

Stepping Stones Academy

Parent Handbook

Mailing Address:

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Affiliations: Licensed by the State of Utah

Purpose and Philosophy

Stepping Stones Academy strives to meet the preschool and childcare needs of the families of Summit County by:

- Providing a developmentally appropriate, discovery-learning environment that meets the needs of every child's healthy cognitive, language, motor, social, and emotional development.
- Providing supportive parenting guidance to every family enrolled in the center.

Stepping Stones Academy practices the Montessori Method which fosters rigorous, self-motivated growth for children and adolescents in all areas of their development—cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. We also pride ourselves on teaching children to be independent. As teachers, we support children in hands-on learning by providing encouragement, staging the environment, and providing many opportunities for creative expression. Components of a quality program include:

- The appropriateness of the program regarding children's developmental stages, culture, individual development, and characteristics.
- Responsiveness of the environment to children's and family's individual needs and preferences.
- The way in which staff interact with children and families.
- The nature of the curriculum and how it is implemented.

Choosing Montessori for your child means you are committing to the years ahead involving more than being on time every day, staying informed about school policies, schedules, events and paying tuition. It means you are interested in supporting your child through all the coming phases of development and enabling their independence by establishing a consistent home-school continuum.

For the youngest students you may want to adapt your schedule to the school's so meals and naps are consistent. Adding child-sized furniture, cooking and cleaning tools to your home will allow your young child to practice the skills they are learning in class and to feel responsible for contributing to the family.

Adding child-sized shelving to hold toys and games instead of a toy box will enable your student to choose "work" and put it back again as they do at school so picking up will never be a huge chore. Check Sprout-kids.com for child-sized furniture. Montessoriservices.com is our supplier for most of our child-sized cooking and cleaning tools.

Consistency remains important for older students, too. Early childhood students enjoy being able to prepare their own snacks as they do in school, taking care of some family responsibilities like folding laundry and preparing a salad for dinner.

Quality Improvement Plans will be updated annually.

Not Daycare, Not Preschool

Stepping Stones Montessori Academy is a private school, not a daycare or a preschool.

The Montessori Method only works if students are at school completing each level of each program. A student who attends school for a year or two has had a wonderful time and has learned a few things but will not retain the full learning experience like a child who attends regularly and completes their program. A 5-year-old can transition into a traditional kindergarten program far ahead of the class, but a 6-year-old who finishes the early childhood program will bring a complete and solid academic, social and developmental package along with an understanding of how to lead and how to follow as a member of a community to any 1st grade class. This will be a trait into adulthood.

Hours and Closures

Stepping Stones Academy will be open Monday through Thursday from 8:00am-4:45pm, Friday 8:00 am-4:00 pm. Drop off is between 8:00am-8:25am. All the children must be here at that time. Unusual circumstances will arise and if you are unable to make it at that time, please wait to drop off at 10:30am, this is for extenuating circumstances only. Call or text a teacher if you will not be on time. Having the children begin together at 8:30 starts our community routine. A calendar of school closures will be updated yearly and passed on to parents when they enroll. If arriving late becomes a habit, at a maximum of three times within a 6-week period that you drop off late, a late drop off fee will be charged at \$25.00 per 15 minutes beginning at 8:26 am. Please be here on time so we can begin our lessons promptly at 8:30 am.

Wait List Procedure

The center will be filled on a first come, first served basis. If we are full, the child's name will be added to our waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur. Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination regarding gender, national origin, or religious beliefs.

A child with special physical, mental, or emotional requirements will be considered for enrollment on an individual basis. Within the scope of our ability and resources, we will make every effort to meet the special developmental needs of the child in collaboration with Child Find.

Enrollment Procedure

When a vacancy becomes available, we will notify those next on the wait list. If your child is offered a space at Stepping Stones in Kamas, you will be contacted and receive a formal offer of care.

Families have 24 hours to formally accept their childcare space. If no response is received Stepping Stones will move to the next name on the list.

If your child is offered a space at Stepping Stones, you will be notified by email 2-3 weeks prior to enrollment date. Upon acceptance of the space, Stepping Stones will email parents a Parent Handbook and Enrollment Documents. Welcome Letters include, but are not limited to information about daily schedule, curriculum, and supplies needed. We encourage parents and their children to visit the classroom prior to their start date to familiarize themselves with the teachers and environment as well as ease the transition from home to school.

A one-time deposit of 2 weeks of childcare is due upon the first day the child is in care. This can be used for the last 2 weeks the child is in care or refunded when the child exits the program. The yearly material fee of \$300.00 is non-refundable and due when you enroll.

Children will not be accepted until 2 years and 6 months of age, unless the director has contacted you and your child has interviewed with the staff. Immunizations will need to be up to date and a copy will be required. If you and your doctor choose to follow a delayed immunization schedule, you must submit a written note from your doctor. These items must

be on file with the home facility. In addition, if there is an outbreak of a disease that has a vaccine to combat it, your child must remain out of care until the outbreak is contained and the incubation period is over.

As required by the State of Utah, you will be asked to update your child's paperwork annually. Licensing requires that your child's health form be updated on the American Academy of Pediatrics schedule (2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 18 months, 24 months, 3 years, 4 years, and 5 years). Stepping Stones also requires that you provide copies of any updated immunizations your child receives at the time they are given. If your child does not have a current health form on file, families have 21 days to turn in an updated health form or care will be suspended until the health form is received.

Stepping Stones is currently licensed for children between the ages of 8 weeks and 12 years.

Make-up days

There will be no make-up days.

Snow Days

If the public schools call a snow day we will follow suit. We will confirm with a Remind text and email.

If the public schools call for a delay or cancellation of school because of weather, event or local traffic problem we will take this information into consideration. If we decide to follow suit, we will let you know with a Remind text and email.

Contract

Once you sign your contract you agree to pay for the entire 10 months beginning August 1. Payment options are a. one-time payment, b. quarterly payments (every 3 months), or c. monthly payments. If you do need to withdraw, you are still responsible for the yearly tuition. However, if your spot can be filled your contract will be voided from additional payments. If you do need to withdraw it will be up to the director's discretion if you need to pay in full.

Payment

Tuition payments are due in full on or before the 1st of each month. Payments may be made by check, or Venmo. Tuition is calculated and invoiced either in one lump sum, four quarterly payments, or 10 monthly payments. This does not reflect the number of days of attendance in a given month.

Payment must be received by the 5th of each month. A late fee of \$50.00/ day will be added to your child's invoice starting at 5:01 pm on the fifth. If tuition balances exceed 30 days, your child may not return until the balance is paid in full. Your space will be held for 30 days.

Tuition rates will be reviewed annually. Any tuition rate changes will be announced at least 45 days in advance.

Financial Policy

Stepping Stones will not allow an account balance greater than \$250 to be carried past 30 days. An account is considered delinquent if it is thirty days past the invoice date. If a family's account carries a balance greater than 30 days, the child will be dis-enrolled from the program until their account is in good standing.

Arrival and Departure

Parents are required to sign their child in and out of the program daily. This is the most accurate way for us to ensure that all children are picked up at the end of each day and accounted for in case of an emergency.

Children will only be released to parties who have been listed by the parent/guardian on the registration form. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on SSA property. If a biological parent/guardian is prohibited by the court from picking up a child, a court order is required to be a part of the

child's file. Parents must notify us by writing or a phone call with the phone number of the new person who will be picking up their child. People who are unfamiliar to our staff will be asked for photo identification before the child is released into their care. Drop off is between 8:00am-8:25am. If arriving late becomes a habit, at a maximum of three times within a 6-week period that you drop off late, a late drop off fee will be charged at \$25.00 per 15 minutes beginning at 8:26 am. Please be here on time so we can begin our lessons promptly at 8:30 am.

Children must be picked up from the home no later than 5:00pm Monday-Thursday and 4:00 pm on Friday. A late fee of \$25.00 per 15 minutes per child will be charged beginning at 5:01pm. Any late charges incurred will be added to your invoice the following month. If your child is not picked up by 5:10pm, we will attempt to contact you. If you cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contact noted on your registration form. If the child is not picked up by 5:45pm, Stepping Stones will contact the Summit County Sheriff or Summit County Social Services.

You may not pick up between 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. You are welcome to come at 12:45 pm after lunch or at 3:15 pm so kids can wake up, go potty and make their beds.

Gate: Please be sure to close the gate as you enter and leave the property.

***Cell Phones: We ask all people to please finish their cell phone conversation prior to entering the property. The children are excited to see you and need your full attention. Take a minute to enjoy greeting your child and listening to what they have learned that day.**

What to bring

Toddlers- Ages 2-3 Not potty Trained

Toddler students will need: LABEL EVERYTHING

1. A supply of diapers and wipes
2. A supply of cotton training pants
3. A few changes of clothes; socks, shirts, shorts, pants, and undies.
4. A lunch that is sugar free.
5. Be mindful of reusable or recyclable containers.
6. A water bottle daily
7. Outdoor wear to keep at school when weather changes; snow suit, gloves, hat, boots.

Help your child to dress for success, choosing clothing that they can put on and take off themselves. Slip-on shoes, and clothing without buttons, zippers or buckles work best as they master their independence in dressing. No overalls or onesies, please. Please remember to label everything with your child's name.

In the toddler class children will begin wearing cotton training pants instead of diapers so the child can feel when they are wet and go to the bathroom to change. Toilet learning is a significant part of the toddler curriculum and even the youngest toddlers soon get into the routine of getting to the bathroom for changes, eventually getting there before they are wet or soiled. We recommend keeping a supply of cotton training pants in a drawer or basket in your bathroom at home with a pail where soiled pants can be put so your child can be responsible for practicing using the toilet instead of an adult training them. This will take time and lots of laundry, but we have found that allowing the child to handle this process is much easier than the power struggles that often originate with adult-directed toilet training. Ask your child's teacher for more details on this process.

There are plenty of opportunities to explore water, sand, paint and glue each day so it may be a good idea to keep a fresh change of clothes in the car in case you need a quick change before going to the dentist. Know that if your student gets dirty, they must have been doing something fascinating!

Early Childhood Classes – students 3 to 6 years old

Early Childhood (EC) students will need: LABEL EVERYTHING

1. A water bottle daily
2. A couple changes of clothes, socks, shirts, shorts, pants, and undies.
3. Outdoor wear to keep at school when weather changes; snow suit, gloves, hat, boots.
4. Sugar free lunch
5. Be mindful of reusable or recyclable containers.

Please help your child to dress for success, choosing clothing that they can put on and take off independently. Early childhood students are expected to be reliably independent in the bathroom, able to follow simple directions, observe boundaries, eat independently while staying seated and treat others with respect.

There are plenty of opportunities to explore water, sand, paint and glue each day so it may be a good idea to keep a fresh change of clothes in the car in case you need a quick change before going to the dentist. Know that if your student gets dirty, they must have been doing something fascinating!

Parent Conduct

Stepping Stones requires the parents and others picking up or dropping off children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of SSA is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of SSA but, it is the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the SSA property. All adults are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. This includes refraining from swearing, threatening, physical/verbal punishment of a child, smoking and confrontational interactions.

Discipline

The staff of Stepping Stones will treat every child with dignity, respect and encourage children to learn mutual respect for individual differences. We believe that young children need our support and guidance to develop the skills needed to make good choices and understand the consequences of their decisions. Our staff will create an environment that supports self-discipline and that encourages positive social behaviors through modeling. Punishment will not be used as a method of discipline. Your young child is in the beginning developmental stage of learning and acquiring appropriate social behaviors. Instances of inappropriate social behavior are developmentally appropriate as your child learns the difference between behaviors that are acceptable and those that are not.

These behaviors will be immediately addressed by our staff with the individual child/children involved, and appropriate alternative behavior will be modeled. Stepping Stones discipline policy directs staff as follows:

- Redirect children to an acceptable activity by suggesting appropriate alternatives.
- Talk on the child's level.

- Speak softly and slowly.
- Be positive and patient, but firm.
- Guide children to resolve their own problems.
- Reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Remind children of the school rules and the consequences
- Encourage children to think about the impact their behavior has on people, objects, and events Physical punishment or verbal slights are not tolerated.

In some cases, children may exhibit a more extreme behavioral issue. In these instances, the staff of Stepping Stones will work with the child and family involved on an individual and confidential basis to develop a Behavior Action Plan. We have many resources available to us, and we may request that the family seek professional advice.

Developmental Support

If a child in our care needs additional support (mental health, health, developmental, or educational), Stepping Stones will provide contact information for additional resource agencies. A Parent Resource Guide that includes information about health care providers, insurance, and development assistance is in the Parent Resource Library. Staff and families will work collaboratively with outside resources to implement support strategies for both home and school. In the event a child needs a referral for further testing or intervention Stepping Stones will:

- Observe a child's behavior.
- Contact parents to discuss concerns.
- Obtain parent consent to have child observed by outside resources.
- Support parents and teachers to complete assessments such as the DECA or ASQ ☐ Schedule meetings with parents, administration, and teachers to discuss results.
- Participate in the development of an action plan if needed.

We expect the family to cooperate with us in our efforts to alleviate the problem behavior. If we feel that we have exhausted our resources and have seen no marked improvement in the behavior, it may be that we are unable to meet the needs of that particular child and a new environment may be best for them and the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the center.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency regarding your child you, and/or the person designated by you as the emergency contact, will be notified promptly. At the discretion of the staff, any immediate emergency medical care and/or transport to Intermountain Health Care will be arranged. If you are unable to be contacted, a licensed physician, dentist, or medical provider will provide the necessary care for your child. In the case of a medical emergency, parents are monetarily responsible for all medical care and transportation involved.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of the staff and children enrolled in Stepping Stones are a major concern. Please review the Stepping Stones Wellness Policy for more information. Your child may NOT attend the center if he/she has displayed any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours:

- Temperature taken of 100.4 degrees or higher.
- Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Unexplained, frequent (2 or more times) diarrhea
- Flu like symptoms.
- Severe colds with heavy coughing, sneezing, and/or constant nasal discharge accompanied by another symptom.
- Discharge from the eyes or pink eye may not return until they have taken antibiotics for 48 hours for pink eye/ conjunctivitis.
- Croupy (bark like) cough

- Any other health reason, in which the Center Director deems your child not well enough for group care.
- A child with a streptococcal infection may not return until he/she has been taking antibiotics for 72 hours and is feeling better.
- If you choose not to take an antibiotic that is offered for a contagious infection, your child may not return for 2 weeks from diagnosis.

If a child becomes sick at school parents will be contacted and are required to pick up their child within 45 minutes of notification. From the first sign or symptom of any illness your child will be required to be out 3-4 days to prevent the spread. They may return when fever free or symptom free for 24 hours. Doctor's notes may be required for return to care in the event of an outbreak.

Please respect the staff and other children of Stepping Stones by keeping your child home if he/she displays any of the above symptoms.

Summit County Health Department will be notified of communicable illnesses. Stepping Stones will notify Public Health of any outbreaks. 435-333-1500.

Keep Your Child Home If...

- ...the child has a fever of 100 degrees or more.
- ...there is persistent coughing.
- ...there is persistent runny nose.
- ...nasal effluent is thick and discolored.
- ...there is a rash.
- ...there is a sore throat.
- ...there is reddening of the eyes, discharge, or crustiness.
- ...they have vomited in the last 24 hours.
- ...they have had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- ...they are tired or just not themselves.

We will call you to pick up your child if any of these symptoms develop during school.

Students may return to school after 24 hours with no symptoms without medication.

Medication

Medications will only be administered with written authorization from the child's doctor and with the medication release form filled out by the parent/guardian. All prescription medication must be in the original container with the original label. Prescription medication must include a label with the child's name, dose of medication, frequency, and expiration date. If necessary, ask your pharmacist for a duplicate container to send medication to school.

Parents are responsible for providing all medications and supplies to the childcare program. Children may not transport medications to and from childcare; this includes medication left in diaper bags or backpacks. Medication that is needed during the day must be left with the program director so that it may be stored according to regulations during the day.

The first dose of medication should be given at home to allow parents time to observe if the child has any type of reaction.

Emergency medications (e.g., epi pen and inhaler) must include a written health care plan signed by the child's doctor. Emergency medications are stored in your child's classroom, out of reach.

Fire/Evacuation Procedures

The procedures for evacuation in case of fire shall be posted in all areas of each site. Alternate routes are practiced at regularly scheduled fire drills four times a year or when new staff is hired. All children will be moved as quickly and efficiently as possible to the designated exit areas and wait for directions from the fire department.

Stepping Stones staff and students will also regularly practice a variety of emergency circumstances: fire drill, building evacuation, lock down and lock out, and active shooter.

If students are forced to evacuate our facility, parents will be notified via phone then email. In these emergency situations, we expect full cooperation from parents in a prompt pickup.

If South Summit School District is closed, SSA will follow South Summit and Summit County Government guidelines for closure.

Inclement/Excessively Hot Weather

In the event of extremely cold (below 15 degrees), high winds, or rain, your child will be kept indoors and away from the elements. Outdoor play, when the weather permits, will be an important part of your child's day at SSA. They will also engage in activities such as art, sand, and water play. Consider these things when your child is preparing for school dress. Please do not send designer clothing, expensive jewelry, or toys. We expect the children to play without worrying. Toys will be provided and if they bring a toy in, it will be left in their cubby until the end of the day.

Visitor Policy

Stepping Stones practices an open-door policy for enrolled families and encourages our parents to make visits by appointment to the facility. We encourage you to speak with our staff frequently about your child. Ask questions about what you can expect from the childcare experience. Please email the director or your child's teacher directly to ask any questions you have.

Transportation

Safety is our primary concern when transporting children. Our van has scheduled maintenance and inspections. All children must be in a car seat, booster or seat belt and remain orderly when riding in the van. There will be no eating in the van and only water in a water bottle.

Field Trips

At the time of registration, you will be asked to give your child permission to attend field trips either within walking distance or with the SSA vehicles. Parents will be notified in advance of all field trips. Failure to abide by rules will be the cause for excluding a child from field trips. All children are required to wear closed toe shoes on all field trips. If a class field trip is scheduled, and you wish for your child not to participate, you may be asked to make other care arrangements for your child for that day. When on field trips, we follow the same teacher/student ratio as in class. Field trip costs will be an additional fee and added to the following months tuition invoice.

While on a field trip, staff will have contact information for the children in their care. A list of all the children and staff on the field trip will be kept at the center.

Television Viewing

Videos are not part of the regular curriculum at our school. Videos may be viewed when they are written into a lesson plan, or weather prevents us from being outside and is used educationally. Director staff must approve the appropriateness of the material content to be viewed by the students.

Stepping Stones will restrict the use of screen time during meals and snack time. Children under one ½ years will also not be permitted to view television or tablets during school hours.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Children in diapers will be changed in regular intervals throughout the day, and as necessary between scheduled changing times. An adequate supply of diapers and wipes must be provided to the school. If families do not provide a supply of diapers and wipes, we will charge families \$1/diaper and \$5/travel container of wipes. SSA will not accept cloth diapers.

Toilet training is part of being a toddler. Stepping Stones is happy to partner with families in this developmental milestone. Please talk with us frequently about your child's progress and success in this area so that we may assist you and your child in reaching this important developmental milestone. It is especially important that during this time you have multiple changes of clothing for your child.

Stepping Stones staff will help children get into the habit of hand washing after diapering and toilet use.

Items from Home

Stepping Stones discourages toys from home including money. Stepping Stones will provide an adequate supply of play materials and activities for your children during the day.

When teachers request a "Show and Tell" let your child bring a toy for that day only, and please label it. If your child brings an item from home, he/she will be required to place the item in their cubby until nap time or the end of the day.

Stepping Stones will not allow food into the school at drop off. They must finish their meal in the car or leave it in the car.

What Not to Bring

- Candy, gum, or soda pop
- Nuts
- Toys
- Costumes
- Clothes featuring violence, drugs, or profanity.
- Stickers
- Make-up
- Money

Establishing Routines

We allow a traditional six weeks for children to "normalize" or settle in to the school routine. It usually does not take that long, and our faculty is expert at handling those rough goodbyes. For young children practice a drop-off routine such as hug-kiss-snuggles. Pretend you are going to school, and your child is going to work or vice versa, in a variety of ways but always using the same good-bye ritual. Then when the time comes to say good bye at school do it just that

way, warmly lovingly and then go. If you hesitate, your child will see your anxiety. Yes, your child may cry at first and you may, too, but know that we will contact you if we have any concerns.

Older children are very aware of arriving or departing too early or too late. We allow 25-minute windows for drop-off Monday- Friday and a 15-minute window Monday-Thursday for pick-up. Give us a call at 435-602-0991 if you will be late so teachers and children can prepare.

Dress for Success

- There will be plenty of opportunities to get messy at school. There are gardens, food prep, cooking opportunities, painting, glue, and sand to explore. We recommend keeping an extra set of clothes in the car in case you need a neater child for dentist visits and such.
- We encourage children to dress themselves as soon as they can sit up and grasp a sock. We give them plenty of time and encouragement to figure out the range of challenges in buttons, zippers, snaps, clasps, buckles, and straps. When your student is in the toddler class there will be lots of changes throughout the day. In early childhood classes there will still be spills, wet work and soggy days on the playground that will also require a change of clothes kept in the cubby.
- We recommend clothing that is comfortable and that your child can manage easily without help. Look for school clothing that allows your child's personality to show.
- Please no violent or gory images or phrases.
- During winter we require a set of snow gear to be kept at SSA. Snowsuit, gloves, hat, boots. Please label all parts with your child's name.
- Remember that children generally cannot tie shoes until they are 5 years old, so please choose slip-ons, Velcro or buckle versions until then.
- Indoors children may wear slippers, socks or go barefoot. Outdoor shoes stay upstairs.
- When your child arrives at school in a mismatched outfit, we know that you have done the right thing in allowing them to dress themselves.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting; we will go outside at least once per day. It is extremely important that you provide your child with proper clothing for outdoor play (sunhat, jacket, appropriate shoes, snow clothes, etc.). Please apply sunscreen every day prior to school on days when we begin outside. Stepping Stones will apply sunscreen prior to going outside in the morning and reapply after a nap.

Rest Time

Toddlers and preschoolers have a scheduled nap time after lunch. All children at SSA will rest after lunch. Freshly sanitized cots are provided for each child. SSA provides a sheet and a weighted blanket for extra comfort. All children will lay down for a rest. If your child has outgrown naps, they will have either computer work or other materials to practice with while the others rest.

Children need lots of sleep:

Infants (birth to 1 year) – 12 – 16 hours/day

Toddlers (1 to 3 years) – 11-14 hours

Early childhood (3 to 6yrs) – 10 -13 hours

Elementary (6 to 9 years) – 9 – 12 hours

Middle school (9 to 12 years) – 9-10 hours

High school (12 to 18 years) – 8 – 10 hours

Birthdays

A child's birthday is the most special day of their year. We like to celebrate it in a special way. Speak to your child's teacher about an appropriate day and time to celebrate. If your child's birthday falls outside the school year, speak to the teacher about an "un-birthday" celebration.

A snack for each member of the class is welcome and a picture for each year of your child's life. The student is welcome to create their own binder with a removable page for each year of their life. The teacher can then remove the photos and place them along a timeline as the class tells the story of the student's life. There are special songs to sing as the student carries the globe around the candle representing the sun once for each year of life. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Your child's birthday is a special time for them. If you wish to celebrate at school, please discuss your plans with your child's teacher so that you are aware of any special concerns (i.e., allergies, healthy snacks).

For parties outside of school, no invitations may be distributed via the children's cubbies/mailboxes unless all children are invited. Addresses and phone numbers are part of the confidential information in a child's file and will not be given out by the school. Please ask for the class email list if you wish to distribute invitations or announcements.

Snack/Lunch

Children should pack a morning and afternoon snack, lunch, and a water bottle. Label everything. Morning snacks will be dropped off in a bin outside with the sign in sheet. Please provide back up snacks for their cubby if they are still hungry after lunch and afternoon snack. If you are noticing that your child is going through back up snacks, I encourage you to pack more food in their morning snack and more in their lunch boxes.

Lunch Guidelines

We encourage healthy food choices that are whole food, plant-based, organic whenever possible and colorful. Our Food Rainbow curriculum teaches students to choose foods that come from the Earth, not from factories, and that make a rainbow on their plate. We encourage mindful use of reusable and recyclable containers.

We recommend stocking a low shelf in the pantry and one in the refrigerator with appropriate lunch items such as cheese, yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, fruit, juice, cold cuts, sandwich makings and individually packaged leftovers such as pasta and pizza so that your child can pack their own lunch each day "Lunchables", "Go-gurts" and other processed foods are easy to pack, but the packaging is not child- or Earth-friendly, the nutrition is negligible. Try providing the fixings so your child can make her own "munchable," an American version of the Japanese bento box approach to healthy portable meals: a small "Gladware"-type container with an assortment of sliced meats, cheeses, fruits, crackers, vegetables, and dips. They can arrange the foods into faces or designs – simple, beautiful, and nutritious!

What Not to Bring

- Candy, gum, or soda pop
- Toys
- Clothes featuring violence, drugs, or profanity.
- Stickers
- Make-up
- Money

Parent-Teacher Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to your child's success. Stepping Stones values the child's home language. If an interpreter is required to communicate Stepping Stones will help seek out resources for this situation. Please speak with your child's teacher daily so that you are both aware of the events in your child's life.

Conferences will be offered twice a year, in spring (March- April) and fall (October-November). However, conferences may be set up on an individual basis to discuss a child's progress or behavior. Newsletters will be sent home via email monthly to keep you apprised of events in your child's classroom as well as the school. Transparent Classroom calendar will have scheduled days closed, snack, themes, activities, and celebrations.

Ensuring Where Children Are at All Times

Staff will take a head count every time they transition to a new activity or place to ensure that all children have remained with the group. Staff members will do a head count every 30 minutes when the children are on the school premises to be sure they are all accounted for. If a classroom is off site (out of the building or outside the perimeter of our fence), our staff will conduct a head count every 15 minutes to ensure that all children have remained with the group.

At the end of the day, staff will ensure that all children have been picked up from the center by referring to the sign-in/sign-out sheet.

Lost Child

In the event a child becomes lost, all available staff will search the premises immediately. If the child is not located after a thorough search of the building and grounds, a call to 911 will be made and a report of the lost child will be given to the police. Please keep your emergency cards updated!

Caring for A Child Who Arrives Late to the Center

UNDER STATE LAW, it is the responsibility of the parent or individual transporting the child to sign the child in/out of the program. If the child's teachers are not in the building (i.e., field trip), a sign will be posted on the classroom door stating the time of departure, destination, and approximate time of return. The parent or individual transporting the child may choose to meet us at our destination, wait for our return, or continue to care for their child for the remainder of the day. Stepping Stones must be notified of the child's absence for the day or will be arriving late.

Media/ Photography

Stepping Stones will photograph children to document special events as well as regular daily activities. The photographs may be displayed within the school, used on the Stepping Stones website, used in your child's journal, printed in the local newspaper, and/or displayed on the Stepping Stones social media pages.

Parents will need to sign a media waiver allowing Stepping Stones to take photos of their children.

Child Abuse

All early childhood professionals are legally required to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect to the State or County Department of Social Services immediately.

Termination of Child Care Services/Withdraw

Stepping Stones reserves the right to terminate childcare services for past due accounts, non-compliance with school policies, and/or unacceptable behavior by children or parents. If any of these situations occur, a conference with the director and related staff will be scheduled to discuss resolutions. However, if the problem is not resolved at an agreed upon time, the child will be dismissed.

If you are withdrawing your child from Stepping Stones, we request a minimum of 30 days' notice in writing. You may use your deposit as your final 2 weeks, or you will receive a reimbursement of your deposit after the 2 weeks are up.

Grievances

Families who have concerns regarding a teacher or other staff member should go directly to that person to discuss the issue. If the problem remains unresolved, families should then go to the director to discuss the issue.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect please speak with the center Director or you may contact: Child Protective Services at 801-538-4100.

Montessori at Home

Students experience their greatest success when we create a continuum between school and home. From the moment your student walks into your home they should be able to find most of what they need to be comfortable such as:

...hooks they can reach for hanging jackets, snow gear and backpacks.

...a bench their size for taking off and putting on shoes.

...a table and chair in the kitchen they can use easily for preparing a snack.

...a cupboard in the kitchen with place settings, simple cooking tools and healthy snack foods all within their reach.

...a stool at the sink, if needed, and the tools for clearing and washing dishes.

...clearly marked containers for recycling, trash, and compost.

...a child-sized broom and dustpan for cleaning up after snack.

...a shelf in the living room with books and games that are easy to reach.

...a shelf in the family room with drawing and crafting supplies.

...a shelf in the bedroom with books and a few toys. Sort Legos, blocks, and small toys into baskets so your child does not need to dump the whole basket to find what they need.

...clothes rods in the closet within the child's reach with a few choices of appropriate clothing

...drawers with choices in underwear, socks, pajamas

...a laundry basket the child can carry to and from the laundry room.

Talk to any teacher about how to "Montessori-ize" your home. And check the following for child-sized furniture and tools:

MontessoriServices.com

Sprout-kids.com

References

Montessori is more than an educational method, it is a practice that brings mindfulness and order to the lives of students, families, and faculty. For more information, look at the following:

* I have read it. Some of them I own if you want to borrow.

Tim Seldin was one of my professors for my Montessori education course through CGMS and we also worked with Paul Epstein in a few subjects.

Infants and Toddlers (birth – 3 years)

The Montessori Baby – Davies & Uzodike

*The Montessori Toddler – Davies

*Montessori From the Start – Lillard & Jessen

Let Me Do It Myself – Trierweiler

The Joyful Child – Stephenson

Diaper-Free Before Three – Lekovic

Early Childhood (3 – 6 years)

Montessori for Every Family – Seldin & McGrath

*The Montessori Way – Seldin & Epstein

Montessori Madness – Eissler

*The Absorbent Mind – Montessori

*The Secret of Childhood- Montessori

*The Montessori Method – Montessori

*Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook – Montessori

*Education for a New World – Montessori