. Please have the MC app on your phone and make sure your cellular setting is “on” to receive updates when not on wifi. Set the notifications to “on” so that you receive a ping or vibration any time a MC message comes through. It may be necessary to first escort the children to safety and then notify parents once settled so there may be a delay in the time we are aware of the emergency and the time you are notified.

Children will only be released to people authorized to pick them up.

***In cases of certain kinds of emergency, we will not notify parents at the expense of safety or helpfulness. If you hear of an emergency via social media or neighbor first and have not heard from us, text the classroom phone.*

White Rabbit Policy

Montessori teachers commit themselves to being rested, patient, tolerant, open, mindful, attentive, intuitive, tireless, and passionate caregivers when it comes to the precious, short time we spend with the toddlers. We strive toward the ability to greet each moment each day with as much grace as possible. For that reason, our well-being outside of school and our ability to attend to our administrative tasks in a routine and timely manner once the children are gone, is a priority. It's imperative that our teachers' administrative time, family time and personal time is respected. To support our staff, ToTH parents have developed a “White Rabbit” policy. 100% of the fees from this policy will be given back to teachers.

5 minutes is considered late and time is based on cell phones, not watches. If you are late, you will receive an email reminder from our administrator. This applies to nannies, grandparents, friends, and neighbors picking up your child. It is a parent responsibility to inform other caregivers. After three friendly reminders you will be charged the following fees:

First late fee:

- 5-10 minutes late: \$10
- 11-15 minutes late: \$20
- 16-30 minutes late: \$30

- >30 minutes late: \$50

Subsequent late fees:

- 5-10 minutes late: \$20
- 11-15 minutes: \$40
- 16-30 minutes late: \$60
- >30 minutes late: \$100

Invoices for late pick ups will sent by Stephanie and be paid by the parent via PayPal or credit card. Any White Rabbit invoice not paid in full within 14 days will result in a temporary suspension from school until the invoice is paid. Abuse of this system or excessive tardiness will be grounds for dismissal from our program.