



GORE RANGE
MONTESSORI
Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

“Gore Range Montessori creates an environment that inspires children to develop inner discipline, self-assurance, and a love of learning. We respect the uniqueness of each student by guiding each child to develop skills at periods of greatest readiness and sensitivity. We seek to balance academic and social development to foster independence, respect and responsibility within a supportive community.”

Physical Address: 400 Homestead Drive
Edwards, CO 81632

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2981
Edwards, CO 81632

Phone: 970.926.3333

Email: edwards@gorerangemontessori.com

School Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am-3:30pm

After School Care: Monday-Friday 3:30pm-4:30pm

Admission and enrollment of children In order to find the best fit for families and the school, we require that all applicants submit an application with a \$30 application fee to the school. The school will then contact the applicant families to schedule a Parent Observation and meeting with the Director and a Child Visit. We strive to ensure that each family enrolled in our program understands and supports the Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Gore Range Montessori enrolls new children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years and who are bathroom independent. Registration of a child requires a signed Enrollment Agreement accompanied with a \$130 non-refundable registration fee and the first month's tuition. Information about the admissions process can be found on our website, www.gorerangemontessori.com.

After School Care We offer an After School Care (ASC) program for those families who wish to sign up. ASC is from 3:30-4:30pm and is supervised by one of our regular teachers. Space for ASC is limited, and we ask that families inform the school at least the day before a child will stay for ASC. There is a fee of \$10.00 per day for ASC, which will be added to the monthly invoice. Cancellation of ASC must be made 24 hours in advance in order to avoid the daily charge. Please email the school if you would like to sign up for ASC.

Attendance Regular attendance is essential to success within our Montessori program. We have 3, 4, and 5-day programs available to meet every family's needs and we ask that you recognize the benefit of your child being in the classroom during their scheduled days of school.

Absence If your child will be absent, please call the school by 9am that day

Tardiness Work Time begins between 8:00-8:30am. A teacher will be present from 8:00-8:30am to escort children from the car into school. **We urge all families to arrive to school by 8:30. After that time, it will be necessary for you to park, escort your child to the gate of the school and leave them with the teacher. Please understand that this is disruptive to your child's routine and to the children already involved in their academic day.** If we have left for a hike or field trip when you arrive, we will leave directions for you to find us. If you cannot find us, you are responsible for your child's care. If tardiness becomes an obvious pattern for your family, we will ask you to consider a program that is more suited to your family's needs.

Back-to-School Night At the beginning of the school year, we will host Back-to-School Night. This is a parent-only informational meeting during which you will learn more about our curriculum and philosophy and what to expect in the upcoming year. This is also an opportunity to meet other parents at the school. We urge all parents to attend.

Bathroom Independence Children must be fully bathroom independent before enrolling in Gore Range Montessori. This begins with the ability to acknowledge the need to go. It also includes pulling pants down or dresses up independently, wiping and re-dressing. Once finished, each child is expected to wash his or her hands. While we do anticipate occasional accidents, we do expect your child to stay dry throughout the day, including naptime.

You can help by working on these bathroom skills at home too. Encourage and expect independence. Have your child practice pulling his or her pants down, wiping his or her bottom and pulling his or her pants back up. Also, have your child dress in clothing that is easy to put on and take off independently. In the event of an accident, encourage your child to clean up and change clothes independently as he or she does at school.

Accidents do happen, so please provide a clean set of extra clothes in a gallon sized Ziploc bag to be kept at school. Please label all items.

Behavior Management/Discipline The teachers work closely with each child to help develop age appropriate and respectful behavior. Gore Range Montessori emphasizes a peaceful classroom and expects each student to be respectful and kind to all other students, teachers and to the classroom and classroom materials. Behavioral concerns will be addressed on an individual basis and will be discussed with the parents when deemed necessary. The teachers will work closely with the parents in order to develop a plan to mitigate inappropriate behavior. When necessary, the teachers will enlist the help of the consultation team from Early Childhood Partners for further observation, evaluation and intervention. Any behavior that is hurtful to another child, such as malicious hitting, kicking or biting, can be cause for suspension and/or expulsion.

Birthdays Celebration of Life We recognize that each child's birthday is a very special event and should be celebrated. As your child's birthday approaches, please contact us to schedule your child's Celebration of Life. This takes place at 8:45am on the chosen day. We invite parents to join us to celebrate the life of their child. We also ask that you provide 1-2 printed photos for each year of your child's life (a picture when he/she was born, when he/she was one, when he/she was two...) the week before the Celebration of Life so that your child can make a book to share on line. We ask that you save any special birthday snacks/treats for your celebration outside of school.

Birthday Parties Every child loves a birthday party! We ask that you use the school address list to send out birthday invitations to your child's friends. We will not distribute invitations at school. In addition, please remind your child that if he/she did not invite everyone from school, to refrain from talking about the party at school.

Car Pool Gore Range Montessori teachers will escort your child between your car and the school at morning drop off and afternoon pick up. Please wait in your car for the teacher. We understand the desire to come into the classroom and hope that you will schedule an observation at your convenience.

Please help us expedite carpool by ensuring that your child is ready to get out of the car (shoes on, snacks/toys set aside, lunch box in hand, etc) when you pull into the parking lot. When you pull in, please use one of the first three space closest to the school on the right hand side. If the spaces are full, please begin a line leaving enough room for cars to back out and turn around. Once a space becomes available, pull in, stay in your car and wait for the teacher to come unbuckle your child and help him/her out of the car.

Please refrain from using cell phones during carpool and from engaging teachers in extended conversations.

Child Abuse Gore Range Montessori staff is required by law to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse to the county Department of Social Services or the local law enforcement agency. In order to report suspicion of child abuse, please contact the Child Welfare office of Eagle County at 970-328-7720 or the local police department.

Clothing 1. Children should come to school in comfortable play clothes and shoes that they can move easily in at all times and that they can put on and take off by themselves. We make every effort to use aprons when necessary, but practical play clothing is recommended.

2. Each child must bring a full set of extra **seasonal** clothes in a Ziploc bag. Please label the bag and all articles of clothing with your child's name. The extra clothes will remain at school and are returned to parents if and when they are used. Please remember to send in a new change of clothes if and when your child brings home wet or dirty clothes.

3. Weather changes quickly in Colorado and we go outside every day. In the winter, please make sure your child is equipped with waterproof boots, waterproof mittens, hat, and snowsuit. All of these should be labeled with your child's name. If the weather becomes extremely cold or hot, the teachers will make a safety decision as to stay inside.

4. Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name.

Communication Parents may contact the Director or teachers by phone or email with questions or concerns regarding your child or the school. You may also schedule appointments to address more in-depth questions or concerns regarding your child or the classroom. Your child's teachers' first responsibility is the care and safety of all children. Please set an appropriate time for communication and not when the teachers are actively teaching or "on duty." Even a "quick" question can distract a

teacher enough to endanger the children in their care. Therefore, curbside and entryway conferences are discouraged. These times are not adequate to give you the undivided attention to your concerns that your family deserves.

Conferences Parent/Teacher conferences are held throughout the school year. These conferences will address social/emotional adjustment, academic growth and goals for your child. School will remain open during conferences. You will receive an email a few weeks prior to the conference days to sign up for a conference time. Additional conferences can be scheduled individually whenever necessary or desired.

Discipline The philosophy of our school encourages “respect for myself, respect for others, and respect for the environment.” We follow a peace curriculum that allows for children to resolve conflict with their peers with a teacher as a facilitator. The teacher may also need to address a child’s behavior specifically, at which time a child is asked to stay by the teacher. The behavior is then addressed with the child and the teacher. Physical punishment is never an option. Recurring discipline situations or serious “acting out” that is harmful to the child, another child or disruptive to the class environment will require an immediate conference with the parents, the teachers, and the Director.

Early Pick Up/Late Arrival Young children thrive in a stable and consistent routine. **Picking your child up early or dropping him or her off late is discouraged as it disrupts your child’s routine and that of the entire class.** As much as possible, we urge you to schedule appointments and other after school activities at times that do not disrupt your child’s school schedule. Of course, we understand that scheduling can be difficult at times, and we will do our best to accommodate each family’s schedule. Please let us know if your child will be arriving late to school. Also, if you would like to pick up your child early, please let us know in advance so that we can be sure your child is ready when you get here.

If you arrive outside of our regular carpool times, please park and walk to the front door to drop off or greet your child at the door.

If regular tardiness or early pick up becomes difficult or disruptive for the child or the school, we may ask that you reconsider your child’s schedule. We cannot accommodate late arrivals on field trip days. If you arrive late, and the class has left for a field trip, you may bring your child to meet the class at the field trip. Please refer to the field trip schedule.

Emergencies Gore Range Montessori staff takes every precaution to ensure a safe environment. Our classroom was designed so that we can identify where children are at all times visually. We also

take attendance and continually count the number of children throughout the day so that we can be sure of each child's whereabouts. Even with these precautions there may be incidents that fall outside our control. We have procedures in place for emergencies such as fire, severe weather, evacuation, and intrusion.

Enrollment Gore Range Montessori enrolls children between the ages of 2.5 and 6 years and who are bathroom independent.

Field Trips We take weekly Field Trips during our Summer Session. Parents will be notified of all Field Trips at the beginning of the summer. Each child participating in a Field Trip must have a Field Trip Permission form on file. Children will be transported by a hired van service or by parent volunteers.

Filing a Complaint If anyone should wish to file a complaint with the Department of Human services they may contact: The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Childcare, 1575 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203-1714, (303) 866-5958 or 800-799-5876.

Graduation and End of Year Party Gore Range Montessori holds a graduation ceremony each May to honor the children who will be leaving the school to go on to elementary school. The school will organize and orchestrate the graduation ceremony. We ask that parent volunteers organize the party following the ceremony.

Hand Washing Children's hand washing will be taught when necessary and will be supervised.

Health and Immunizations

Health Form Before the first day of attendance, each child must have a Health Form on file. This form must indicate the child's health status and must be signed and dated both by a parent and an approved health care professional who has seen the child within the last 12 months.

Immunizations If a parent or guardian of a child wishes an exemption from the requirement for immunizations due to religious or personal beliefs, a written statement signed by the child's parent or guardian which states the reason for such an exemption and that the child is in good health must be submitted to the center. Gore Range Montessori may enroll children who are non-immunized.

Holiday Party Gore Range Montessori rents out a space in December for the school's Holiday Party. This is an evening orchestrated by parent volunteers that invites all of the Gore Range Montessori families to come together and celebrate the holiday season together.

Hours Regular school hours are from 8:00am to 3:30pm Monday through Friday. After School Care is optional from 3:30-4:30pm for an extra fee.

Inclement and excessively hot weather In the case of thunder storms, frigid temperatures or excessively hot weather, children will be kept indoors for the duration of the school day.

Inside Shoes Gore Range Montessori requires that each student keep a pair of inside shoes at school. These should be appropriately fitting shoes such as sneakers, Crocs, Natives, etc. that will stay on your child's feet and limit the noise level in the classroom. No slippers please. Your child will change shoes upon arrival at school, for outside time and to go home. Your child should come to school in shoes appropriate for the playground that day such as sneakers in good weather and snow boots in snowy weather. Your child will go home in these shoes.

Illness/Accidents If a child becomes ill or injured at school, we will first notify the parents or emergency contacts. A staff member will stay with an unwell child in the office until a parent or emergency contact arrives. We request that you respond immediately so that staff members can return to their duty in the classroom. Please help us keep our environment healthy by keeping children home free of fever, vomiting, discomfort and medicine for at least **24 hours**. Your child must be well enough to resume a regular full Montessori day, including outdoor play. If a child is sent home sick in the middle of the school day, we expect he/she will stay home the following day.

All health problems must be noted on the child's Health Information form.

The school is required by law to keep an updated Immunization Record for every student. This must be in the child's file before the child's first day of school. A child may be withheld from school until his/her health records are complete. There is no discount on tuition when a child is unable to attend for this reason.

When children have been diagnosed with a communicable illness such as hepatitis, measles, mumps, meningitis, diphtheria, rubella, salmonella, tuberculosis, giardia or shigella, the school must immediately notify the local health department or the Colorado Department of Public Health and

Environment, all staff members and all parents of children enrolled. Children's confidentiality must be maintained.

Parents are asked to report exposure of their child to communicable illness outside of school, and, at the discretion of the Director, the child should not attend school for the period of time prescribed by the child's physician or by the local health department.

Lunch and Snack

Lunch Gore Range Montessori's policy is to promote grace and courtesy and healthy nutrition through education. Lunch tables are prepared with place mats, napkins, dishes and glasses. In order to develop community manners and respect we request:

- no drinks in water bottles, cans, or boxes. We serve organic 2% white milk, almond milk and water served in pitchers.
- only basic foods, such as protein, fruits, vegetables, grains, or dairy products.
- no sweets or "empty calories" such as chips, cookies, cakes, fruit snacks, fruit leathers, etc.
- no food in squeeze containers, as it is impossible to eat graciously when squeezing food into one's mouth.
- hot food can be brought to school in a thermos to keep it warm until lunch time. Teachers will not heat up food in the microwave.
- limit number of food items to 2-4. Too many options overwhelm a child.
- reusable containers are encouraged to minimize our impact on the environment.
- children eat only the food they bring. Sharing with friends is prohibited because of allergies and parental preferences.

Gore Range Montessori stresses the importance of a good diet for a growing child: junk foods, additives, food coloring, hidden sugars, and so on are not only empty calories and devoid of solid nutrition, but are also a low source of energy. Please ensure your child brings only healthy foods to school and respect this policy as a reflection of our respect for the whole child.

Due to the severe nature of nut allergies, we have a Peanut-Free policy. We request that families do not send peanuts or peanut products, such as peanut butter, to school.

Snack Parents rotate snack responsibilities based on a schedule provided by the teachers. Families usually provide snack once or twice a year. When it is your turn, the teacher will send home a snack guideline the week before. Please bring in snack promptly on the morning of your child's first day of the week (Monday or Tuesday). We use the same nutritional guidelines for snacks as we do for lunch. Snacks will consist of fruits, vegetables, crackers/grains, and dairy.

Make Up Days Gore Range Montessori does not offer make up days, sick days or trade days. Our enrollment is full each day. Your child may only attend on the days he or she is enrolled.

Medication Prescription and non-prescription medication shall be dispensed by staff who has completed the Medication Administration training and has been delegated to administer medication. Medication can be dispensed ONLY with the written order of a person with prescriptive authority and with written parental consent. The required Medication Authorization form is available on our website and must accompany any medication given to the school. The written order by the licensed prescribing practitioner must include:

- Child's name
- Licensed prescribing practitioner name, telephone number, and signature
- Date authorized
- Name of medication and dosage
- Time of day medication is to be given
- Route of medication
- Length of time the medication is to be given
- Reason for medication
- Side effects or reactions to watch for
- Special instructions

Medication must be in the original container bearing the original pharmacy label with the RX number, name of medication, date filled, expiration date, physician's name, child's name, and dosage instructions. Never send medication in a child's lunch box or backpack. Please hand the medication directly to the teacher. All medications are kept in a lock box in the office and are dispensed by teachers trained in first aid and the administration of medicine.

Inhalers and Epinephrine: in addition to the above requirements, inhalers and epinephrine will be stored in the office but not in the lockbox for easy access. Inhalers and epinephrine will be carried by the teacher assigned to the corresponding child for any field trips or neighborhood walks.

New Family Orientation Before the beginning of the school year, we will offer an informational meeting during which we will share important information for the start of school. We urge all new parents to attend this meeting.

Observations In order for parents to fully understand and appreciate their child's experience at Gore Range Montessori, we ask that **each** parent come to the school for a Parent Observation at least once during the school year. A Parent Observation can be scheduled any morning between 9:00 and 11:00 and lasts about 30 minutes. This gives you the opportunity to see the classroom and your child in action and also meet with a teacher or Director to ask any questions. A Parent Observation consists of sitting and watching the class quietly. It is important to the integrity of the classroom that observations not disrupt the children and their work in any way. A Parent Observation is especially helpful prior to the Parent-Teacher conferences. Please call the school to schedule your observation time.

Open House There will be two Open Houses each year. On these nights, we invite the children to bring their parents into the classroom to show them the work they do and introduce them to their friends. Please check the calendar for specific dates.

Personal Belongings Children are asked to leave all personal items like stuffed animals, money, jewelry, costumes, toys and other valuables at home. Items such as these are easily lost and are also a distraction during our classroom time. The school cannot be responsible for lost or damaged belongings.

Philosophy and Curriculum Gore Range Montessori follows the Montessori philosophy and curriculum. The lead teachers in the classroom are certified by the American Montessori Society. This philosophy and curriculum includes training and methods for cultivating positive child/teacher relationships and creating and maintaining a socially and emotionally respectful early learning environment. In addition, teachers work closely as a team to provide individualized attention for each child focusing on learning, social and emotional development. When necessary, the teachers will work together to develop a specific learning or behavioral plan for a child. In addition, Gore Range Montessori works with Early Childhood Partners for further observation and evaluation of children when necessary.

Pick-up Time and Procedure

1. Children are to be picked up in front of the school at 3:30pm each school day. We ask you to be patient as a teacher escorts your child to the car. For the children's safety, cell phones are restricted from being used at this time of day on school grounds.
2. If a child is not picked up by 3:40, he or she will be added to the After School Care list, and you will be charged the After School Care fee of \$10.00. If a child is not picked up by 4:30 pm, a late fee of \$15 after 4:30, \$15 for each additional 5 minutes will be charged to your account.

If a child is not picked up by 4:40, the teacher will contact the parents and the people listed on the emergency contact form if necessary. If a child is still not picked up and contact has not been made with any of the Emergency Contacts, we are required to call Eagle County Health and Human Services. If tardiness becomes an obvious pattern for your family, we will ask you to consider a program that is more suited to your family's needs.

3. Colorado State Law requires that all children under 40 lbs. must use a car seat and all children under the age of 8 must use a booster seat.
4. Gore Range Montessori will not release a child to anyone without written authorization from the parent. Teachers will also require identification from the person picking up your child if we do not recognize the person.
5. In the event an unauthorized person attempts to pick up a child, the teacher will not allow the person to enter the school and will call the parents of the child to report the attempt. If the parents do not know the person or do not authorize the person, then the teacher shall call the local police department to report the attempt.
6. If a parent or authorized individual arrives to pick up a child and appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the teacher will encourage the parent/authorized individual to allow her to call someone else to pick up the child. If the parent/authorized individual leaves with the child, the teacher will call 911 and report them.

Rest Time All children are required to rest for at least 20 minutes while at school. We will provide each child with a rest mat and clean sheet to rest on. Please have your child bring in a small blanket for rest time. Do not send pillows, stuffed animals, security blankets due to limited storage and sanitation. Blankets will be washed at school each week. Older children in the class are given the option to have a quiet book time and a teacher-led book chat during rest time.

School Calendar Gore Range Montessori is an 11 month program running from the end of August until the end of July. The school is closed for the following vacations:

Thanksgiving	1 week
Christmas	2 weeks including Christmas and New Year's Day
Winter Break	1 week in February
Spring Break	1 week in April
Memorial Week	1 week in May
August Break	4 weeks in August

Please check the school calendar each year for specific dates of school closures.

Sign In/Sign Out Teachers will have a clipboard during drop-off and pick up with the Sign In/Sign Out sheet. It is required for security purposes that each child be signed in each morning and signed out when picked up.

Special Needs Children Gore Range Montessori welcomes the opportunity to work with children with special needs; however, the number and training of our staff may limit our abilities to best accommodate specific needs.

Summer Session Gore Range Montessori's school year includes the Summer Session for June and July. We are closed for the month of August. In June and July we add various summer activities to our curriculum. This includes Field Trips, Art Projects, Nature Walks, and Water Days. In order to help cover the cost of transportation, there is a \$15 fee per Field Trip plus any admittance fee for a specific Field Trip.

Teacher Work Days Please check the calendar for Teacher Work days. School will be closed on these days to allow for the teachers to have meetings and prepare the classroom. This is a crucial time for your child's teachers to re-group, confer and make curriculum plans to enhance your child's experience at school.

Transportation Transportation for field trips will be provided by a hired van service or by parent volunteers. Children will be seated in appropriate carseats provided either by the parents or by the van service. A teacher will be present in each vehicle to supervise the children. In the event of an emergency on the road, the teacher will remain in direct supervision of the children at all times. The teacher will contact the Director who will contact parents if necessary.

Tuition and fees Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. If tuition is received after the 7th of the month, you will be charged a \$15.00 late fee on your next month's invoice. If tuition is received after the 15th of the month, you will be charged an additional \$30 late fee on your next month's invoice. In order to keep up with the rising costs of running a quality program, tuition will be reviewed on a yearly basis with the possibility of increasing each year.

Visitors Visitors must check in with a staff member and sign in indicating when they visited and the purpose of the visit. Spontaneous visits are discouraged but observations by appointment are welcome.

Video Viewing/Television Gore Range Montessori does not use television or videos within the classroom.

Volunteers Volunteerism allows parents to contribute to the school. We understand that each family has different commitments and schedules; for this reason, we try to offer different volunteer options for those who are interested. We only expect families to do what they are able to for the school. Gore Range Montessori rents space in December for a Holiday Party and in May for an End of the Year Party. We do rely on parent volunteers to organize these events. Opportunities to volunteer include setting up the space, organizing the food, donating beverages or food items, etc. Other volunteer opportunities include helping supervise children at lunch and recess or coming to the class to present a special activity or read a book. Guidance regarding these options will be offered by the teachers prior to the volunteer being in the classroom.

Withdrawal from the program Gore Range Montessori requires one-month advance notification in writing if a child will be leaving the program. This will allow for the staff to review applications, schedule observations, and place the right child in the program. If the staff of Gore Range Montessori determine that the program is not a good fit for a family, the school will give one-month advance notice in writing to allow the family to find another program for the child.