

*Coastal Empire
Montessori Charter
School
Student/Parent
Handbook*



COASTAL EMPIRE Montessori
EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD FOR THE WORLD

2009-2010

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CEMCO shall not discriminate against students on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, and marital status or for special educational services.

Message From the Head of School:

Welcome to the Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School family! I am so excited to welcome you to CEMCO and I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you! My door is always open and I will always do my best to make myself available to address concerns, ideas and thoughts you might like to share. The staff and I are very dedicated to providing your child(ren) the highest level of Montessori education. We as a school community are partners in your child's/children's educational path and I will often look to you, the family, as the initial support system and educator of your child(ren). We are your support and your supplement. And as you look to us for advice and guidance we will do our best to attend to your number one job...being a parent!

It is very important that you read and understand this Handbook. This is your Parent/Family Contract. There is a signature page at the end of this Handbook that you are required to sign and return to me within the first 7 days of the first day of school: September 9th, 2009. Upon signing this form you are agreeing to the rules, regulations and guideline we have created in our Charter agreement and as a school. In order for your child to remain registered at CEMCO you must return the Student/Parent Handbook signature page within the allotted time.

Our Mission:

Provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere in which certified Montessori trained teachers provide an exceptional education for young children that adheres to the principles and standards of the Montessori Methods of childhood education. CEMCO also strives to awaken and support children in reaching their full potential in all areas of life by teaching them to take responsibility for their learning.

Our Philosophy:

Everyday activities promote the development of social skills, emotional growth, and physical coordination as well as cognitive preparation for future intellectual academic endeavors. The holistic curriculum, under the direction of a specially trained teacher using the Montessori method, allows the child to experience the joy of learning, the time to enjoy the process, and ensures the development of self-esteem. It provides the experiences from which children create their knowledge.

The Montessori method of education that will be used at the Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School has long been established as an approach that successfully meets children's individual needs while simultaneously accomplishing the goal of educating children to become contributing citizens to our society. The highly structured teaching methodology is designed to provide an activity-based curriculum using an individualized approach supplemented with experiential components such as discovery-based activities. The program initiator, Dr. Maria Montessori, was a woman physician (the first in Italy) who worked with and developed a method whereby mentally deficient children could learn and even pass national education exams. The amazing success of these children, who could read, write, and carry out mathematical functions at ages 4 and 5, has been celebrated worldwide.

School Information

School Hours: Daily Schedule- 8:30AM-4PM

Car Drop-Off: 8:30-8:45 Car Pick-up: 3:30-3:45

Bus Drop-Off: 8:45-9:00 Bus Pick-up: 3:30-3:45

Pryme Tyme- 7AM to 6PM;

School Phone: 912.238.1973

Fax- 912.238.1974

Pryme Tyme Phone:912.238.1973

Website- [www.CEMCO](http://www.CEMCO.org) .org

Enrollment Procedures

CEMCO shall be open to students residing in the Savannah-Chatham School District. CEMCO shall not enroll any student who is under a current term of suspension or expulsion.

Applications will be available for potential families during Open Houses held throughout the school year. During the Open Houses the rigors and responsibilities of the program will be shared with applicants. Open Houses will be advertised in the local newspaper and on the school's website. All applicants will be selected during a public lottery held at the school. Notification letters will be mailed out to all applicants. Once accepted to CEMCO, families will not need to reapply for subsequent years and will be deemed to be admitted **if the family is in compliance with the family contract. Siblings will be admitted without having to go through the lottery process if the family is in compliance with the family contract.**

Enrollment Procedures:

- A. The Charter school will be subject to compliance with the entry, health examinations, and immunization requirements of state rules and regulations.
- B. The parent(s) or guardian(s) must complete and sign an application form which must include, but not be limited to, the following:
 1. The student's name, social security number, date of birth, place of birth, race, local and mailing address, telephone number, verification of birth, last school attended, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) information, health screening requests, hearing, vision and fluoride;
 2. The parent's or guardian's name(s), local and mailing address, and telephone number;
 3. Documentation of eligibility criteria as outlined in the Charter.
- C. CEMCO shall maintain all applications for enrollment.
- D. CEMCO may enroll students who meet the eligibility criteria under this Charter by accepting a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In such case, all applicants shall have an equal chance of being admitted through a random selection process.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency we will call 911, emergency services and transport your child to the nearest medical facility. You will be contacted in the event of an emergency and be given information regarding your child, his/her illness, situation etc.

CEMCO works with the SCCPSS to ensure a safe and effective Emergency protocol and procedure. You will receive an emergency action plan for CEMCO and required to read and sign a statement that you have both read and understand its contents.

Safety and Security

Coastal Empire Montessori School is a Drug Free Environment

When you visit school (any time during the day) you must check in at the office and wear a nametag. This includes volunteering in your child's room, going on a field trip, observing, attending PO meetings etc. Any individual on campus not wearing an identification tag or badge will be escorted to the office to sign in.

An emergency action plan has been developed for CEMCO by the SCCPSS Security Office. We will be conducting fire drills and emergency evacuation drills throughout the school year. The school's emergency plan will be posted and available for your review in the main office.

Parent Involvement

Parent/Teacher Communication

Teachers will respond to parent inquiries/concerns within 24 hours via note, email, phone, or in person. All teachers are available for scheduled meetings before or after school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

There are a total of 7 scheduled conferences that will be held throughout the year. 4 of these will be telephone conferences. The other 3 conferences will be held at the school. These conferences are required. For a schedule of conferences please refer to the school calendar.

Parent Education Classes

We will be holding a total of 8 Parent education Meetings throughout the year. Parents are required to attend a total of 5 of these information sessions. We will be discussing specific information about child development, Montessori principles, and philosophy and education methods. We will be bringing you all together as a group as well as having you work with your child's teacher in their specific environment. For a schedule of education meetings please refer to the school calendar. The planned topics will be posted in advance.

Parent Observations

At least one parent from each family is required to observe their child's classroom environment at least one time during the scheduled school year. These observations shall be scheduled with your child's teacher and should last no less than one hour. Expectations of the observation will be communicated to you prior to your scheduled visit. An observation is the best way to understand what your child does during the day and is such a source of pride for the children.

Volunteering Opportunities

All families of CEMCO students are required to provide volunteer service to the school, 30 hours for a single-parent families and 60 hours for two-parent families. Parents are responsible for recording hours in the Volunteer Notebook located in the main office. Below is a list of potential volunteer opportunities offered through the school and or your child's classroom:

Field trips
Parent Education Meetings
Cleaning Materials
Reading
Gardening
Art Projects
Helping out during teacher workdays
Scheduled Parent/Teacher conferences (in person and over the phone)
Classroom Observation
Fundraising

Keeping track of volunteer hours is the responsibility of the parent. Volunteer updates are distributed quarterly and any discrepancies in hours should be reported to the office assistant. To receive re-enrollment packages in the spring, families must have fulfilled 90 percent of their volunteer requirement.

All scheduled parent/teacher conferences (both in person and telephone) are a required part of the CEMCO family contract. Please refer to the school calendar for reference. Your child's teacher will be scheduling these meetings with you throughout the school year.

At least one Classroom Observation is required of the family.

In the event a parent or guardian faces a period of hardship during which volunteer hours would place an undue hardship on the family, the parent or guardian can request exemption from the volunteer requirements for an agreed-upon period of time.

Families who have not met conditions of the family contract will be notified by April 1. They will be given an opportunity to meet the terms of the family contract by May 1. If the student's family has not met the terms of the family contract by that date, the student is not eligible for re-enrollment.

In the event that a family is experiencing difficulty in completing the volunteer requirements, a hardship letter explaining the situation may be sent to the Head of School for consideration. Waivers will not be granted to families who have not participated in the required conferences.

Supplies and Belongings

It is the philosophy of CEMCO, as a Montessori school, that absolutely **no** toys are permitted on campus. Any items not school related are to be kept at home. Personal belongings, change of clothes, lunch boxes etc. are to be clearly labeled in permanent ink with the child's full name. This will ensure your child's personal belongings are not misplaced, or accidentally used by another child.

******Lunchboxes and shoes are to be FREE of cartoon characters. Please provide your child with solid/printed colors or realistic animal figures. Cartoon characters and action figures will be distracting to your child and detract from the essence and purpose of their Montessori educational experience.******

Your child will NOT need a backpack.

Dress Code

Your child is required to attend school wearing a school uniform. The bottoms may be anything khaki in color: skorts, pants, shorts, capris or skirts. Your child may choose from three tops all of which need to be collared: white, navy blue or gray. Please expect your child to come home with paint, dirt, sand and food on his/her clothes. We assure you this is a normal occurrence and we encourage exploration in and outside our classroom environments.

Closed-toed shoes are required. Crocs are not considered safe for school or playground play. Tennis shoes are the absolute best shoes to encourage movement and independence. ***Your child may not wear tennis shoes that display cartoon characters, action figures or lights. This would be distracting to your child and detract from the essence and purpose of their Montessori educational experience.***

Nutrition Guidelines

Snacks

Each classroom will have a snack schedule in place. The families are responsible for supplying their classrooms with healthy, nutritious snacks. Some examples of healthy and nutritious snacks are fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, cheese etc.

Lunches

Lunches will initially be provided by the SCCPSS. Families may choose to participate in the county's school lunch program or may chose to provide their children with lunch from home. CEMCO encourages the use of recycled containers whenever possible. For example, thermos for water or milk, wax paper bags as opposed to plastic bags etc. We will be composting foods that are not consumed or cannot be saved for future use.

It is our philosophy to teach your child how to establish healthy eating habits and to learn to be respectful of their own bodies both inside and out. We as teachers do this not only by teaching about health and nutrition in the classroom, but also by consistently modeling these healthy eating habits ourselves. As a Montessori parent please keep this in mind when packing your child's lunch.

Feed your child what you would eat yourself. A balanced meal includes proper portions of protein, natural sugars and carbohydrates. Below is a list of foods that are acceptable and unacceptable school lunches. Foods sent to school in your child's lunch that are considered

unacceptable will be sent home with your child uneaten. Healthy eating habits start early and your support is crucial to the nutritional education of your child.

Acceptable Foods (Organic/Natural Whenever Possible)

Crackers
Peanut Butter Crackers
Goldfish (plain in color)
Deli Sliced Meats
Tuna
Raw vegetables
Whole fruit
Pasta
PLAIN Milk
Nuts
Pretzels
Sandwiches with whole Wheat Bread
Raisins
Air Popped Popcorn
Granola Bars (No Chocolate)
Natural Cheese (Not Processed)
Apple Sauce (No sugar added)
Yogurt Eaten With a Spoon

Unacceptable foods

Chocolate
Candy
Pudding
Carbonated Beverages
Juice of ANY kind
Chips (cheese, potato, corn)
Processed Meats(includes lunchables)
Cookies
NO fast food

Please avoid foods containing hydrogenated oils/trans fats and foods with any unnatural food coloring.

Parties/Birthdays

CEMCO has a special celebration for birthdays. “Walk around the sun” is a Montessori tradition that we feel in very meaningful and purposeful. Starting in the primary classroom, your child will be a special part of this tradition throughout his/her Montessori education. You will coordinate this celebration with your child’s teacher when the time is appropriate to do so. You are welcome to bring in a special snack for your child’s birthday to share with the class. We ask that the snack be healthy- fruit, vegetables, crackers etc.

Another part of this wonderful celebration we would like to start is to have the birthday child present a book to his/her classroom during the celebration. This is such a special occasion and it gives your child a chance to honor him/herself in front of his/her peers giving something to his/her classroom family.

Arrival/Dismissal/Parking

Bus drop off is from 8:45 -9AM; Pick Up is from 3:30-3:45PM

Car drop off is from 8:30- 8:45AM; Pick Up is from 3:45-4PM

Car Drop Off Directions:

Please pull your car up to the sidewalk entrance of the school. Teachers will be there to greet you and your child as you pull up to the school gate. ***Please do not park your car or turn off your car. Other cars will be in front of and behind you and this will slow the arrival and dismissal process.*** A teacher will open the back passenger side door and help your child out of his/her car while you sign your child into school with the clipboard provided. Once your child has gotten out of the car, a teacher will escort him/her to the your child's classroom.

If you arrive to school late you must sign your child in at the Office. The office manager will escort your child to his/her classroom. ***Tardiness occurring more than three times a semester will result in a full day's absence for your child.*** We are all working very hard to instill consistency, as well as, respect for your child's self and others in the environment. Arriving to school on time is extremely important to help foster this philosophy. Please keep this in mind when you are preparing your morning schedule.

Car Pick Up Directions:

Please follow the same procedures as explained in Drop Off Procedures. Once the teachers see your car your child will be called to the carpool line and helped into the car. Please wait in carpool line until you reach the entrance of the school buildings where teachers will be waiting with your child.

It is extremely important that we *all* follow these procedures. We want to ensure your child's success, confidence, happiness and ability. The more supportive you are of them and their ability, the more successful they will be!

We are to release your child to those individuals listed on the enrollment form. If you know someone other than those listed on the enrollment form (i.e. visiting grandparents or relative), we must have this request in writing with your signature. We will ask this person for a picture ID. If you have arranged someone else to pick your child up that ***is*** listed on the enrollment form you must contact us with this information before 2PM so as to relay the message to the child's teacher. We will ask this adult for a picture ID.

Field Trips and "Going Out"

Depending on your child's class, Field Trips and Going Out will be scheduled according to each class's needs and developmental abilities.

A child is not permitted to leave school property with any person other than his/her parent/guardian or person listed on the pick-up authorization form unless written and signed permission has been given for the teacher to do so for a field trip or Going Out. This permission form will be given to the parent well in advance of the off campus trip. Your

child's teacher will communicate with you his/her needs for volunteers depending on the classroom size and class readiness and ability.

Health and Wellness Policies

Please use your best judgment when deciding whether or not your child is in good enough health to attend school. Green or yellow runny noses and fever are good indications your child is not well enough to be in school. We will call you to pick up your child if these symptoms are observed at school. Any child with fever, whether medicated or not, will not be allowed in school until he or she has been fever free for 24 hours. Please be courteous and respectful to your child's peers and teachers.

Prescribed or non-prescribed medication may be administered by the faculty when you have given us permission to do so. The Authorization to give Prescription/Non Prescription medication Form must be filled out and signed by the parent in order for us to administer medications as school. This includes sunscreen and insect repellent. If you wish for us to administer any such medications on a regular basis you must bring them to your child's teacher in the original medication container and in a Ziploc Bag, clearly labeled with your child's full name written both on the medication and on the bag.

Attendance Policies

Your child is expected to attend school on a regular basis unless he/she is ill. If your child is absent from school, you must call the office and let us know that he/she will not be in. These absences should be approved and excused by the Head of school (i.e. doctor's excuse, planned vacations etc.). All children are on a schedule of five days per week and any exceptions must be approved by the Head of School.

If your child has reoccurring unexcused absences, more than 5 in a semester or 10 throughout the school year, he/she will be considered truant and be recommended for dismissal from the Coastal Empire Montessori School. CEMCO is very committed to providing the highest level of education to your child and we expect your support in this effort. We are very consistent in our approach to every child's education and development and look to families to provide the same level of consistency and commitment.

Discipline Policy

The Montessori program nurtures self-discipline, which develops over a period of many years. The basis of discipline is respect: respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment. The adults and children in the prepared environment set limits for behavior based on the group's need for a safe and mutually respectful community.

If a student is having difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age-appropriate. Personal attention, distraction, substitution and or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many instances resolve themselves as the student, within the bounds of safety and common sense, experiences the logical consequences of his/her actions (for example, wiping up after throwing a paint can on the floor).

If a student disregards the rules of the classroom environment, the teacher seeks the underlying causes in order to help the student understand the inappropriateness of his/her actions and to find a constructive alternative. If such behavior occurs repeatedly, the teacher may request the support of the Head of School or another teacher to observe and offer consultation before the parents are contacted for their support and cooperation.

To help support the child through behavioral situations, we give the child choices. By giving choices, negotiating disputes and using *Positive Language*, we invite cooperation rather than demand it. There are often times when a child needs to “pull back or start over”. It is a *positive* interruption of an unwanted behavior of an overexcited child. We strive to teach the child that the world doesn't end when he/she has stepped beyond the set limits or angered someone. Shaming a child does not help to develop a positive, healthy self. By being held accountable for their behaviors and communicating the why and how, the child will develop lifelong skills.

The following are examples of some general guidelines of the *positive* approach to discipline Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School follow. We encourage and fully support this philosophy in both the school and home environments.

- Allow freedom with order

- Limit choices and allow the child to choose within these limits

- Hold the student to the standard- he/she will rise to expectations

- Think satisfaction and motivation vs. gratification and manipulation

- We motivate internally and not through external rewards

- To maintain strong, effective discipline, seek consistency and clarity

- Catch children “doing something right”

- Engage and interest the child

- Involve and stimulate the child

- Redirect the child from destructive and negative behavior

- Let natural consequences flow from inappropriate behavior

- Be respectful- through your treatment, demeanor and language you use with children

It is the policy of Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School to never physically discipline and it is in all cases inappropriate to physically discipline a child on school campus.

Communication Channels/Parent Grievances Procedures

Any parent with a school concern is required to discuss the matter directly with the individual(s) involved as soon as possible. If a discussion does not resolve the matter or if a discussion appears to be impractical, the following procedures should be implemented:

Step One: Meeting with teacher

If concern is not resolved:

Step Two: Meeting with teacher and Head of School

If concern is not resolved:

Step Three: (optional as recommended by Head of School): Meeting of Consultation group composed of teacher, parent, Head of School, other faculty and/or member of Board of Directors. Head of School informs parent in writing of final determination regarding the parent concern.

Student Records

All children are required to have the following forms in their CEMCO files *before* the first day of school:

- **Birth Certificate (certified Copy)**
- **Georgia Certificate of Immunization-Form 3231**
- **Georgia Ear, Eye, and Dental Certificate (EED)**
- **Proof of Address- one of the following listed below:**

current mortgage statement

current lease or rental agreement (month to month)

current gas, electric, or water bill

current governmental agency mail (county, state, or federal)

Parents have a legal right to see any information that is forwarded to other schools unless they have waived their access to these materials.

Student records usually consist of, but are not limited to, attendance records, health and emergency information, assessments, developmental and academic progress reports, accident reports and parental authorization for various school activities.

Confidentially of Student Records and Parental Rights:

CEMCO stresses the importance of protecting the rights and privacy of children, their families, and our teachers. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our school. The practice is in accord with one of the primary ethical principles of professional behavior in any educational setting. For this reason, no parent volunteer is ever permitted any access to any records pertaining to a child or children other than the child or children of that volunteer.

Legal guardians have the right to inspect and review any and all records, files and data directly related to their children. Parents/guardians who desire these records are requested to call the Head of School to schedule an appointment to do so. A CEMCO staff member must be present whenever records are reviewed.

Child Abuse

19-7-5 Reporting of child abuse; when mandated or authorized; content of report; to whom made; immunity from liability; report based upon privileged communication; penalty for failure to report.

The purpose of this Code section is to provide for the protection of children whose health and welfare are adversely affected and further threatened by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection. It is intended that the mandatory reporting of such cases will cause the protective services of the state to be brought to bear on the situation in an effort to prevent further abuses, to protect and enhance the welfare of these children, and to preserve family life wherever possible. This Code section shall be liberally construed so as to carry out the purposes thereof.

As used in this Code section, the term:

1- "Abused" means subjected to child abuse. □

2- "Child" means any person under 18 years of age.

3- "Child abuse" means: A- Physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker thereof by other than accidental means; provided, however, physical forms of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury to the child; □ B- Neglect or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker thereof; □ C- Sexual abuse of a child; D- Sexual exploitation of a child.

The following persons having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made as provided in this Code section: **School teachers;** □ **School administrators;** □ School guidance counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, or school psychologists

If a person is required to report abuse pursuant to that person shall notify the Head of School, or the designated delegate thereof, and the person so notified shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with this Code section. A staff member who makes a report to the person designated pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed to have fully complied with this subsection.

An oral report shall be made as soon as possible by telephone or otherwise and followed by a report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

**Parent Contract and Handbook Acknowledgment Form
Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School
2008-2009**

I (we), _____ and _____,
Parent's Name (Print) Parent's Name (Print)

have read, understand, agree to and abide by the information given in the Coastal Empire Montessori Charter School's Student/Parent Handbook. I (we) understand this is CEMCO's parent agreement and contract and failure to follow rules, regulations, expectations and standards set forth by CEMCO could result in your child's dismissal of CEMCO. I (we) understand that this Handbook and Contract is subject to amendments and changes as the Head of School and the CEMCO Board of Trustees deems fit and acceptable.

Signatures

Date

Parent Volunteer Requirement Acknowledgement Form

By signing this form you acknowledge that as a member of the CEMCO family you are **required** to provide volunteer service to the school, 30 hours for single-parent families and 60 hours for two-parent families. Parents are responsible for recording hours in the Volunteer Notebook located in the main office.

By signing this form you also acknowledge you are **required** to attend and be available for the 7 scheduled conferences that will be held throughout the year. 4 of these will be telephone conferences. The other 3 conferences will be held at the school. These conferences are required. CEMCO will be offering a total of 8 Parent Education Meetings throughout the school year and parents are **required** to attend a total of 5 of these information sessions.

Signatures

Date