

LaJolla Montessori SCHOOL



Infant Community Parent Handbook

2026-2027

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Welcome

Welcome to La Jolla Montessori School! We strive to provide an exceptional early childhood educational program based upon Dr. Maria Montessori's principles of human and child development. At La Jolla Montessori School, we focus on the young child's primary goal of self-construction. Our curriculum creates opportunities for your child to develop his or her own will, self-control, concentration and intellect. Utilizing time-tested Montessori practices, our home-like environments engender self-esteem, independence and a sense of responsibility. We are honored that you have chosen our school to nurture, support, and love your child. Thank you.

Overview of La Jolla Montessori School

Situated on the campus of the Beth-El Congregation, we also share our space with Beth Montessori School and the Montessori Institute of San Diego (an AMI training center). La Jolla Montessori School, however, has no affiliation with any religious orientation or organizations.

We currently enroll children ages six months to six years in mixed-aged classrooms. We follow Dr. Montessori's pedagogy to design classrooms that allow for children to experience maximum independence and movement throughout the day. Materials in our curriculum are child-sized, age-appropriate, and made of natural materials. Our teachers prepare individualized lesson plans for each child and introduce new lessons to children in a one-on-one format. We offer a 5-day program for children in the Infant community with half-day (morning) and full-day care options depending on availability.

Our year-long Infant Care program serves children ages six to 18 months and supports the youngest members of our community in learning how to feel safe and secure at school, how to move freely and explore a classroom environment, and how to independently feed themselves. For most children, this will be their first school experience. Children who enter our program are learning to be mobile and move safely and purposefully about the environment. As they gain control over their movements and become steady walkers, they can seamlessly transition into our toddler program. We offer a 5-day program for all infants with a half-day or full-day option.

Our Toddler Program continues to offer a home-like environment but introduces the concept of schooling through individualized presentations of classroom materials; formal language lessons; and group time for stories, songs, and movement activities. We offer a 5-day program for all toddlers with a half-day, full-day, and full-day option with extended care. Around the age of three, children experience a developmental shift in language, problem-solving and self-awareness. Our mixed-age Primary Program focuses on developing the young child's concentration, communication, problem-solving and sense of self. Our Primary teachers also support the young child in orienting to the traditional language and mathematics learning and the expectations of group learning school environments. We offer a 5-day program for all Primary students with a half-day option for children under the age of 4 years old.

Admissions & Enrollment Policies

It is the policy of La Jolla Montessori School to admit students without regard to race, culture, color, creed, national and ethnic origin, gender/sex, religion, or ability/disability. In both staff hiring and student enrollment, we encourage diversity and inclusion. We do offer priority to children who have siblings already enrolled in the school, staff of the Bishop's School, and families with prior Montessori experience.

Our program accepts children with special needs as long as we can provide a safe, supportive environment for the child to grow. We have expertise working in partnership with specialists (speech and learning pathologists, occupational therapists) to meet each child's needs. When we identify that a child has special medical or learning needs, our teachers will meet with parents / guardians to

review the child's care requirements and create a learning plan. Consistent with our philosophy of providing the best and most relevant service, all admissions are on a trial basis. We reserve the right to observe and evaluate each child to see where they would best fit within our environment.

Tuition is due prior to the first of each month (see Appendix for Schedule of Tuition and Fees). La Jolla Montessori School will give a 30-day notification of any tuition changes. All families are asked to pay a non-refundable deposit of the last month's tuition. We understand that modern life often presents families with challenges such as relocation for work. We ask that if you need to leave LJMS for any reason, please give the school a 30-day written notice so that we may fill the spot in the classroom. Families will be responsible for tuition during this 30-day period.

Hours of Operation

La Jolla Montessori School is open year-round based on the LJMS calendar. Please note: our calendar includes staff professional development days in which our school closes in order for staff to prepare their environments and complete mandatory training. Ongoing training and professional development for childcare staff is a requirement in order for us to maintain our licence.

Hours of Operation for Our Infant Program are:

Monday - Friday: 8:00 - 3:30pm (academic year)

Monday - Friday: 8:00 - 3:00pm (summer)

La Jolla Montessori School does not currently offer an Extended Day Program (EDP) for our Infant Care program.

Infant Community Classroom Contacts

1. Ms. Lilia Garcia, Lead Teacher (8:00 am - 3:30pm)

mslililjms@gmail.com

2. Assistant Teacher (7:00am - 3:00pm)

TBD

3. Assistant Teacher (8:00 - 4:30pm)

TBD

Infant Classroom Guidelines & Procedures

A Montessori classroom for infants, sometimes referred to as "The Nido" (Italian for "nest"), accommodates non-mobile, crawling, and infants learning to walk in a peaceful classroom environment. Here, the infant safely explores, feeling secure in the presence of loving adult caregivers. The environment includes developmentally appropriate furniture and materials. **Safety is paramount**, but equipment that limits a child's freedom of movement is avoided. Instead, specially designed furniture supports your child's budding independence, including bars for pulling up, mirrors to reflect body movement, and a sleeping area with individual floor beds/mats, and child-sized tables and chairs rather than high chairs. Our teachers also believe in the inherent power of the young child's mind to effortlessly absorb language. For this reason, we also offer a bilingual immersion program in which one teacher speaks only in English (and provides English-language lessons) and another teacher speaks only in Spanish (and provides Spanish-language lessons).

Our toddler communities are mixed-aged and composed of children between 6 and 18 months of age. There is a **4:1 child-teacher ratio** with no more than 10 children in the environment. The goal of this program is to provide the young child with a learning experience away from home and parents, in a home-like environment. Young children learn to feel safe away from their parents in the presence of loving guides, consistent routines, and interesting work. Teachers strive to foster each child's emerging independence, development of a healthy self-image, and a positive attitude toward attending school.

During the first three years of life, your child develops more rapidly than at any other time. During this phase, your child absorbs large amounts of information from the environment through observation and experiences. These are the years that lay the foundation for later learning—and the stronger the foundation, the more the child will be able to build upon it.

Our Infant Program offers a curriculum that emerges from each child's unique skills and interests. Based on daily observations, teachers introduce new materials and activities that pique curiosity and stimulate learning. Learning objectives for your child at this age include developing skills such as language, concentration, problem-solving, visual discrimination, and physical coordination. We integrate activities that promote independence, order, coordination, and concentration, as well as support social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The prepared environment is organized into six areas:

- **Movement**: The infant room is an open-plan area that is designed to meet your little one's need to gain control over their body and allow for freedom of movement
- **Eye-Hand co-ordination**: This area offers a range of activities that encourage your child to use two hands to work together to gain fine motor skills.
- **Language**: This area has real objects, replicas, picture cards of their familiar and wider environment, and picture books in the book corner. Language is brought to life daily with songs, stories and rhymes. A display of family photos encourages the children to recognize members of their families.
- **Eating**: Around 7 to 8 months, the children can begin to sit together to enjoy their meal times. They learn to use a fork and spoon to eat, and to drink from a small glass. As they become ready, they are introduced to all the food served in the community.
- **Art**: This area has activities such as play dough, painting on an easel or large paper, using stickers etc. The activities give children opportunities to use their senses to explore different textures, materials, colour, and also gain control of a variety of tools such as large children-sized pencils, crayons, chalks, paintbrushes, rolling-pins etc.

- Music / Singing & Outdoor learning: Children love music and singing. We set aside time each day for gathering to listen to music and sing every day in the Infant community. We provide children with simple musical instruments to accompany their singing. The outdoor area is an extension of the indoor learning environment, with activities designed to strengthen their large muscles and help to develop their physical skills. We also believe in the importance of connecting children to nature and make time each week to take children for nature walks in strollers around the property.

Daily Schedule

*** Please note that infants are changed, fed, and napped on an as-needed basis. This is a general schedule that we work towards with older infants who are preparing to transition to the toddler room.***

The routines of everyday living are the foundation of our Infant program:

8:00 - 8:30am Arrival, Child-Led Play, Breakfast

8:30 - 9:00am Diapering

9:00 - 10:30am Morning nap and/or child-led play (depending on age)

10:00 - 10:30am AM snack / Bottles

10:30 - 11:00am Diapering

11:00 - 11:30am Music and Movement / Stories / Sensory Play

11:30 - 12:00pm Lunch / Bottles

12:00 - 12:30pm Diapering

12:30 - 2:30/3:00pm Afternoon Nap

2:30 - 3:00pm Diapering

3:00 - 3:30pm PM snack / Bottles

3:30 - 3:55pm Pick-Up Time

Morning Arrival

Children enrolled in the infant program may arrive as early as 8am. Upon arrival, please use the ProCare App to sign in your child and complete the daily notes. Teachers will review daily notes to understand how well your child slept the night before and how much they have eaten prior to arriving at school. The app will notify the teacher that you have arrived. Please use your FOB to enter Gate 4 and walk your child to the infant room. We ask that you wait outside the door to be greeted by the teacher, as we do not wear shoes in the infant room. Please alert staff if an alternate guardian (i.e. grandparent, nanny) will be dropping off your child. Additional guardians will need to be buzzed in via Gate 4. They will be assigned a "pin," and they must use this pin to sign in your child when they arrive.

Our goal is to have all infants arrive between 8:00 - 8:15am. If you are running late or plan to drop off your child later than 8:30am, please let us know ahead of time by messaging in the ProCare App.

Feeding, Diapering, and Rest

Parents must provide a cold breakfast and lunch for their child each day. For infants eating solid food, parents should send a meal that is cut and/or prepared to their child's age/preference and that can be served cold. In addition to breakfast and lunch times, children are served an AM and PM snack each day. LJMS will provide the two daily snacks. A weekly menu is sent via ProCare each week prior. If your child has specific needs (i.e. sensitivity, vegan, organic foods, daily milk, or any specific brands or foods), you will need to provide those foods and beverages for your child. Forks, spoons, and bibs (as needed) are provided for meal times.

Nursing mothers are allowed / encouraged to come to **nurse their child in the rocking chair in the classroom or on the couch in the Lower Building office** (if the rocking chair is occupied). We simply ask that you communicate with your child's teacher (via ProCare) to communicate your nursing needs. Upon entering the facility, we ask that you remove your shoes and wash your hands when entering the infant care room. Please wait by the sink area for your child's teacher to invite you into the room, deliver your child, and invite you to the nursing area. Please follow the same procedure after nursing is complete.

As infants transition to solid food, we will follow parent's guidance regarding introducing new foods per the 'Infant Needs and Services Plan'. It is important to note that La Jolla Montessori School is a **peanut and tree nut-free environment**. Nut-butters, in particular, are really dangerous in the early childcare setting because the children have not yet developed the internal hygiene standards we need to ensure the safety of all children. Please do not send any nut-butter spreads (including Nutella).

- We recommend alternatives, such as sunflower seed butter (sun-butter) or pumpkin seed butter, that taste similarly and can be spread on crackers and sandwiches. In the past, we have found parents can make the switch to these alternatives and most children don't notice the change.
- We ask that you please pack a low-fat, low-sugar, and high-protein lunch.
- **Please pre-cut food** for your child into bite-sized portions. Smaller pieces offer the young child more opportunities to practice using utensils.
- Some foods, such as popcorn, represent choking hazards that cannot be served at school.

Diapering: Parents must provide LJMS with diapers, wipes, and any diaper cream for all children who are not using the potty / toilet. Diapers must open and close on the sides for ease of changing (no Pull-Ups please). Young infants are changed while lying down on a changing table. However, as children become more steady standing, we transition children from having their diaper changed in a lying down position to a standing upright position. This is part of the preparation for using the potty / toilet. Standing diaper changes allow for the child to be more physically, cognitively, and emotionally aware of what is happening during the diaper change. [Read more about the transition to standing diaper changes here.](#)

Bathroom independence is often hampered by the prolonged use of paper diapers and pull-ups. A child can become toileting independent by the time they are walking well, around 15-18 months. Thus some children, who show signs of both physical and psychological readiness, may begin the process of toileting while enrolled in the infant community. Teachers will discuss the process of supporting toilet independence with parents at that time. When mutually agreed upon, parents will be responsible for providing LJMS with labeled underpants in the event of an accident. See section on Toileting in LJMS Toddler Handbook for more information.

Rest: The State of California requires that a full-day care program for infants offer designated rest/nap times in the afternoon. Depending on the age of your child, our scheduled nap/rest time is between 12:00 - 3:00pm. Younger children (under 1yr) may also rest / nap on an as-needed basis, and are offered additional rest times throughout the day. With this in mind, we cannot promise an alternative to nap after midday meals. If you do not wish for your child to rest/nap at the scheduled time, part-day enrollment will be required.

To ensure safe sleep, LJMS Teachers will complete a visual wellness check for every child under 2yrs every 15 minutes to ensure safe sleeping. We keep records of sleep checks using ProCare as part of our log of napping (LIC 9227).

Daily Reports

Throughout the day, teachers carefully track your child's quality of meals throughout the day, diapering (type of movement, application of diaper cream), amount of time sleeping, and any incidents (behavior or 'ouch reports'). Our school uses a childcare management system called ProCare to record and share data through 'daily reports'. These reports are designed to inform and support parents with your child's food intake / nutrition, elimination, and rest. Reports are entered by the teacher into our ProCare system during nap time and batched by the office around 1:30pm (half day) and 4:00pm (full day).

What to Send with your Child Each Day

*** Please note that no items (i.e. toys) other than those listed below are permitted in the Infant Room. ***

1. **Leak Proof Water Bottle:** Please bring a clean, filled, labeled water bottle every day for your child. This enables your child to have access to water throughout the day. Water bottles will go home at the end of the day to be washed by parents. Please ensure that the water bottle does not leak, as your child will be carrying it with him/her wherever they go during the day.
2. **Formula or Breast Milk:** Parents must provide either formula or breast milk in labeled containers and/or bottles so that they are easy to prepare and feed your child. We only use dry formula. Please premeasure each bottle so that it is ready to be used, but do not mix. We will add water and mix at the time of feeding. We are required to keep an extra supply of formula or breast milk on site in the event of emergencies. We will send home used bottles each day for you to clean.
3. **Meals:** Parents are required to pack a cold breakfast and lunch for their child each day. Please make sure to label your child's food and drink containers. Please pack your child's meals in ice daily (we do not have enough refrigerator space to store all of the lunch boxes. We will place your child's lunch in a cubby upon arrival and we will send it home each day.
4. **Milk** (optional): For children who are transitioning away from a bottle, milk is optional. If you choose to send milk for snack or lunch, please bring it in a labeled container. We will send home this container each day.
5. **Diapers, Wipes, Cream:** Parents must provide all diapers, wipes and diaper cream (as needed) for children who are not using the potty. Diapers must open and close on the sides for ease of changes. When mutually agreed upon, parents will be responsible for providing LJMS with labeled underpants in the event of an accident.
6. **Bedding:** Parents must provide bedding for rest time. We ask that you provide two labeled, fitted crib sheets on a weekly basis. Infants sleeping in cribs are not permitted to have blankets. You may, however, send them a sleep sack in the place of a blanket. Children who sleep on a cot are permitted to have a blanket and/or a small comfort object. Bedding will be sent home weekly. Please wash and return on Monday so that we always have adequate bedding for your child.

7. **Changes of Clothing** (see below): Parents must provide at least four changes of clothing that will be stored in your child's cubby. Please be sure the clothing you send is appropriate for the weather conditions. If/when your child requires a change of clothing, we will be sent home in a wet-bag to be washed. Please replace this clothing (for the cubby) immediately.
8. **Shoes** (as appropriate): When your infant is ready to wear shoes or booties, please send one new/clean pair to be kept in their cubbies. We are required to have both indoor and outdoor shoes in the infant room.

*** Note: All items must be labeled. We encourage you to order a package of labels for your child. We have found the brand called [Name Bubbles](#) to be great as they do not come off in the dishwasher or laundry. Any items not labeled will be **labeled with a permanent marker** by the teacher upon arrival. ***

Reusable wet bags: In order to reduce plastic waste, parents are asked to purchase and label **two reusable wet bags** for sending home wet / soiled clothes. Please send your child to school with **4 changes of clothes** (shirt, pants, underwear and socks). Each item of clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name¹. These clothes will be stored in a cubby that your child can access. Whenever your child's clothing has become wet, for any reason, he/she will be offered clean, dry clothes to change into from their classroom's supply. Wet and/or soiled clothing will be sent home at the end of the day in a wet bag. For each set of clothes we send home, we ask that you please send back a fresh set. We are not responsible for unmarked clothing.

Indoor vs. Outdoor shoes: **Please send your child in closed-toed, comfortable shoes.** Ideally, indoor shoes have a light sole so that the child is still using their toes to grip the ground for balance. Outdoor shoes, in contrast, have solid tread to prevent slipping on the outdoor patios / playground. Sandals and Crocs are not permitted. In contemplating shoes for your child, we ask that you purchase shoes that they can put on and remove on their own. If your child is just entering our program, shoes should be fastened with Velcro. Around the age of 4, we begin teaching the children how to tie bows, we may ask that your child come to school in shoes with laces so that they may practice.

Birthdays Celebrations

In Montessori schools, birthday celebrations represent the child's introduction to history and time. These celebrations help to ground the child in time and space. In the Infant classroom, birthday celebrations contain two parts. The first part involves telling the story of the child's life. The week prior to the celebration, we ask that you prepare a brief biography and 2-3 photographs of your child's first year of life (i.e. first words, favorite toys, special trips).

Then, on the day of the celebration, your child's teachers will gather a few children together to tell the story of your child's life. At this age, parents are invited to be a part of the celebration. Together we will sing "Happy Birthday" in both English and Spanish. If you choose to attend, we ask that you allow the teachers to take photos of the celebration and share them with you.

The last part of the celebration is optional. We invite your child to bring a gift for the class. This gift will remain in the class as a reminder of the celebration / passage of time. We encourage parents to choose the gift with their child. Gifts might include a favorite book (non-fiction or realistic fiction only), a cuddly plush toy, or a carefully chosen plant is always appreciated.

¹ Parents can label items on tags using a sharpie. Smaller items, or items without tags, can be labeled with your child's initials.

Transition to Toddler

We anticipate children in our Toddler program will transition into the Toddler Program around 18 months. It is possible that this transition may occur earlier should the child show developmental readiness. These indicators include beginning to communicate needs verbally (or via sign), ability to be steady on feet (signs of running!), need for more intellectually complex materials, larger body size and need for a bigger environment.

We require all parents to observe the Toddler environments before their child makes the transition. Parents may observe unobtrusively from the one-way windows. Observation, attending Parent Education events, and consulting with your child's guides will provide you with valuable information and insight about LJMS's holistic Montessori program and how it meets the developmental needs of your child from 18 months to 6 years old. Children enrolled in our Toddler Program benefit from the mixed-age classroom by listening to older children verbalize their interests, needs and boundaries and by observing how the older children work and interact with each other. Children enrolled in our Primary Program who are three years old benefit from being in the mixed-age classroom: observing how the older children work to care for the environment, play language and mathematics games, and explore the natural and cultural world. Families staying for the kindergarten year are offered a \$200 credit, per month their child was enrolled, to use towards tuition for the kindergarten year.

Understanding Pushing, Hitting, Scratching & Biting

Conflict between young children is complex. **Young children who react by pushing / hitting / scratching / biting, in general, do not understand that they are hurting the other child.** For this reason, teachers must closely monitor and redirect any child who is hitting, pushing, or biting. They may push or hit another child to get something they want or to 'get away' from a child in their space.

Infants are still in the process of acquiring language to meet their own needs. They often view their mouth as a tool for solving problems and may bite as a way to cope with frustration, anxiety or anger. From the young child's perspective, pushing, hitting, and biting are often effective strategies to get attention, cope with feelings of being crowded, and express anger. But these behaviors are a type of 'misbehavior' that can present danger to the teachers and other children in the class. As educators, our task is to help develop all children's capacities to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way.

If your child is involved in an incident of pushing / hitting / scratching / biting, the teachers will notify you via an incident report and may follow up with a phone call. This report will offer clues as to what preceded the incident and how the teachers responded to the incident. Dr. Montessori believed that children 'misbehaved' when the demands of the environment (social or physical) exceed the child's capacity. Thus, teachers will work with families to observe and modify the environment and to offer the child alternative strategies and language for coping with frustration.

We have a set of procedures for responding to biting incidents at school that are designed to help us to identify why children are biting and to provide or identify outside sources of support. Our protocol involves: documentation, increasing proximity and blocking, offering language and alternate coping strategies, inviting parents to observe, and making referrals to specialists as needed (see Appendices). We will work with families to both protect children from getting hurt during conflict but also support the child who is reacting with these behaviors.

However, in order to protect all children in the classroom, repeated incidences of these behaviors cannot be tolerated at LJMS. If a second instance of biting occurs, teachers will schedule a meeting with the child's family, the teachers, and the director to discuss how we can work together as a team to eliminate the child's need to bite. Repeated biting, despite interventions, may signal the child is not ready to be enrolled in a formal schooling setting and may result in a child being dismissed.

Attendance, Arrival, and Departure

Student Attendance Policy

There are no transportation services provided by La Jolla Montessori School. School attendance is required five (5) days a week, except for holidays. Please see the school calendar for details. Dr. Montessori found through her observations that children have a great need for order. It is very important that your child comes to school every day that they are well so that they will feel more comfortable as they are familiar and happy within their environment. In respecting this need of the child we would like to stress the importance of your consistent and prompt arrival to school every day that your child is well.

Late arrival and early departure can be disruptive for children and classrooms.

Children need firm consistency and repetition to help them define the boundaries and limits of their home and school environments. Each classroom has a morning routine that involves greeting the children, assisting them to put away their belongings, inviting them to the bathroom (toileting / diaper check), and washing their hands. The teachers wait to begin new lessons until the class has arrived and is settled. Children who are late are more likely to be greeted by support staff (not their teacher).

Arriving on-time represents a type of parent involvement with our school. If you are having a hard time getting your child out the door in the mornings, please see the Director as she has many helpful ideas. At 9:00am our support staff begin their in-classroom duties. Parents who arrive after 9:00am are required to park and may need to wait until staff are available to greet and receive your child.

Arrival and Departure Information

We share our beautiful campus with the Congregation of Beth-El community, Beth Montessori, and the Montessori Institute of San Diego (an AMI training center). In order to facilitate safe arrival and departure for children and the smooth flow of traffic, we have a one-way driveway, use two entrances, and follow a staggered arrival and departure schedule. In order to respect our neighbors, we need to do our best to have compassionate but expedient transitions to and from school. **Please drive slowly when on campus.** Your attention in this matter is greatly appreciated.

We have three active drop-off / pick-up Gates with three spaces available. Please pull forward to the first available space. Some families have multiple children and have their car seats on the passenger side. For the safety of our staff and children, **please avoid passing while teachers are unloading children.** If LJMS staff see that the line is getting backed up, they may pause drop off to allow cars to pass.

Minnows Room (Gate 4 arrival and departure):

School starts promptly at 8:15.

Please drop your child off at Gate 1 between 8:00 and 8:15am.

Please park in a designated spot and walk your child in.

Half-Day Program Infant pick-up at Gate 4 is between 12:00-12:15pm.

The Full-Day Program Infant pick-up at Gate 4 is between 3:30 and 4:00pm.

Montessori schools strive to develop the young child's sense of physical, emotional and (eventually) intellectual independence. Your emotions at drop-off communicate to your child how you feel about them going to school. Please make your goodbyes **cheerful and brief.** If you show hesitation, then the child may feel that this isn't a safe or fun place and could feel anxiety. We want school to be a wonderful experience for each child and you can help in many ways.

Our campus has limited space for parking and drop off. There will be two MARKED spaces for

parents to park to bring in their infant via Gate 4. If these spaces are not available, please remain in your car and pull forward to the space first drop off space (in front of the hydrant). Because we need you to walk your child to the classroom, **we ask that you stay in your car until one of these three spaces is available.**

Remember that even when you love your work, there can be days when it can be difficult to get up and go to work. Children have these same feelings about school. They may love their school, their teachers, their friends, and their work - and still have days when they find it hard to go to school. On these days, they may cry or say they don't want to go to school. Dr. Montessori believed it was important to honor the child's feelings while at the same time maintaining consistency and routine. At La Jolla Montessori, we do our best to help children process their feelings so that they can move on with having a productive day. Please do not worry if your child is crying when you leave. Most children stop crying by the time they reach the classroom. Others stop crying once they are greeted by their teacher and their teacher can guide them towards "work that helps them feel better." We will always call parents if any child cries in a way that is inconsolable. And, you can always call us back to check in if it was a rough morning at home.

When it is time to pick your child up, the two marked spaces will no longer be available. (LJMS support staff who arrive around 9am will use those for parking). Please pull into one of the marked drop off spots and park there to receive your child.

Lastly, we conduct health checks upon arrival. **Any child who appears to staff to show signs of fever / illness may be excluded from class and will have to be taken home.**

Procure Sign-In and Sign-Out Policies

The State of California mandates that parents / authorized guardians must sign in and out their children. Our school must keep a record of when the child arrived at school, if they transitioned to our extended day program, and when you picked them up. In order to facilitate this record-keeping and to provide parents with a tool for communicating with their child's teacher about changes to drop off / pick up, we have adopted the Procure automated system.

To use Procure for communication with the teachers, parents must download the Procure App to their phones. Procure App can be used with iPhones or android phones. Parents who do not want to download the App to their phone must still create a Procure account. Parents will receive an invitation to create an account. Once they create an account, they will be given a unique 4-digit pin that can be used for sign-in / sign-out. Procedures for sign-in / sign-out:

- Using the App on your phone. When you arrive on campus, open the Procure App. Go to the 'Sign-In' icon on the bottom.
 - Ideally, the App will use your GPS to tell you that you have arrived at school and will display your child / children's names. Tap their names, and use your finger to sign them in.
 - There is a place to put a note to the teacher - but we ask that you are conscious of the line behind you. Please avoid holding up the line to send a note to the teacher. Once you drive down the hill, you can pull into the parking lot at Beth-El and send a note.
 - In the event that the GPS does not recognize that you are on campus, the teachers will have a QR code that you can scan. This QR code will 'activate' the sign-in process and display your child / children's names. Tap their names, and use your finger to sign them in.
- Using the Parent Kiosk. At each gate, the teachers can use their phones as a 'kiosk' for signing

the children in / out. To sign your children in/out, you or your authorized pick-up MUST know your unique four-digit pin number.

- Teachers will type in your pin number. The App will display your child / children's names. Tap their names, and use your finger to sign them in / out.
- If you forget to bring your phone, teachers must ask you to sign out on their device.

We will not allow your child to go home with anyone who is not on your emergency card.

Please notify the school in writing via ProCare if someone other than you will be picking up your child. Please include a phone number for the individual so we may reach them in the event we need to contact them about your child becoming ill or they arrive late to pick up your child.

Please keep your emergency contact list updated. If you need to make a change, contact the office via phone or e-mail with the name and contact phone number of the new authorized individual.

Anyone on your emergency list picking up your child must have their ID ready to show the teachers every time.

- Teachers at each gate will have a mobile device that can be used as a 'kiosk' for signing children out. Any individuals signing out children will need to know the unique 4-digit pin associated with your family's account. They will be asked to type in the pin. The App will display your child / children's names. Tap their names, and use your finger to sign them out.

- Alternate caregivers will need to show a form or picture identification to receive your child. At times, we have floating assistant teachers who help with pick up, they may not know your regular caregiver. Every time someone other than yourself picks up your child, please remind them they could be asked for their identification.

Health and Wellness Policies

School and State Mandated Wellness Policies

La Jolla Montessori School requires that you **KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME** or we will send them home if we notice **signs of illness** such as:

<u>Symptoms</u>	<u>Children May Not Return to School Until</u>
Fever of 100 or above	Their temperature has returned to normal for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication. You may be required to submit a negative Covid test.
Covid / Cold / Flu Symptoms	They have a negative Covid test, a note from a physician confirming they are not contagious, when thick mucus is no longer draining from the nose, coughing has subsided, and energy returned. NOTE: Thick yellow or green mucus from the nose, cough, and lethargy are signs a child is fighting an infection. Children over 2 years old may be asked to wear a mask if coughing is persistent.
Diarrhea/Vomiting	They have a negative Covid test, a note from a physician confirming they are not contagious, symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours and your child has returned to normal eating with no stomach upset. NOTE: Loose stools and vomiting can be a sign that a child is fighting an infection.
Sore Throat / Painful Earache	They have a negative Covid test, a note from a physician confirming they are not contagious, the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours, or symptoms have subsided. NOTE: Sore throat could be a sign of the Strep bacteria.
Red Weepy Eyes /Discharging Eyes	They have a note from a physician confirming they do not have bacterial conjunctivitis, or your child has been on antibiotic drops for 24 hours, or eyes are now clear. NOTE: Some forms of conjunctivitis are more dangerous than others.
Rash (i.e. Face, Mouth, Hand, Feet)	They have a note from a physician confirming they are not contagious, the rash is not spreading, itching and / or discomfort has disappeared (to prevent outbreaks in the classroom). NOTE: Some rashes are associated with common contagious illnesses.
Head Lice, Scabies	They have been treated with lice shampoo and all nits have been removed from their hair. The child's skin has been treated for bites and for 24 hours and the rash has subsided.

Daily Health Evaluation

Upon arrival, staff will evaluate each child's health and wellness. Teachers can not allow sick or potentially ill children in the classroom. Teachers will look for signs like runny noses, cough, rashes on cheeks, etc... **We know that your time is valuable, and taking time off work is costly, but we ask you to think about your impact on the classroom community.** At this age, children do not yet have the hygiene standards to avoid infecting others. They are still learning how to cough / sneeze in their arm, use tissues and blow their nose, avoid touching their eyes, and wash their hands. We work with the children daily on these hygiene standards. But one child with mild symptoms can infect an entire class.

Should your child **become ill while at school**, your child will be isolated in the office and we will immediately call to notify you. Children with a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, and / or lethargy will be sent home. We ask that you or someone authorized on your list arrive at the office to pick your child up within 30 minutes of the call. If there is a disagreement with the teacher's or office's decision to send the child home, it is the parent's responsibility to provide verification from a healthcare professional stating that the child is not contagious and is well enough to take part in the program. Please contact the office regarding the most recent Covid Policies from the county / State.

We are required by the State of California to keep track of all absences and illnesses. Please contact the office if your child will miss school and if they are staying home sick. Please let us know if your child is diagnosed with a **contagious disease** such as: Covid-19, chicken pox, pertussis (whooping cough), mumps, measles, strep throat, pinworms, hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD), impetigo, conjunctivitis, or head lice. We are required by law to keep records of incidents and outbreaks of contagious diseases. Additionally, if your child has suffered a more serious injury (broken/fractured bone, reactive bee sting, concussion, etc.) at home, please contact the Director before arriving at school to provide specific guidelines for returning to school safely.

Lastly, if your child needs to stay indoors because of severe outdoor allergies, it may be best to keep them home until the allergens in the environment subside. Each of our classrooms has an outdoor patio area for practical life work and we take the children outdoors to play each day. It is very difficult to keep one child inside while the others are all outside.

Medical Emergency Plans

La Jolla Montessori School does not discriminate on the basis of special needs. When we identify that a child has special medical needs, our teachers will meet with parents / guardians to review the child's care requirements and create a medical plan. These plans will provide clear guidelines for how staff should prevent and respond in the event of a medical emergency.

If your child requires an EpiPen for an allergy, please be sure your Pediatrician indicates as such on the Physician's report and bring two (2) EpiPens to the front office before the first day of school. We will keep one in the classroom's first aid kit and one in the EDP room's first aid kit. Please bring all relevant paperwork from your doctor to be included.

Medication and Medical Emergencies

We do not have a nurse and are not allowed to give medication to the children. In general, if your child must use medication during school hours (i.e. antibiotics when recovering from an infection) you must bring it to the office at the appointed time and administer it yourself. We will call the child to the office for their medication.

Exceptions may be made under certain circumstances (i.e. inhalers, EpiPens, etc...); please see the Director for more information if needed. **Please do not send medicine (including cough drops) in lunch boxes, as other children will have access to it.**

It is very important to completely fill out your emergency information paperwork so that the staff can contact you in the event of an emergency. If your child has a medical or dental emergency, we will first call the necessary emergency services and then contact the parents. If a child needs to go to the hospital, a staff member will accompany them if a parent is not available. The staff will stay with the child until the parent has arrived.

Campus Safety and Security

Our school benefits from many of the security measures put in place by the Congregation Beth El. In addition to gates that restrict vehicle and pedestrian access to campus, both of our buildings are surrounded by 8' security fences that remain closed and locked throughout the school day. We also have an on-site security guard who monitors the 50+ cameras on campus. Nevertheless, because of our proximity to USCD and the UTC commercial area, we do from time to time receive alerts about security issues in the area. In each case, our goal is to be as transparent and reassuring as possible with parents about how we are responding to safety and security events. **To balance the need for safety and security with the need to maintain a sense of normalcy and a peaceful environment for the children**, we have three different kinds of alerts you might receive through Procare:

Alert One: "Gates are Closed"

This alert on ProCare means that we have received an alert from the larger community (which includes downtown La Jolla, UCSD, Gillman shops and UTC Westfield). These alerts can be vague and do not pose any immediate threat to the campus. Nevertheless, if needed, we will send an administrator to supervise the traffic coming on campus from the La Jolla Scenic Gate. Our on site security guard will then monitor the Gillman gate. *The school will continue with normal operations.* Your child is not likely to know anything unusual happened at school.

"Dear parents,

We have received an alert from the community about a possible security issue in the area. At this time, out of an abundance of caution, we are closing our gates to ensure the safety of all students and staff. If you were on your way to campus, we kindly ask that you wait an additional 30 minutes before coming to pick up your children, or until we receive confirmation that it is safe to reopen the gates. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your understanding and cooperation"

Alert Two: "Shelter in Place"

This alert on ProCare means that we have received a specific alert from the nearby community. These alerts will be very specific about an immediate threat to the campus. For the safety of the children and staff, we must bring everyone indoors. *The school will continue with modified operations; we work as if it is a 'rainy-day, indoor playtime'.*

"Dear parents,

We have received an alert from the community about a threat to our immediate community. At this time, out of an abundance of caution, we are sheltering in place to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Please do not come to campus until we receive an all clear. The children are indoors and we will not be opening the pedestrian or car gates."

These moments can be very scary. But it is important to remember that the safety of the children is our top priority and that our campus is built for security. It is also important to remember that our teachers prioritize the mental well-being of the children. They will be doing the hard work of protecting our children from the anxiety these situations can cause. Your primary age child may know something unusual happened at school if this happens during a time when they usually go out to play. "What we will be telling them is that there is a problem on the playground and it is not safe to play

there right now. We have to wait until it is safe.” On the other hand, they may be so excited to play with the constructive toys (trains, magnetiles, legos, fuse beads etc.) that they may not be aware.

Alert Three: “Threat on Campus”

We hope and pray that we never have to give this alert. Nevertheless, we live in a time when it is important to prepare for these safety issues. During our summer professional development week, we practice lockdown drills with staff. This alert on ProCare means that we have been told by someone on campus that there is an unsafe individual on campus. For the safety of the children and staff, we must bring the children indoors to the safest area of each classroom where we gather quietly together. *The school and all gates onto campus are closed. Do not come to campus. We must silence our devices until police arrive and secure the campus.*

“Dear parents,

We have been told there is an unsafe individual on campus. Children and staff are indoors. We must cease all communication until the situation is safe. Please do not come to campus until we receive an all clear.”

Fire and Earthquake Preparedness

The State of California requires that we are prepared to respond to natural disasters such as earthquakes and fire safety. Three times of year (Fall, Spring, Summer) we practice fire and earthquake drills with the children. In the event of an earthquake or fire alert in the buildings, we first evacuate the buildings, take attendance, await first responders, and determine the extent to which we can continue with a normal school day. All families are required to prepare an emergency kit that we keep on campus in the event that our buildings are determined to be ‘unsafe’ and we need to await parents coming to campus to pick up their child. **These emergency packs are called our “Hugs from Home” kits.** These kits are meant to provide children with both emotional comfort (a photo of family, loving words in a card, a favorite book etc) and physical comfort (an emergency blanket to keep them warm, snacks to keep them from experiencing hunger). We keep these emergency kits in weather-proof bins outside of the buildings along with our emergency water supply.

In the event of a fire emergency near campus, we would first determine the level of threat, anticipating it may take parents up to an hour to get back to campus. Fires can move quickly and be unpredictable. So, out of an abundance of caution, we may decide to evacuate campus for the safety and security of all children and staff. **All infants will be evacuated from the classroom by stroller or being carried by the teacher.** Evacuation procedures include:

- Alerting parents via ProCare of the need to evacuate.
- Determining how long we can remain on campus for parents to pick up their child from campus.
- Moving children to a safe on-campus pick-up location (either at the top of La Jolla Scenic or the bottom of Gillman Dr.)
- If necessary, moving children in staff vehicles to a safe off-campus pick up location.
- If necessary, moving children in staff vehicles to an evacuation site as determined by SDFD.

Parent Communication and Participation

School Communication

At La Jolla Montessori School, we value parents as our partners in helping each child to fully realize their potential. We communicate with parents in a variety of ways:

- Daily Procure Access: Open and ongoing communication with all our families is of the utmost importance to us. The Procure App provides parents with access to send and receive information from their child's teachers. Messages from parents go directly to the teachers' 'dashboard' where they can respond to any questions or concerns parents have.
 - There are two different 'chats' available in ProCare. The office chat is only visible to administrators (teachers cannot see posts in the office chat). The classroom chat is visible to parents, teachers, and the office. **Parents should generally use the 'classroom chat' to communicate with the office and teachers.** The office will use the 'office chat' for all school communications.
- Weekly Updates and Snack Menu: Each week, your teachers will share with you insights on Dr. Montessori's theory, how the Montessori curriculum is unfolding in your classroom or emerging research in child development. They may attach articles and various resources to help provide insight into the curriculum and your child's mindset.
- Monthly School-Wide Newsletters: We begin each month with a School-Wide newsletter that updates parents on important dates and events happening that month as well as sends out health and safety reminders.
- School Conferences: We conduct Parent-Teacher conferences twice per school year in order to keep you updated on your child's progress. **These conferences are required for all parents at La Jolla Montessori School and are crucial to your child's success.**
- Classroom Photo Sharing: Each classroom maintains a photo-sharing website: Google Photos. Only parents in the classroom community have access to the website. Once a month, teachers will upload photos they have taken of children working in the environment.
- Parent Education Events: We offer different types of events for parents and caregivers to learn more about Dr. Montessori's approach to early childhood education. Some events are hosted by the Director with the teachers' support. Other events are hosted by the classroom teachers. Space for these events is limited and parents will be asked to sign up to attend.
- Parent Involvement Activities: Three times during the year, we offer parent involvement activities. These activities are hosted by the classroom teacher, in the classroom, during normal school hours or after school. These events permit parents to socialize with their children (Picnic with a Parent and Granola with a Guardian) or to observe how their children use materials (Give your Parent a Lesson).
- Parent Volunteering Opportunities: We need parent support to build a strong sense of school community. Each year, we seek parents who are interested in helping to organize three community events (Fall Festivities, Silent Auction and Art Show Fundraiser, and End of Year Picnic) and two classroom-level fundraisers (Small Hands by Montessori Services and Usborne Book Fair).

Guidelines for Effective Teacher Communication

When the children are on campus, our number one priority is to be physically, emotionally and intellectually present in our interactions with them. For this reason, our school policy is for teachers to refrain from responding to questions or concerns submitted via Procure. Instead, we ask teachers to scan their messages prior to the start of the day (7:30-8:00 am) to note important messages from parents regarding schedule changes. Then, at the end of the day, we ask that teachers respond to parent communications. Our teachers stay until 3:30 each day.

If you need to speak with your teacher immediately, you may call the office to leave a message. We will ask the teacher to call you back after their morning break, during nap, or after school. Sometimes things happening outside of school can make for a tough day for the child at school. For example, the arrival of exciting visitors or difficulties sleeping. An effective way to alert your teacher to changes / challenges at home is to send a handwritten note to school with your child or call the office / send a note to the office that we can print out and share

Finally, it is important to note that the **teachers are not available to discuss your child's day at arrival or dismissal**. During this time, the teachers are striving to set a positive tone for the day when greeting the children or saying goodbye to the children. Time at drop-off and arrival is also quite limited; as we are striving to make the process efficient for parents who are going to work / dropping off siblings or taking children to extracurricular activities. Teachers are not going to be the most effective listeners or communicators at this time because they will feel the combined 'pressures' of talking to you in front of your child and the demand of the 'line'.

Our teachers have devoted their lives to supporting the development of young children. Our guides have the equivalent of Master-level training in early childhood development and Montessori pedagogy. They work hard to ensure the safety and well-being of your children each and every day. Parents observed speaking disrespectfully or aggressively to any staff member may be dismissed from campus.

Parent Observations

The best way to understand your child's work at La Jolla Montessori School is to come to observe their work in the classroom! We offer parents a variety of different ways to observe the classroom:

- Schedule Time at the Observation Window
- Required Observations prior to Parent Conferences
- Give Your Parent a Lesson Event (Primary Program)

What can I expect to see when I observe? Dr. Montessori observed (and we still see today) that our world, our society, is made for adults. Nearly everything the child comes into contact with inside and outside the home is adult-sized. In contrast, a Montessori environment is created solely for the children. Every single thing is selected and designed with the child in mind. The pictures are hung at the child's eye level. The lamps, chairs, tables, shelves and materials are all made specifically for children. All of the materials are made from natural, not plastic; they are real wood, glass and metal objects just like adults use. You can begin to see what a wonderful sanctuary this is for children! That is why Dr. Montessori called her school the "Children's House".

The children come to understand quite quickly that this is their place. When new adults enter their environment, they can become unsettled / uncomfortable. Observing at the 'privacy window' ensures that you are viewing the children in their 'natural state' in the classroom environment.

It is important to note that the State of California protects your rights as a parent to inspect your child's classroom unannounced. For our Toddler program, we still ask parents to observe from the

windows to minimize disruption. A reasonable inspection lasts for 20-30 minutes. If you require a longer observation, we can follow up by scheduling a time to observe and then meet with the teachers.

A Montessori Perspective on Parent Involvement

At La Jolla Montessori School, parent involvement takes many forms:

- supporting an on-time and upbeat arrival each morning
- sending your child with a healthy lunch
- participating in community snacks
- observing your child in the classroom setting (2x a year)
- attending parent conferences
- partnering with your child's teachers to support their adaptation to the classroom
- assisting with material preparation
- volunteering with gardening or 'spring cleaning'
- volunteering to help plan and offer Community Events (i.e. Fall Festival, End of Year Celebration).

Sometimes, parents are disappointed that we do not, as a practice, invite parents to serve as daily or weekly volunteers in the classroom. This is a more common practice for elementary-aged children. Dr. Montessori, however, viewed a critical milestone for young children was to achieve physical, emotional and intellectual independence. She observed that young children may struggle to achieve this independence when they are constantly worrying about their parents 'leaving'. She observed children had the most success when they were able to adapt to a predictable routine of parents departing (i.e. to go to work) and returning (at either a half-day or full-day program dismissal).

Grievance Policy

There may be times when you and your child's teacher disagree. If you are having a problem with any aspect of the classroom, then we ask that they first meet with their child's teacher to discuss the issue. Teachers may request time to observe the child, make modifications to the environment, and meet with you again. If the issue cannot be resolved, then you may request a meeting with the teachers and the Director. Again, the Director may request time to observe the child, make additional modifications to the environment, and meet with you again. If you are still not satisfied with the process and/or the Director's decision, we ask that you please notify the Director in writing. Parents should follow the same procedure if unsatisfied with a policy or program at La Jolla Montessori School.

Statement Regarding Smoking, Drugs, and Alcohol on Campus

SMOKING, DRUGS OR ALCOHOL ARE NOT PERMITTED ON CAMPUS AT ANY TIME.

No Solicitation Policy

Occasionally, LJMS may participate in a 'selling' fundraiser (i.e. Small Hands Fundraiser from Montessori Services or an Usborne Book Fair). However, beyond these planned fundraisers, there is NO soliciting permitted on the premises. Any contact information shared with parents via classroom rosters are for personal use only and may not be used for solicitation unless previously approved by the LJMS Administration.

Appendices

Appendix 1: 2025-2026 Tuition and Fee Schedule



Date	Tuition and Fees
June 12, 2026	Summer Session 1 Tuition Due for Primary & Toddler* Summer Session 1 Dates*: June 15, 2026 - July 3, 2026
July 24, 2026	2nd Tuition Installment Due; Summer Session 2 Dates*: July 6, 2026 - July 31, 2026 Annual Tuition Option Due in order to receive a 5% discount for paying yearly in advance.
August 25, 2026	3rd Tuition Installment Due
September 25, 2026	4th Tuition Installment Due
October 23, 2026	5th Tuition Installment Due.
November 24, 2026	6th Tuition Installment Due <i>The 'December Tuition' Installment is the same amount, regardless of the length of the school days in the month.</i>
December 18, 2026	7th Tuition Installment Due; <i>(last full school day prior to Winter Break).</i>
January 25, 2027	8th Tuition Installment Due; \$400 Enrollment & Materials Fee for 2027-2028 Due.
February 25, 2027	9th Tuition Installment Due \$300 Summer Enrollment Deposit Due for re-enrolling children.
March 25, 2027	10th Tuition Installment Tuition Due
April 23, 2027	1st Tuition Installment for May 2027 Tuition (deposit is non-refundable) Due. Reserves your enrollment for August 2027. <i>The 'May Tuition' Installment is the same amount, regardless of the length of the school days in the month.</i>
May 25, 2027	Summer Session 1 Tuition Due (\$300 Summer Deposit is credited)
June 25, 2027	Summer Session 2 Tuition Due
July 23, 2027	2nd Tuition Installment Due; Annual Tuition Option Due in order to receive a 5% discount for paying yearly in advance.

** Note: Please pay careful attention to the attached calendar. For currently enrolled families, will be modifying the Summer 2026 calendar to better align with San Diego Unified School District. Summer will have two four week sessions.*

Frequently Asked Enrollment Questions: Enrollment

1: When are the tuition installments due?

Tuition Installments are due on the 25th of each previous month. A \$25 late fee will be assessed weekly if La Jolla Montessori School does not receive payment by the 1st of the month. Late fee payments are due upon receipt of a statement. Application fees are due with an application.

Plan A – Annual – Single payment of complete school year, less 5%. This annual payment is payable any time before August 25th.

Plan B –Monthly Installments – The annual tuition listed above can be broken into 10 equal installments. Monthly Installments begin August 25th and are due on the 25th of every month through April 25th. **These payments are the same amount each month regardless of the length of each month and are non-refundable. There will be no tuition payment for June 2025 due on May 25, 2025.** Please refer to “2024-2025 Tuition Installment and Fee Schedule” on the last page.

2: What discounts does La Jolla Montessori School offer?

LJMS offers a 5% discount for the younger sibling(s) of a child currently enrolled at the school. La Jolla Montessori School offers a 5% discount to Parents that pay the school year in advance. This discount is not offered beyond September 25th.

3: What if I need to withdraw my child from La Jolla Montessori School during the school year?

In order to terminate the enrollment contract without penalty, parents / guardians must give LJMS a 30-day notice that you will be leaving the school. Parents are responsible for tuition 30-day from the notice to leave. Additionally, the June 2025 deposit is non-refundable.

4: What if I prepay the year of tuition and need to withdraw my child?

In order to terminate the enrollment contract without penalty, parents / guardians must give LJMS a 30-day notice that you will be leaving the school. Parents who prepay will receive a prorated tuition refund. The refund will be calculated from 30 days of your withdrawal date to the end of the school year, less the June 2025 installment.

6: Is there Summer care and how does tuition for the Summer Sessions work? In February 2027, we will open up registration for Summer 2027. For Primary and Toddler, we host two summer sessions (generally four weeks long). Summer affords our staff an opportunity to take time off and travel. To accommodate staff time off, LJMS reserves the right to limit class size.

For Infants, consistency of care is our priority. We reserve the right to close our infant program when our Lead Infant Guide takes time off. In order to staff Summer, we will ask parents to reserve a placement for each session with a deposit that goes towards summer tuition. We will then coordinate the summer schedule with the Lead Guide and notify parents of coverage by April 25, 2027. However, parents who enroll their child in a summer session agree to pay for the entire session - even if they are not attending for all five weeks. Children who re-enroll for Fall or who have a sibling that is re-enrolling have priority in the summer.

Appendix 3: Infant & Toddler Biting* Incident Prevention and Response

* Note: While **biting is still considered a typical reaction for children ages three and under** to deploy when feeling crowded or threatened, it is not an adaptive response. It is our responsibility as a school to do our best to prevent, observe, and respond to biting in a way that teaches children to solve problems in a more adaptive way. We follow this same protocol for other reactive behaviors such as pushing, hitting, and scratching.

1. We try to prevent biting incidents:

- Most common cause of biting is crowding: two or more children close together. Try to prevent crowding, especially in the play structures.
- The second most common cause of biting is overstimulation: one child is overstimulated by the sounds / movements of another child (loud crying can be a big trigger).
- The third most common cause of biting is speech delay; a child cannot communicate that they need space, want a turn etc.

2. We take a developmental approach to responding to a biting incident:

- When biting happens, separate the children and talk with each child. Both children need guidance and language to resolve the problem.
 - Make a connection: "I see that you wanted....."
 - Set the limit: "Our teeth are for eating. You hurt..."
 - Offer language: "We use our words. Next time say..."
 - We emphasize the importance of getting a teacher for help.

3. We recognize biting is emotional for parents. Both sets of parents need to receive a call before pick up:

- If it is the first biting incident, a teacher or Holly can call.
- Teacher notifies the office: We've had a biting incident and someone will come get information to make the call / or cover so a teacher can call.
 - Holly will need to know:
 - Where the bite happened and why
 - Where the bite is on the child's body and if it broke the skin
 - How the child is coping
- If it is a repeated biting incident, Heather needs to call the family.
 - Admin will meet with the teachers at the end of the day to formulate a plan. The classroom teachers will follow up with a phone call to parents.

4. We document all instances of biting. Both children need to have a written incident report.

- The incident report should contain this information:
 - Where the bite happened and why
 - Where the bite is on the child's body and if it broke the skin
 - How you calmed the child
 - What language you offered the child
 - (If the child who was bitten; what you told the other child).
 - If there is a plan to observe / separate moving forward

5. We respond with a series of Interventions to repeated biting incidents:

- After the second biting incident, we need a plan in place to prevent biting.
 - Is it a sensory issue? Does the child need a chew necklace?
 - What are the triggers? How can we build capacity?

- Where and when are the incidents happening? How do we increase adult proximity for blocking?

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- Do we need separate areas for play?
- Do we need to consider whether we need to change the hours in extended care?
- After a third biting incident, we need to respond by increasing adult presence and asking questions about whether the child needs a referral for specialized support:
 - Speech Therapy / Occupational Therapy
 - Do we need to talk with parents about a shadow?
 - Do we need to consider whether we need to change the classroom placement?
- After a fourth biting incident, we need to make a change to the classroom placement. We will consult with parents to make the best decision for both the child and the classrooms:
 - Move the child who is biting? If parents do not want to change placement, ask parents to supply or pay for a shadow.
 - Move the child who is getting bitten? (When their behavior may be triggering other children)

Sources: Biting Hurts! (April, 2024). Care Courses: Distance Learning for Early Childhood Professionals. The Care Courses School, Inc., P.O. Box 10526, McLean, Virginia 2210. <https://www.carecourses.com/courses/322>



LJMS 2025-2026 Parent Handbook Agreement

Please print, sign, and return this sheet to the LJMS office within two weeks of your start date. If you have any questions, you may address them with the office at that time.

I, _____, have read and understand the information outlined in the
Parent/Guardian

La Jolla Montessori School Parent Handbook. By signing below, I agree to follow the policies and procedures described in the Handbook.

Signature_____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian

Signature_____ Date: _____
Parent/Guardian