MONTESSORI
LEARNING CENTER
Fort Walton Beach

2026-2027 Parent Handbook

Montessori Learning Center
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Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
850-244-1775

FEDERAL ID # 59-221-0929

Welcome to the Montessori Learning Center

The Montessori Method of education is regarded by many leaders in child development as unsurpassed in helping children achieve their full potential in academics, self-reliance, and self-respect. Individual sensorial development is an important part of this process, as is an emphasis on structured learning and group interaction.

Our Mission Statement

Providing a Montessori-based education for the development of the whole child, creating a lifelong foundation for learning.

Our Vision Statement

Creating academically established, independent thinkers becoming positive stewards of the community.

Our Core Values

Whole-child development

Community Environment

Collaborative

Nurturing

Academics

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You will be expected to sign the Parent Handbook and Acknowledgement form. The signed form must be turned in on or before Open House. Please make sure to reach the entire handbook.

Admissions

The Montessori Learning Center uses a whole-person concept when considering students for attendance to the school. Our process is designed to ensure the best selection and placement for the student, the family and the school. We have a non-discriminatory admissions policy for children who are in our Primary Preschool program (ages 3-4) as well as our Elementary (Kindergarten through 5th Grade). Currently the school is not licensed for special needs students.

The admissions process includes a personal tour of the school as well as an interview with the Director or representative staff member to answer all questions regarding the school and the Montessori Method. The final decision of admittance will be based on the interview and applications information and at the discretion of the Director. The Kindergarten Level and Elementary applicants will be required to have an in-person classroom visit as well as take a placement test.

Siblings of former students who have completed the Montessori program and Montessori students from other schools will have priority for available openings at the beginning of each school year; for all other applicants, the date of registration will take precedence. *The Director makes the final decision of admittance to the school.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Tuition and Fees

Based on the entire school year, holidays included, tuition for 2026-2027 is as follows:

$300.00 annual non-refundable registration fee along with registration paperwork.

Primary Preschool (3 year old class)

8:00 AM – 2:30 PM (M-W-F) and 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM (T-TH)

TUITION: $9,000.00 annually or $900.00.00/month (Aug-May)

Curriculum Fee of $250.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Enrichment Fee (Music and Art) of $150.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Security Fee of $75.00

Registration Fee (Non-Refundable) of $300.00

Primary Preschool (4 year old class)

8:00 AM - 2:30 PM (M-F)

TUITION: $9000.00 annually or $900.00/month (Aug-May)

Curriculum Fee of $250.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Enrichment Fee (Music and Art) of $150.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Security Fee of $75.00

Registration Fee (Non-Refundable) of $300.00

Elementary & Kindergarten

7:50 AM - 2:45 PM (M-F)

TUITION: $9,000.00 annually or $900.00/month (Aug-May)

Curriculum Fee of $250.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Enrichment Fee (Music and Art) of $150.00 (ACH on July 20, 2026)

Security Fee of $75.00

Registration Fee (Non-Refundable) of $300.00

Tuition Payment Options & Schedule

Tuition will be invoiced through Procare at the beginning of each month and will be due by the 22nd of each month. August tuition will be invoiced in May. Families must set up their payments through the Procare APP. It is recommended that families set up ACH payments as opposed to credit/debit card, as these will have a 3% fee assessed on them.

August tuition will be withdrawn on 5/20/2026 .

Any additional payments collected throughout the year may be paid through quickbooks, Venmo @fwbmlc or by calling us to pay through Procare

Scholarships Accepted

Step-Up for Student Scholarship: This is a scholarship offered by the Florida Department of Education. There are three options available to apply for and this can be found at www.stepupforstudents.org

Private School Scholarships

Step Up For Students proudly offers the Private School Scholarship that covers **tuition and fees at eligible private schools**, and any remaining funds can be used to support your child's education through expenses like registration, books, testing and other approved fees.

Students, regardless of household income, who are residents of Florida and eligible to enroll in a K-12 public school, can receive a scholarship worth an average of $8,000 to attend a private school that best meets their needs. These scholarships are available through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program (FTC) and the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO).

Unique Abilities

Customize the education of your child with unique abilities with a scholarship worth an average of $10,000. This scholarship gives families access to an education savings account (ESA) that acts like a bank account in which you can direct funds toward a combination of programs and approved providers. This includes schools, therapists, specialists, curriculum, technology, a college savings account and more. Please see the handbook for the special circumstances that are allowable for this scholarship. This can be found at www.stepupforstudents.org

Quick facts:

Available to Florida students age 3 through grade 12 or age 22, whichever comes first, who have a specific diagnosis.

$10,000 average scholarship for tuition and fees for a private school, homeschooling options, therapies, tutoring and more.

Childcare Aware

Child Care Aware® of America is proud to partner with the United States Military and Department of Defense to serve and support their families through the Fee Assistance and Respite Child Care Programs. To date we have served more than 10 million families and have created a network of more than 10,000 licensed child care providers. You can find further information about this fee assistance at: https://www.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/

Montessori In-House Scholarship:

This is a new scholarship that is being offered this year to help off-set what the scholarship does not pay for students. This is an income base scholarship and an application must be requested from the school.

Extended Care

We offer extended care for our Primary Preschool 3-year olds on Tuesday and Thursday until 2:30 PM at the rate of $20/day or $75/month paid via check, cash or Venmo (FWBMLC).

Before Care

We offer before care from 7:30-8:00 AM at the drop in rate of $10/day paid via check, cash or VENMO (FWBMLC) or quickbooks.

Our full time rate of $175 will be invoiced through Procare. It is offered every day that school is in session.

If your child is registered for our monthly aftercare then they may attend before care at no additional charge.

Registration is required 24hrs in advance for before care.

Aftercare

We offer aftercare from 2:30-5:30 PM at the drop in rate of $20/day or $350.00/month. Paid via check, cash or VENMO (FWBMLC). Invoices will be provided at the end of the month and you will have one week to submit payment. Our full time rate of $350 per month will be invoiced through Procare. It is offered every day that school is in session (closed for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break and Teacher Work Days). Our aftercare program will include arts and crafts, outdoor play time, and limited organized activities. Your child will need to bring an extra snack to aftercare.

If your child is registered for our monthly ACH aftercare then they may attend before care at no additional charge.

If you are signing up for the Monthly aftercare, August's payment will be invoiced in July 2026.

We require notice the morning of, if you are planning to use our drop in aftercare as we have limited space. Fees will be collected on the morning of signing up.

Please note that if you arrive after 3:00 to pick up your child from the school day, they will be admitted into our aftercare program and you will incur the aftercare fee of $20.

Children staying for aftercare must be picked up by 5:30 PM or a late fee of $1.00 per minute will occur.

Summer Camp

We will offer Summer Camp M-F or Tue-Wed-Thur June 1st - July 24th, 2026with the exception of the week of 4th of July. Tuition will be $800.00 per month for full-time (5 days/week) or $500 per month for part-time (3 days/week). There is a $150.00 registration fee, due at the time of registration. Tuition will be invoiced through Procare.

Communication

The Director communicates with families Procare, email, Facebook and a monthly newsletter.

Procare: This is a critical way for the school to contact all families in the rare case of a school emergency. We also use it for day to day non-emergency communication. Please download the app, all parents should have received invites to do this.

Email: Email is the preferred method for non-emergency communication. Please make sure your email is up to date with the office.

Facebook: We post school and event information on Facebook. We appreciate you "liking" the school to help promote us.

Newsletter: Our monthly newsletter will be emailed at the beginning of each month. It includes all the upcoming activities and important dates.

Procare: We are transitioning into the use of Procare which will be our student database as well as billing portal. This also has a communication option. Once we have this fully integrated into the school, Remind will be obsolete and we will only use this program. This APP is required for use by all families.

Calendar

We follow the Okaloosa County School Calendar with the exception of a few key dates: The first day of school and phase in schedule, Good Friday, Parent-Teacher Conference Day, and the last day of school. **Please refer to the calendar at the end of the handbook. Our school calendar can also be found on our website as well as a LIVE calendar. The Live Calendar will show all updates as they become available. Procare also has a calendar within it, where we will post upcoming events.**

Safety & Security

Our school is fully locked down during the school day. The only access is through our locked front door by a teacher or administrator. Please call 850-244-1775 and a teacher or administrator will open the door.

We will be practicing monthly Fire & Safety Drills in accordance with the Department of Children and Families and the Fire Marshall of Okaloosa County.

We are a part of Okaloosa County emergency notification system and receive notifications regarding weather or other emergencies from county officials. Upon their advice, we may ask you to come early to pick up your child from school depending on the nature and severity of the situation. We appreciate your full cooperation in these rare instances.

Health & Wellness

If your child will be absent please notify the school (850-244-1775) by 9:00 AM. If you do not, we are required to check in on your child based on the Department of Children and Families well child regulations.

When you have verification of the fact that your child has a communicable illness, please call the school immediately so that a notification may be sent home to inform the other parents. Your child must be fever free without the use of medicine for 24 hours before they can be admitted back to school. Please use the same guideline for vomiting and diarrhea.

It should be noted that we do not have a nurse on campus and since we are not medical professionals we are not able to diagnose illness. Due to this, students who exhibit fever, diarrhea, or vomiting must be sent home immediately.

In the event that you are called to pick up your child because he or she is ill, please plan to arrive within 30 minutes of being notified. If you can not arrive in a timely manner, the emergency number you have indicated will be called.

Medication

If medication is needed during school hours, you must fill out the "authorization for medicine" form, medication must be in the original packaging (with the doctor's name visible), and all dosing information must be clearly labeled.

If your child has an epi pen for allergies please ensure to have clearly written instructions for use. The original medication containers must be provided before staff can administer. Any prescribed medication must have a dosing label attached.

Medications should never be sent into the school via the student or their backpack. All medications must be brought into the office to ensure we have all required forms in place.

School Accidents

In case of an accident at school, you are to be notified immediately after first-aid is given. If you cannot be reached, the emergency number you have indicated will be called. If that person is not available, your child's doctor will be called. If the child's doctor cannot be reached, the school will call another doctor. A parent or other Guardian will be asked to sign an Accident Form at pick up. This year we will begin sending incident reports home through the Procare App once we have it fully integrated at the school.

Health Forms

A physician's certificate of your child's health and immunization schedule is required and must be on file with the school. Your child's physician will provide you with the appropriate forms. Please ensure you have Page 1 and 2 of the physical signed by your physician. A physical is good for 2 years. We must also have the authorization for the emergency medical care on file.

All school-aged students must provide a copy of their birth certificate to be kept in their student file.

Sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen before your child comes to school. However, if you need additional applications you may leave a labeled bottle with your teacher.

Montessori does not provide sunscreen for your child. Please ensure that you have signed that sunscreen may be applied to your child on the intake form.

Food & Drink

Your child will have daily snack time and it is the parent's responsibility to pack this for the school day along with a filled water bottle. Please clearly label your child's disposable snack bag with his/her name on it for easy identification (snacks should not be kept in your child's lunch boxes.) Keep these bags small to ensure enough room for all students' snacks.

Any child staying past 12:00 will need to also bring a healthy lunch. We are unable to reheat foods.

Our goal at Montessori is to make each of our students as independent as possible. Please practice opening their drinks, food containers and other items at home. This will eliminate the need for teachers to touch your students' lunch. Plus your child will be so proud of themselves for their new found independence.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide a drink for lunch time. We encourage you to put it in a thermos with an ice pack for lunch. Also, please remember to send in utensils for your child to use. Please no soda or drinks from a pop can.

We are not a peanut free school. If your child has allergies please inform the Director so accommodations can be made.

For Age 3: Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents must not be served to children under 4. Examples include but are not limited to: whole/round hot dogs, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, nuts, whole grapes, cheese cubes or any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe.

School Closings

We follow Okaloosa County school closings and will notify you via Facebook, Remind text and/or email in the event of a school closing. There are times that St. Simon's will require the school to be closed, but an advance notice will be given to allow you to plan accordingly. Please note - if we are required to close due to in-coming weather or other situations which are out of our hands, please expect

assignments to be sent home either before the date or on a teacher workday. This will constitute an e-learning day.

Disaster Refund Policy/Emergency Shutdown

If MLC is required to close their campus due to Hurricanes, Pandemics or Terrorism we will make every effort to provide online learning (e-learning). Mandated closures for the 2026-2027 academic year will not compromise our ability to provide a full and enriching program. Therefore, financial policies and tuition obligations would continue as stated in your Tuition and Registration agreement. Only unused Friday lunches and before/aftercare fees would be eligible for refunds.

Enrichment Programs

We will offer enrichment programs during school hours throughout the year. Beginning in September your child will attend art classes provided by Ms. Bethany and music lessons will be provided.

Parent Involvement and Volunteering

The school cannot succeed without your help. Montessori Learning Center was founded by parents, and the school has always relied heavily on parental involvement. We are a non-profit corporation consisting of all parents whose children are enrolled in the school, and it is administered by a Board of Directors.

We ask that all MLC families commit to volunteering to help execute at least one of our 2026-2027 fundraisers. Volunteer parents will be expected to attend the committee meetings and help on the event day. Sign ups will take place at the Fall parent meeting.

General Meetings

There are 2 General Meetings throughout the year. Our 1st General Meeting of the year is referred to as the “Parent Meeting” and is held within a few weeks of school starting. The second one is typically at the end of the school year. It is **mandatory** that at least one (1) parent attend these meetings. Childcare will not be provided, so please make other arrangements for your children.

Board

The Board of Directors shall nominally consist of six-seven (6-7) members with a maximum of ten (10) members. The Board is composed of four (4) elected officers, two (2) members-at-large, the Immediate Past-President, when applicable, and up to four (4) additional board members for a maximum total of ten (10) members. Board members are elected for two (2) year terms with the exception of the President who must serve an additional one (1) year term in the capacity of Immediate Past-President after their two (2) year term as President. The Board holds meetings at least monthly during the school year. A description of each board position can be found in our schools by-laws.

Board elections will occur at the second general meeting. It is imperative that we have enough membership (parents) at the general meeting so we can conduct a vote. We encourage you to reach out to current board members if you or someone you know in the community would be an asset and be interested in joining the board.

Committees

The committees are run by parents and assist with the planning of school and class events such as fundraisers, field trips and class parties throughout the year.

Some of our in school events include our Christmas Brunch, and Teacher Appreciation Week.

If I am paying tuition, why am I expected to volunteer?

The true cost of educating your child is more than the tuition rate. To help close this gap, we offer a variety of volunteer opportunities and require each of our school families to participate in PIC (Parent Involvement Committee). Parent volunteers can assist your child's teacher, grounds keeping/maintenance, work on school events or fundraisers, and join parent committees. There are many options. We believe that strong parental involvement is an important factor in your child's academic success. PIC hours offer an opportunity to meet your children's teachers, get to know your school and other families and to play an active role in your child's education. Sharing your time, talents and gifts with the MLC community keeps our tuition rates down and our sense of community strong.

Parent involved committee (PIC):

We founded The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) in 2019 to provide an additional support function to the student body and staff for events, enrichment and fundraising efforts. The PIC also serves as an effective means to build cohesive parent relationships as our school continues to grow. Parent involvement is imperative to the success of Montessori Learning Center and coordinating effective communication is the key to a successful PIC.

The PIC is structured with a PIC President who serves over the entire PIC, as well as a designated parent from each class to serve as a “Class Parent” and liaison to the President to communicate the specific needs for the class. The Class Parents and President are responsible for Enrichment Opportunities in-house and off-campus for the students including field trips or STEM demonstrations and creating SignUp Links as needed to assist the teachers with classroom needs. PIC is also responsible for the Christmas program as well as the end of the year programs, and providing decoration/event coordination assistance when needed.

The PIC President will coordinate Teacher Appreciation Week in May each year and will assign duties for each Class Parent.

Class Parents are responsible for fundraising efforts within their own grades and as such must also serve on the Fundraising Committee.

Lastly, the PIC President will attend MLC Board Meetings quarterly to serve as a parent liaison between the MLC Board and the PIC.

Each month, the President of the PIC will compile a relevant update of ongoing efforts in each committee. The PIC newsletter is sent out each month alongside Teacher Newsletters to maintain effective communication with the entire parent body.

School Spirit Nights

The school hosts spirit nights at local restaurants and a percentage of proceeds go to our school. We encourage parents to come out on these nights and wear their school shirts, as it raises money for the school, but also it gets our name out into the community.

Box Tops For Education

Montessori Learning center has an account with this program and we would love you to designate those purchases to us that count through this program. There are a couple of ways that you can help our school with this.

1) Parents can download the Box Tops APP and set-up an account. There is an option to link your Walmart App to this so those purchases automatically are found when you use your Walmart App to make purchases. All other store receipts that show qualifying purchases can be uploaded by you through the APP.
2) Parents can bring their grocery receipts (No more than 2 weeks old) into the school and we will upload them for you. Parents can send the receipts in with their child or drop them in the marked box on Walk-in Fridays

School Swag Store

Montessori Learning Center has a beautiful school store where you can get all of your needed gear that promotes our school. There is something for everyone. You can access the school store through our website at www.montessorifwb.com or through the following link:
https://www.ddbapparel.com/montessorilearning/shop/home

Walmart Spark For Good Round-up

Montessori Learning Center is registered with Walmart's round-up through Spark Good. We encourage you to sign up and whenever you order online round your dollars up to support the school. You can register to round-up through the following link:
https://www.walmart.com/nonprofits/72a1c478-d2d5-45cb-9200-17b94116100e/profile

Building The Future Together

Montessori Learning Center will host our fourth annual Building The Future Together event in the 2026-2027 school year. This event is our largest fundraiser each year and parent involvement is of the utmost importance. There will be a committee dedicated solely to this event and finding sponsorships that will meet beginning in September. If you feel this is something you would like to assist in, please let the Board President or Director know.

Friday School Lunches

Each Friday throughout the school year students will have the option to participate in our lunch program. On designated days a student can have a hot lunch from a local restaurant . This year we will be working with Julie's Southern Joy for a more well rounded meal. You may pay by either monthly or by the semester You may pay by Check, Cash or VENMO (FWBMLC) or CC through Quickbooks. The first Friday Lunch will be September 4th. The menu will be posted on our live calendar on our website and Procare .**A Friday Lunch Order form will be sent out at the beginning of each semester.**

All monies raised will go to further develop the school. Parental involvement

is critical for our school to continue to provide quality education. All parents are encouraged to participate in our school at a level that they feel appropriate.

General School Information

Classes meet Monday through Friday, August through May, and children are expected to bring their own lunches if they stay until 2:30/2:45 PM.

Primary Preschool age 3 children will meet 8:00-12:00 Monday- Friday until Friday, August 28. Beginning Friday, August 28 the Primary PK 3 schedule will be 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM on M-W-F and 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on T-TH with the option of Extended Care at the rate of $20/day or $75 per month. School age children (Kindergarten-Fifth Grade) school day begins at 7:50 AM. Your child is considered tardy after 8:00 AM. If you are later than 8:00 am you will need to walk your child into our building and call the office at 850-244-1775.

Phase-In (Preschool)

The new student phase-in is a very important step for the preschool child who is first entering Montessori. The returning students will spend a few days at the school first and then new students will phase-in over a period of one week. This has been studied extensively as an optimal way to introduce new students to the Montessori concepts and environment.

School Drop Off

When a child arrives in the morning, a carline will be established in the back of the school under the overhang for all students. A school staff member will come to your vehicle to help your child from your vehicle and ensure they enter the school safely. **Your child is considered tardy after 8:00 AM (K-5) and 8:10 (PK3/4).**

All children who arrive after 8:10 must check-in through the main office. Please call (850) 244-1775 and someone from the office will come out to get your child.

If you arrive late and see children on the playground, please do not try to drop off children at the playground, they must be checked into the office due to late arrival.

Arrival and dismissal times are not appropriate times for discussions as this greatly impedes the other parents' picking up their children. To make an appointment with any teacher, please wait until all the children have been dismissed or call/text and we will be happy to schedule an appointment at that time.

Every Friday parents will walk their child into their class. Parents will park towards the back of the church and enter the Parish Hall via the overhang. **Please note that this is not a time to have parent/teacher conferences. If you need a conference please contact the teacher or the front office to schedule a time to meet.**

School Pick Up

Carpool schedules and a list of approved people to pick up your child must be given to the teachers by the first day of school. Please ensure that these are updated in Procare.

Pick up will take place under the overhang behind St. Simon's. For efficiency, we ask that you form **two car lines for the entire length of the car line, including the area in front of the playground and the east facing parking lot. This is imperative to ensure maximum efficiency in the pick-up process and minimize any back-up traffic in the turn lane on Highway 98**. A teacher will direct you to pull forward when appropriate. **Please do not pull forward until directed to do so, as we are removing children from other vehicles.** Once you have been directed to pull forward you may then get out and assist in buckling your child to ensure that all of our students are safely placed in their vehicles. Please do not park before you are directed and please **DO NOT GET** out of your car to pick up your child. This is very unsafe and slows down the car pick up lines. **Make sure that your child's name is prominently displayed on a piece of paper in your car window during pick up. If your child needs help buckling then please pull forward and park.**

Please be courteous to the other parents, grandparents, and children in the lines! **The school will not accept transportation changes after 2:15 PM. If you are picking up your child early from school, the latest time we can release your child is 2:15. After 2:15 you will have to get them from the car line.**

Please ensure that anyone that picks up your child understands the pick-up procedures. This will help to ensure that the line flows well.

Dismissal Time- Car Line Only

Dismissal is at 2:30 (for PK3/4) and students should be picked up no more than ten (10) minutes late. Aftercare is available until 5:30 PM. **Any child picked up after**

2:45 PM will be charged the aftercare drop in rate of $20/day.

School age children (Kindergarten-Fifth Grade) will be dismissed at 2:45 PM. Please do not block the road that leads to dismissal - preschool dismisses until 2:45 and if we have too many people lined up it blocks the road where they are unable to get through. If you have children registered in both classes they will be dismissed at the later time. If your child is not picked up by 3:00 then your child will be placed in aftercare and you will incur a $20 charge.

Teachers spend time immediately before and after class handling record keeping, cleaning, and preparing the classroom. It is essential that teachers have this time free in order to complete these duties.

Dismissal will be at 12:00 PM for the PK3 on T-TH. **Any child picked up after 12:10 PM will be charged the extended care drop in rate of $20/day.**

Please note: Please make yourself aware of car seat requirements for the state of Florida. If your child is required to be in a carseat, we cannot place them in your care without appropriate seating. Please see below information from Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles:

Florida Child Safety Seat Requirements

In Florida, the requirements for child safety seats are as follows:

- **Infants (0-1 year): Must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until they outgrow the manufacturer's specifications or reach a weight limit of 20 pounds.**
- **Children (1-4 years): Must be secured in a rear-facing car seat until they outgrow the manufacturer's specifications or reach a weight limit of 25 pounds.**
- **Children (4-5 years): Must be secured in a separate carrier, integrated child seat, or booster seat.**
- **Children (6 years and older): Must be secured in a seat belt.**

It is crucial to follow these guidelines to ensure the safety of children in vehicles. Parents should always check the child's size and weight against the car seat's specifications to ensure proper fit and safety.

Policy on the Release of Children

If anyone other than a parent is to pick up a child, please notify the school beforehand by filling out a pick up authorization form. Please ask the person who will be picking the child up to identify himself/herself upon arrival and have photo identification available for verification.

Each child may be released only to the child's parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) to take the child from the center and to assume responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached.

If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court-order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court order.

If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick up a child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

1. The child is supervised at all times
2. Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s)
3. An hour or more after closing time, and provided that other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the Florida Dept. of Children and Families Abuse hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick up the child. If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such and individual, the center shall ensure that:

    a. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.

    b. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s):and

    c. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the FL Dept. of Children and Families Abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

    d. For school-age child care programs, no child shall be released from the program unsupervised except upon written instructions from the child's parent(s).

Personal Belongings

Candy, gum, toys, stuffed animals, key chains and weapons may not be brought to school. Please check your child's pockets to see what they contain before and after school. If at any time your child inadvertently brings school material home, we ask that the item(s) be promptly returned.

A change of seasonal clothing, including underpants and socks, should be sent with each Primary Preschool (age 3-6) child to use in case of an accident. This set of clothes will be kept in a safe place at the school.

Children may occasionally be permitted to bring in special items which relate to schoolwork, or special items for show and tell.

Electronic Devices - Students may not use personal electronic devices during the school day. If students have such a device, it needs to be turned off and stored in their backpacks. If electronic devices are brought to school, it is at your own risk and The Montessori Learning Center is not liable for lost or stolen devices.

School Clothing

In addition to being neat, comfortable, and appropriate for the weather, school clothing should be easy for the child to manage by himself or herself, completely washable, and labeled with the child's name, especially in the case of coats, jackets, and sweaters. We sometimes get messy with crafts and on the playground. Please do not send your child in clothing that cannot get dirty.

Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the season. We have hooks in the classrooms for a sweater or jacket to stay at school if you prefer to leave one.

We allow sunglasses, hats, and earrings, but **please leave all other belongings at home.**

Children are required to wear rubber-soled shoes for safety on the playground.

Elementary Dress Code

- Closed Toed Shoes
- Shoes must be appropriate for running and sand
- Clean Clothing without tears or holes
- Shorts should be no shorter than end of student's fingertips
- No Spaghetti Straps or midriff showing tops are allowed

- Tank tops are allowed, just no skinny spaghetti straps
- No inappropriate verbiage on tee-shirts, sweatshirts, or backpacks

Field Trips

In the event that there is a planned off-campus field trip, you will be notified at least fourteen (14) days in advance. A parent or guardian must be present on off-campus field trips for your student to attend. Teachers will provide more information on any planned field trips.

Outdoor Playtime

Time outdoors is an important part of a Montessori school day. It provides the fresh air needed to insure good health and aids in the development of social and gross motor skills.

Weather permitting, the children go outside several times a day. In the case of a light sprinkle or cold weather the children may still go outside for a short time. It is important to dress appropriately. Layering clothing is very helpful and seasonal jackets or gloves may be necessary.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days and we enjoy celebrating them at school. Please remind your child's teacher a few days before the birthday so the teacher is able to plan for the celebration.

Preschool students may bring a special snack and their parents may join them at snacktime to celebrate this special time.

Kindergarten and Elementary students may choose to celebrate their classroom birthday's a little differently so please check with your child's teacher.

Your child can bring a store bought birthday snack to share with the class and should be brought at drop off.

Please check with your child teacher about classroom allergies before you buy a treat.

Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences occur in the Spring and will be scheduled at least once a year. However, a parent may schedule a conference with a teacher or a classroom observation at any time.

Teacher Communication

At Montessori Learning Center we encourage open communication. At the beginning of the school year, you will be provided with a school directory that lists all staff members' email addresses. Please be respectful when contacting staff. Email is always the preferred method of communication.

It is never appropriate to text or call a staff member before 7:30 AM, or after 6 PM. We also ask for you to please allow 24 hours for your child's teacher to respond to your message. No foul language is acceptable.

Drop off is not a good time to discuss questions about your child. Unless it is an emergency, an email should be used to communicate with staff both during and after school hours. Your child's teacher is in class teaching, so they will not be able to reply to text messages and phone calls received during the school day.

The exception to this rule is with administration, specifically, the Director. **The Director is available to reply to text messages from 7:30 AM to 5 PM on days when school is in session.**

Please email your teacher or call the front office to schedule an in-person meeting. Remember to use the proper chain of contact. If an issue occurs please contact your child's teacher first. The Director should be the last person contacted.

Attendance

Studies show that children who practice regular attendance are more likely to be successful in the classroom and have stronger personal relationships with peers.

Requirements For Kindergarten and Elementary (school age children)

Regular attendance provides students the opportunity to master required skills at each grade level. Many integral activities, including class discussions, group experiences, guest speakers, and direct instruction, cannot be simulated or replicated with written work. "Each K-12 student must remain in attendance throughout the school year, unless excused by the school for illness or other good cause." Therefore, with the goal of promoting student success, the school has adopted a uniform attendance policy. It is our intent to encourage honest, accurate

and consistent adherence to this policy by all students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

F.S. 1003.04; 1003.21; 1003.24, 1003.26 9

We understand students may need to be absent occasionally for medical, family, or emergency reasons. See the following information for attendance procedures.

- Absence 1-8 in any given semester can be excused by a parent or doctor's note within 5 days of the student returning to school.
- Absence 9-15 can only be excused by a note from a medical professional or evidence of other necessary absence or for a religious holiday.

The Montessori Learning Center will follow the same guidelines as Okaloosa County School District in regards to attendance.

Reporting An Absence (Applicable to Kindergarten and Elementary)

When a student accumulates a total of nine (9) absences per semester, the student must have an excuse from a doctor or an official agency for each subsequent absence (i.e; Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children and Families).

We understand students may need to be absent occasionally for medical, family, or emergency reasons. See the following information for attendance procedures.

1. Absence 1-8 in any given semester can be excused by a parent or doctor's note within 5 days of the student returning to school.
2. Absence 9-15 can only be excused by a note from a medical professional or evidence of other necessary absence or for a religious holiday.
3. After the 15th absence in the school year, a letter will be sent to the parents or legal guardians notifying them of the necessity of a doctor's excuse or an excuse from an official agency. In addition, this letter will notify parents of additional consequences for additional absences.
3. Between 25 and 30 absences your child's academic record will be reviewed by the Montessori Board for possible recommendation of repeating the current grade level.
4. The above absences do not apply if a child has been medically diagnosed with terminal illness.

Tardies:

Tardiness Parents/legal guardians will be notified when a student accumulates five (5) unexcused early checkouts and/or late arrivals within a semester. When the number of early checkouts and/or late arrivals reaches seven (7) within a semester, the parents will be requested in writing to have a conference with the Director or his/her designee. If a student continues to show a pattern of excessive tardiness then it could jeopardize your child's enrollment.

Student Withdrawal

A written notice of thirty (30) days must be given prior to withdrawing your child from the school. Additionally, there will be an early withdrawal penalty of one month's tuition. Tuition cannot be refunded, except for Military families under the SSCRA. All student accounts must be current before information will be provided to their next school. **Please also note that we will not withdraw a student until we receive notice from the receiving school via a records request or from the homeschool office.**

Discipline & Policies

The ground rules of the school are:

1. No child may disturb the work of another.
2. No child may hurt another in any way.

The teacher will meet with the parents for a conference exchanging ideas to help the child in the event of a disciplinary problem. If there is a serious question of whether the child can function happily in the school, the school may set a limited "probationary" period to try to work out the problems. At the end of this period, the parents and teachers will hold personal conferences to decide what further action should be taken to best meet the needs of the child. Discipline requires sitting in a time out chair. There will be no physical punishment. Discipline cannot be associated with food, toileting or rest. It may not be frightening or severe in nature.

Any student who hits, bites, kicks or spits on another student will be sent home for the remainder of the day, as physical violence will not be tolerated.

Expulsion Policy

Montessori Learning Center is committed to providing a safe, nurturing environment conducive for learning and growth. We strive to ensure all of our children are set up for success regardless of their need or developmental level. Every effort will be made to prevent the expulsion of children from the program.

However, Montessori Learning Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons, not limited to but including:

1. Non-payment or excessive late payments of fees/tuition.
2. The child has needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
3. The child's behavior threatens the health and safety of him/herself, the other children or program staff.
4. Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in the Handbook.

The parent/guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom and/or program. This includes but is not limited to: vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of child care licensing regulations.

Defining and Preventing Bullying

People often say that teachers have eyes in the back of their heads. They don't. We can't see everything that is happening and we depend on our students to let us know when something is going on that needs to be addressed. Students are always encouraged to ask for support immediately when a situation arises at school. Teachers act as facilitators to resolve the conflict, and this is most effective when it is done immediately following the situation. If your child tells you about something that happened at school that upset them, the parents should ask the child what they did at school to resolve the problem. If the problem was not resolved, it should be addressed upon arrival the following day with the support of a teacher and both of the children involved.

How to deal with bullying depends on a lot of factors including the age of the child. Bullying can be physical and/or verbal.

It is important to draw a distinction between behavior that is rude, behavior that is mean, and behavior that is characteristic of bullying.

Rude behavior is characterized by saying or doing something that hurts someone else. In children, this usually takes the form of social errors. The critical factor is that these incidents are usually spontaneous, unplanned inconsideration based on thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism, but not meant to actually hurt someone.

Being mean involves purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone. Mean behavior very much aims to hurt or depreciate someone. Very often, mean behavior in kids is motivated by angry feelings and/or the misguided goal of propping themselves up in comparison to the person that they are putting down.

Both rudeness and mean behavior require correction, however they are different from bullying in important ways that should be understood and differentiated when it comes to intervention.

Bullying is defined as intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power. Kids who bully say or do something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse.

Bullying is not tolerated at Montessori Learning Center.

In order to prevent bullying at Montessori Learning Center, when students display mean or rude behavior, it is immediately addressed so that the behavior does not continue.

At Montessori Learning Center, we aim to prevent bullying and promote respect by teaching prosocial skills such as empathy, listening, and conflict resolution.

Communicating Events At Home

In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please consider informing the Director as soon as possible. All information will be regarded as confidential. We will accept your judgment as to the kinds of changes which may affect your child's behavior, security, and general well-being. Common causes of distress include: either parent being away from home for any reason for an extended time; a new person living in the home; illness of either parent; illness of sibling; any hospitalization, accident, or death in the family; new caretaker or any new employee; or death of a pet.

The teacher/director will keep you informed of any significant change in the school environment which may affect your child.

Dr. Maria Montessori says in her book The Secret of Childhood,

"Parents have a very important mission; they are the only ones who can save their children by uniting and working together for the improvement of society. They must appreciate the mission which nature has entrusted to them."

A.M. Josten, the Director of Montessori training centers in Minnesota, Calcutta, India, and Ceylon, wrote in an editorial for a Montessori Publication:

"Educational institutions should never try to supplement parents. . . . No educational institution, much less a House of Children can even perform its tasks nor realize its aims unless it is firmly supported by the parents of the children entrusted to it. . . . Both parents and educational institutions should cooperate in providing what is necessary for the children's development in both environments and, as far as possible, do so concretely and directly, not merely in the form of pecuniary donations or levies."

Montessori Publications

If you wish to further your knowledge of the Montessori Method of learning, the following is a partial list of Montessori related publications available in libraries and/or bookstores:

Dr. Maria Montessori The Montessori Method

Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook, Vol. I & II

The Absorbent Mind

To Educate the Human Potential

Secret of Childhood

Pedagogical Anthropology

E. Mortimer Standing The Montessori Method,
A Revolution in Education

Maria Montessori – Her Life and Her Work

Dr. Claude Claremont Spanning Space

Intelligence and Mental Growth

The Innumerable Instincts of Man

The Chemistry of Thought

Learning How to Learn, An
American Approach to Montessori
Nancy McCormick Rambusch

R. C. Orem

A Montessori Handbook

A Children's House,

Parent-Teacher Guide to Montessori

BY-LAWS
OF
THE MONTESSORI LEARNING CENTER
OF
FORT WALTON BEACH, INC.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this corporation shall be *The Montessori Learning Center of Fort Walton Beach, Inc.*.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this organization shall be to promote, establish, and operate a nonsectarian Montessori school to develop interest in and to disseminate knowledge about the Montessori Method of education; and to undertake additional purposes as future needs require. This association is not organized for business purposes nor pecuniary benefits of any member or individual, whether incidentally or otherwise.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION A. DESIGNATIONS

Members – The membership of this association shall at all times consist of such persons as to maintain full compliance with each and every rule of the association and are in good standing as shown by the records of the association.

1. Regular members – Regular members shall be parent(s) or guardian(s) of students enrolled in The Montessori Learning Center of Fort Walton Beach, Inc.. Enrollment shall be accomplished by completing the required application forms and paying the non refundable registration fee.
2. Patron members – Patron members shall be those persons or organizations that have contributed to the association.

SECTION B. PRIVILEGES

1. REGULAR MEMBERS – A regular member shall have one (1) vote. In the case of membership of a couple, each individual shall have one (1) vote. In the event of a member's absence, he may grant in writing, his nomination in written form. All proxies must be rendered to the Secretary prior to the meetings *Call to Order.* Regular members shall be entitled to serve on the Board of Directors and on Committees.

2. PATRON MEMBERS – Patron members shall have no voting privileges.

ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION A. MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors shall be comprised of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer of the Organization, two (2) regular members-at-large, up to three to four (3-4) additional board members, and the Immediate Past-President, when applicable. A minimum of two (2) members of the Board will have previously served on the Board. A minimum of (2) two members of the Board must have a child currently enrolled in Montessori Learning Center of Fort Walton Beach during their term. Any vacated positions will be filled from the regular membership. All members of the Board will be elected to their positions at the second meeting of the association, will attend the Board meeting in April, and will assume their positions at the May meeting. No member shall be nominated for a position on the Board without his knowledge. If a nominee is not present, his written approval must be presented. A majority of votes cast shall be necessary for election.

SECTION B. ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICE

i. TERMS OF OFFICE – All directors shall take office at the May meeting of the Board. All terms of office shall be for a term of two (2) years with the exception of the Immediate Past-President which shall serve a term of one (1) year. The President must serve a term of two (2) years, and then serve an additional one (1) year term in their capacity as Immediate Past-President. Directors shall be eligible for succeeding terms.

ii. VACANCIES – In the event of a vacancy on the Board, the Board shall appoint a member of the association to fill the office for the unexpired term. Such appointments shall be subject to recall by petition signed by (10) members of the association.

iii. QUORUM – Sixty percent (60%) of total Board members shall constitute a quorum at Board meetings.

iv. RECALL – Any member of the Board may be recalled if he does not perform satisfactorily the duties of his office. A recall may be initiated by a petition signed by fifty percent (50%) of the membership and presented at any general or Board meeting. The vote shall be held by ballot not less than thirty (30) or more than sixty (60) days after the presentation of the petition. A vote of sixty percent (60%) of the members shall be necessary to carry the recall vote.

v. VOTING – Each of the Board members elected by the association shall have one (1) vote on the Board and only they shall have a vote. The president’s vote will only be cast in the event of a tie.

SECTION C. OFFICERS

i. ELECTION – Each year at the December board meeting, the members shall nominate officers. Each year at the second association meeting the regular members shall elect officers. Each year at the May meeting, the newly elected officers shall assume office.

ii. OFFICERS – The officers of this association shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

iii. DUTIES – Each officer shall have, in addition to the powers and duties herein specified, all other powers and duties pertaining and incidental to his office and such other powers as may be determined by the Board from time to time.

iv. JOB DESCRIPTIONS –

a. President – The President shall be the chief executive officer of this corporation: he shall preside at all meetings of the members and the Directors; he shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried out; and he shall be ex officio a member of all committees and shall have the powers and duties of management usually invested in the office of President of a corporation.

b. Vice President – The Vice-President shall be vested with all powers and shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence of the latter and shall have such other duties as may, from time to time, be determined by the Board of Directors. In the event that the President shall be absent at any meeting, the Vice-President shall preside.

c. Secretary – The Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board of Directors and all meetings of members and shall act as a clerk thereof; he shall record all votes and minutes of all proceedings in a book to be kept for the purpose; he shall notify members of all meetings as the corporation and the Board of Directors as directed by the President; and he shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors, and shall be custodian of the corporate seal and all of the books and records of the corporation except as may be otherwise provided.

d. Treasurer – The Treasurer shall receive and bank all monies due the organization and shall keep bookkeeping records of such funds; he shall pay bills from officers and committee members only when authorized and when receipts or expenditures are attached and shall pay such bills whenever possible by check, countersigned by the President and himself, if necessary; he shall disburse all monies as the organization may direct; he shall make the financial records of the organization available for inspection by the membership at all monthly meetings; he shall give a statement of finances as often as required and shall give a complete financial report, which may be audited at the May general meeting; and he shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors.

SECTION D. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board shall have the general power to administer the affairs of the corporation and shall report its actions to the membership.

i. POLICIES – The Board shall determine institutional policies of the school upon consideration of recommendations of the membership and the teaching staff and/or the administrator.

ii. APPOINTMENTS – The Board shall appoint the Director of the school and nominate officers for the next year.

iii. PROPERTY AND EARNINGS – The Board shall have the power to acquire, administer, and dispose of property and funds. However, the title to all property, funds, and assets shall at all times be vested in the association for the joint use of the members. In the name of the association and with the approval of the membership, the Board may borrow money and issue bonds, etc.

iv. MEETINGS – The Board shall hold meetings at least monthly during the school year.

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

SECTION A. TIMES

i. GENERAL MEETINGS – General meetings shall be held at least two (2) times per school year and will be indicated on the school calendar.

ii. SPECIAL MEETINGS – Additional meetings may be called by the President, by the Board, or upon written notice of not less than five (5) members at least seven (7) days in advance to all members.

SECTION B. VOTING

At any meeting, any officer may call for a ballot on any issue brought to vote.

SECTION C. QUORUM

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the members of the whole corporation, at least five (5) of them Board members, shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

SECTION A. STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee – Chaired by the Treasurer
Building – Ground – Equipment Maintenance Committee – Chaired by a Board Member at Large
Public Relations Committee – Chaired by the Secretary
Fund Raising Committee – Chaired by the Vice-President

SECTION B. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

May be established by the Board.

SECTION C. COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

All chairmen shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Board. Subject to the approval of the Board, each committee chairman shall determine the size of his committee, the plans for carrying out the work of the committee, and the rules of procedure for committee functions.

SECTION D. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members and patrons shall serve on committees. No member shall be appointed without his knowledge. Committee chairmen shall appoint members.

ARTICLE VII – RULES OF ORDER

The rules contained in Robert's *Rules of Order,* Revised, shall govern this organization in all parliamentary procedures in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

The power to adopt, amend, alter, or delete any provisions of the by-laws shall be vested in the members and shall be exercised by a majority vote of the members present, provided that twenty (20) days written notice of the proposed amendments is given to all members of the association.

ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION

If, at any time, this organization ceases to remain operable for any reason, the total, including all properties and monies, shall be held in escrow for a period of one (1) year. If, at the end of that time, dissolution still is desired, the assets shall be dispersed to other non-profit organizations determined by the Board of Directors.

2026-2027 School Calendar

August 5-10 Wednesday-Monday	Teacher Professional Development and Planning Days
August 10, Monday	Orientation for All Students and parent meeting
August 11, Tuesday	**1st Day of School** for **ALL** Kindergarten and Lower Elementary students at 7:50am, and ONLY returning PreK students at 8:00am
August 11, 13, 17 Tuesday, Thursday, Monday	Phase-in for PreK students at 8:00am (Returning& Siblings; PreK4 & Summer camp; prek3) ***check phase-in schedule that will be emailed***
August 18-September 25	Star Early Lit (PK3-1st) Star Reading (2nd-5th) Star Math (K-5) Testing Window 1
August 28, Friday	PreK-3 begins full days on MWF
September 7, Monday	**NO SCHOOL**-Labor Day, No Aftercare
October 12, Monday	**NO SCHOOL**-Teacher Work Day, No Aftercare
October 30, Friday	**End of 1st Grading Period**
October 30, Friday	Trunk-or Treat (whole school participation)
November 6, Friday	Progress Reports sent home
November 11, Wednesday	**NO SCHOOL**-Veterans Day**,** No Aftercare
November 20, Friday	Early Dismissal/Half-Day.
November 23-27, Monday-Friday	**NO SCHOOL**-Thanksgiving Break, No Aftercare
November 30-December 4, Monday-Friday	Book Fair
December 14-18	All School Christmas Programs - TBD
December 18, Friday	Early Dismissal/Half-Day. **12:00 Preschool, 12:15 School Age** No Aftercare
December 21-January 4	**NO SCHOOL**-Winter Break, No Aftercare
January 5-6, Tuesday, Wednesday	**NO SCHOOL**-Teacher Work Day, No Aftercare
January 7, Thursday	School Resumes
January 11-29	Star Early Lit (K-1st) Star Reading (1st-5th) Star Math (K-5) Testing Window 2
January 18, Monday	**NO SCHOOL**-Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No Aftercare
January 19, Monday	Returning Student registration begins;

January 25th, Monday	Sibling Registration begins
January 27, Wednesday	100th Day of School Celebration
February 1, Monday	New Student registration begins
February 5, Friday	End of 2nd Grading Period
February 12, Friday	**NO SCHOOL**-Parent Teacher Conferences, No Aftercare; Progress Reports Go Home at Conference
February 15, Monday	**NO SCHOOL-** Presidents' Day, No Aftercare
March 2, Monday	Read Across America Day (Dr. Seuss' Birthday) Snuggle Up and Read
March 12, Friday	Early Dismissal/Half-Day. **12:00**
March 15-19, Monday-Friday	**NO SCHOOL**-Spring Break, No Aftercare
March 22, Monday	**NO SCHOOL-** Teacher Work Day,No Aftercare
April 3, Friday	**NO SCHOOL**-Good Friday, No Aftercare
April 22, Thursday	Earth Day School activities focused on our Earth
May 1-21	Star Early Lit (PK3-1st) Star Reading (1st-5th) Star Math (K-5) Testing Window 3
May 10, Monday	Mandatory Parent Meeting for New and Returning Student
May 17-20, Monday-Thursday	**All Grades Programs/Graduations TBD**
May 21, Friday	**Last Day of School** Early Dismissal/Half-Day. **12:00**
May 25th, Monday	**No School; Memorial Day**
May 26 & 27th, Tuesday/Wednesday	**Preschool Bootcamp 9:00-12:00**
May 24-28, Tuesday-Friday	Teacher Work Days. Last day for Teachers 5/28 @ 12:00.
June 1, Monday	Summer Camp Begins