



Parent Handbook
2026-2027

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: 970.331.2067
Email: edwards@gorerangemontessori.com

School Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00am-3:30pm
After School Care: Monday-Friday 3:30pm-4:30pm

Staff

Elisa Cohen - Lead Montessori Teacher
Marybeth Bahan - Director / Classroom Manager
Ariana Peralta - Assistant Montessori Volunteer / Classroom Manager
Sylvan Ellefson - Owner
Kristin Tang - Advisor

****PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE HANDBOOK. HIGHLIGHTED AREAS ARE AREAS OF CHANGE OR
NEED FOR MORE OF YOUR ATTENTION****

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. We will contact families in our applicant pool the winter before the child is eligible to enroll. 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 3* and 6 years old and who are bathroom independent. Registration of a child requires a signed Enrollment Agreement accompanied with a \$150 non-refundable registration fee and the first month's tuition. Information about the admissions process can be found on our website, www.gorerangemontessori.com.

*Children under the age of 3 years old will require special approval from the director and staff

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 a week** before a child will stay for ASC. There is a fee of \$15.00 per day for ASC, which will be added to your 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 different families' 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 or email the school by 9am that day.
- **Tardiness** Dropoff if between 8:00-8:30am. A teacher will be present from 8:00-8:30am to greet children at the door. **We highly discourage any dropoff after 8:30am unless it is for a scheduled appointment. An important part of the Montessori curriculum is an uninterrupted work period so that the child can practice their concentration, coordination, and independence with as little interruption as possible.** 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 and you will be notified through Transparent Classroom notification or email.**

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 labeled with your child's name 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 will provide

the celebration of life book template and your child will make the book at home and then bring in for their celebration. 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 greet your child at the gate. We understand the desire to come into the classroom; however, drop off and pick up time is not the ideal time for this. We hope that you will schedule an observation at your convenience. Please help your child transition into school by sharing a quick and positive goodbye.

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

- 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.
- Practical clothing is recommended.
- **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.

- The 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.
- Please label all articles of clothing with your child's name.
- The winter gear will stay at school but will be returned home prior to DEcember and February breaks

Communication

Parents may contact the Teachers/Directors via Transparent Classroom and the owner directly 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. Please do not discuss school matters via text message or phone call with teachers, please utilize Transparent Classroom for all communication with teachers and staff.

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 before the conference days to sign up for a conference time slot. 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 conflicts with their peers with a teacher as a facilitator. The teacher may also need to address a child’s behavior specifically, at which time the 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. 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 for an appointment. 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 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 NOT 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 visually identify where children are at all times. We also take attendance and continually count the number of children throughout the day to ensure each child’s whereabouts. Even with these precautions, there may be incidents that fall outside our control. The following procedures have been established:

- **Active shooter on-premises drill:** In the event there is an individual actively engaged in harming people in the school, the teachers will attempt to move all children either out of the nearest exit and walk to Evacuation Site #1, or into the storage closet and close and lock the door. The on-site director will call 911.

- **Evacuation away from facility:** In the event it is necessary to evacuate the school and the premises, the school will follow this procedure:

Evacuation Site #1: The Cohen Residence, 65 Spring Creek Court, Edwards, CO. (.3miles from school) Using the daily sign-in sheet to ensure all children are present, all teachers will escort the children out of the school through the playground to the back gate, up the steps and to the sidewalk to the Cohen residence. Once all children and teachers are at the Cohen's residence, the director will contact parents and update them on the situation.

Evacuation Site #2: Edwards Post Office. Using the daily sign-in sheet to ensure all children are present, all teachers will escort the children out of the school to the sidewalk along Homestead Drive. They will take the walking trail just north of the school to walk to the Edwards Business Park, walk through the business park, through the parking lot and across the street to the post office. Once all children and teachers are at the Post Office, the director will contact parents and update them on the situation.

Any children with disabilities will have an evacuation plan in place and implemented by one of the teachers.

- **Fire :** The classroom has a fire evacuation plan, which is enacted when the alarm sounds. One teacher leads the children to the designated meeting place outside by the sign at the entrance of the parking lot. Another teacher surveys the entire classroom and takes attendance. If we are unable to return to the classroom, the director will notify parents to pick up their child at our meeting place.
- **Lockdown drill :** In the event the teachers and children are restricted to the interior of the building and the building must be secured, the teachers will ensure all children are in the classroom and will close and lock all windows and doors.
- **Lost child :** The Director is notified immediately and staff will conduct an immediate and thorough search of the school grounds. The parent or emergency contact is alerted to the situation. The police are notified if the parents or emergency contacts cannot be located.
- **Shelter-in-place drill :** In the event that the teachers and children need to seek shelter from an external threat, the teachers will close and lock all doors and escort the children into the storage closet, close and lock the door. The director will call 911.
- **Severe Weather :** If parents are unable to pick up the children due to severe weather, staff will stay at school until all children have been picked up. Meals will be prepared with available food and sleeping arrangements will be made if necessary.

- **Reunification with Families:** After an emergency or disaster, the director will notify parents with information about reunification.

Enrollment

Gore Range Montessori enrolls children between the ages of 3 and 6 years and who are bathroom independent.

Field Trips

We take 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 enter elementary school. The school will organize and orchestrate the graduation ceremony. We invite parent volunteers to organize a party following the ceremony.

Hand Washing

Children's handwashing will be taught when necessary and supervised. We encourage handwashing after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after using a tissue, etc.

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 be signed and dated by both a parent and an approved health care professional who has seen the child within the last 12 months. All forms can be found on transparent Classroom.

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.

Hours

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

Inclement and excessively hot weather

In the case of thunderstorms, 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 indoor shoes with closed toes and heels.

An example of appropriate shoes would be Crocs (without ghiblets). 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 Covid-19, 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. In order to develop community manners and respect, we:

- Serve water in pitchers.
- Please ask that only basic foods, such as protein, fruits, vegetables, grains, or dairy products are packed..
- Please ask for no sweets or "empty calories" such as chips, cookies, cakes, fruit snacks, fruit leathers, etc.
- Please ask for no food in squeeze containers, as it is impossible to eat graciously when squeezing food into one's mouth.
- Allow hot food to be brought to school in a thermos to keep it warm until lunchtime, but teachers cannot heat up food in the microwave.

- Please ask you to limit the number of food items to 2-4. Too many options overwhelm a child.
- Please ask you to use reusable containers, as they help minimize our impact on the environment.
- Ask kindly, for the children to not share with friends 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.

Snack

Parents rotate snack responsibilities based on a schedule provided by the teachers. Families usually provide snacks once or twice a year. When it is your turn, the teacher will send home a snack guideline the week before. Parents will be asked to provide a prepared snack, based on the school's list, that is consistent with the school's high nutritional standards. Please bring in snacks promptly on the morning of your child's first day of the week in which you are assigned. We use the same nutritional guidelines for snacks as we do for lunch. Snacks will consist of protein, 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 a staff member 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. This form can be found on the Transparent Classroom forms under your child's name. 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 / Cubby Visit

Before the start of the school year, we will hold an informational meeting to 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 for prospective parents and families.

Personal Belongings

Children are asked to leave all personal items like stuffed animals, money, jewelry, costumes, toys and other accessories at home. Items such as these are easily lost, often are not safe for all in a child care setting, 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. 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 at the school gate at 3:30pm each school day. We ask you to be patient as your child gets ready to go home. 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 3:30, he or she will be added to the After School Care list, and you will be charged the After School Care fee of \$15.00. 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. **Persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to sign children out of school.**
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 beginning of September until the end of July. The school is closed for the following vacations:

October	1 week
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 (marks end of school year)

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

Sign In/Sign Out

Teachers/Parents will utilize Transparent Classroom to sign children in and out of school. In the event of no service or power outage, 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 half of July. We are closed until the middle of August. In June and July, we add various summer activities to our curriculum, which include our outdoor Montessori classroom and three field trips. To help cover transportation costs, there is a \$40 fee per Field Trip, plus any admission 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, prepare the classroom, or engage in professional development. 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 car seats 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 15th of each month. If tuition is received after the 25th of the month, you will be charged a \$15.00 late fee on your next month's invoice. If tuition is received after the 30th 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 a typical 3% to 5% increase each year based on local inflation.

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.

Volunteers

We do not use parent volunteers in the classroom; however, we do welcome parents to schedule times to visit the classroom.

Withdrawal from the program

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