

Montessori Center of Downriver - February Newsletter

The Transition to Preschool: When Is Your Toddler Ready?

Toddlers are famous for their struggles with transitions: That's why they melt down when it's time to stop playing and start the bedtime routine, and it's why tools such as timers and 5-minute warnings are so useful. It's also why you may be concerned about your child moving from a toddler program into a preschool program. But don't fear! We are experts at helping children move smoothly into our preschool program, and we can also help you know when it's time to make the change.

Signs of Readiness

Before we move a child from our toddler program into our preschool program, there are a few things our teachers monitor for:

First, the child must be completely toilet trained. This means that the child must be able to urinate and have a bowel movement in the toilet and attempt to wipe their own bottom. The child must be able to ask to use the bathroom (or be able to go on their own), and they should be able to pull their pants up and down on their own. The preschool classrooms have stalls, so children will have more autonomy over their bodies. Teachers will only enter the stall if a child requests assistance.

Second, our teachers will look to see if a child shows social and emotional maturity. These can include working well with others, communicating effectively, staying on task, developing grace and courtesy toward others, and connecting with peers. They also involve developing self-awareness and emotional control. We don't expect children to have mastered all these skills, but our teachers do look to see how they are developing.

Finally, children must be at least 33 months of age before they can transition to preschool.

What You Can Expect In Our Preschool Program

Many things will stay the same when your child transitions to preschool: They will still be with highly trained and loving teachers, and they'll still be receiving an authentic and high quality Montessori education. That said, there are some differences in the preschool program, aside from it being more challenging.

The ratio of caregivers to children is 1:4 in the toddler rooms and is closer to 1:10 in the preschool rooms. This means that children will not get quite as much individualized attention, and so children will work on becoming more independent. They will need to learn to communicate their needs effectively as teachers have more children they need to care for.

Children will also need to work on being self-directed and able to make choices as free-choice work-time is for a full two hours. Our preschool rooms are also larger and contain many more materials available on the shelves.

Ways to Ease the Transition

Our caring teachers will work hard to make the transition to preschool as smooth and painless as they can. We are incredibly responsive and sensitive to children's emotional needs and will, of course, meet children where they are. Prior to the end of their last toddler year, our toddler and preschool teachers will work together to acclimate them to their new room. This will involve the preschool teacher visiting the child in the toddler room, and the child visiting the preschool teacher in their room.

You can help ease the transition too. Be sure to talk with your child about how they will be joining a new class and what that means for them. You can read books about starting preschool or about having a new teacher. If your child likes, try some role playing—you be the new student who is nervous and have them be the new teacher, and then you can switch roles. Let them direct you in what to do or say if they want. This will help them work through any worries or concerns they have.

Another thing you can do to help with the transition is have children attend even just one month in the summer if possible. This will give them a chance to get to know their new teachers and classmates in a slightly more relaxed environment with lots of outdoor play and summer fun. When the fall program begins, they will be ready for and comfortable with the change!

Still Have Questions?

The transition to preschool is a big change for both your child and you! If you'd like to talk with us more about it, we're happy to help. Send us a message or give us a call anytime.

In the Classroom

Ms Ashley's Room

In February, Ms Ashley's class will be learning all about the solar system!

Mrs. Dona's Room

In February, Mrs. Dona's class will continue learning about Antarctica, including parts of penguins and the lifecycle of penguins, and they will be making snow cones.

They will also have special treat for Valentine's Day and will do a craft. They will be learning how to show love to each other.

Ms Paula's Room

In February, Ms Paula's class will continue their work on dinosaurs. They'll also be doing Valentine's Day activities and exploring a North American culture box.

Mrs. Melissa's Room

In February, Mrs. Melissa's class will learn more about our planet Earth. They will also learn about our oceans and the creatures that live in them.



Preschool Afternoon Potluck

Ms Paula's and Mrs. Dona's afternoon classes collaborated for a potluck. They read the story "Potluck" by Anne Shelby. In the story, children from diverse backgrounds come together for a celebration—a potluck. They each bring a favorite or cultural family food. And...the food they bring also starts with the first sound of their name. For example, Ben brought bagels and Don did dumplings.

A big thank you to all the parents who participated! The children loved it!

Montessori and Planes of Development

Dr. Montessori observed that there are four distinct periods--or planes--in human development. She found that each plane has different characteristics, learning modes, and developmental milestones, and that each plane requires educational approaches that are specific to that period.

THE FOUR PLANES OF DEVELOPMENT



1st Plane (Birth to 6)

- Period of physical and “spiritual” construction
- Need to feel loved and protected
- Mind doesn't choose for itself
- Period of adaptation to surrounding environment
- Development of ability to formally communicate
- Development of coordinated movement
- Spontaneous physical movement
- Use of sensory organs important
- Work alone or in parallel
- Need for purposeful work



2nd Plane (6 to 12)

- Greatest potential for intellectual development
- Relatively calm and stable
- Disappearance of rounded, baby-like contours of the body and face
- Lose teeth
- More robust and less sickly
- Ready to move from concrete learning to abstract learning
- Use imagination
- Need more internal than external order
- Adventurous
- Sense of justice
- Social; “Herd Instinct”
- Big work
- “Hero” worship



3rd Plane (12 to 18)

- Idealism
- Need to discover their intended vocations
- Great change and relative instability
- Puberty
- Rapid physical and emotional changes
- Emotional and sensitive
- Need nurturing environment
- Need for respect
- Decrease in intellectual capacity
- Abstract learning



4th Plane (18 to 24)

- Spiritual, emotional and moral independence
- Think about place in and contributions to society and humanity
- Have personal interests
- Evaluation of social policy
- Personal responsibility

Source: <https://amiusa.org/families/childs-development/>

Age-appropriate Chores

Nearly every morning, I walk into a beautiful sight here: Children happily participating in the care of their classrooms and the building as a whole. They sort and fold laundry together and deliver the folded washcloths to the correct classrooms; they help move cots; they fill up water bottles; they

sweep and mop; they help prepare snack; they help put out the cones after drop-off; someone even helped fix a toilet last week!

When given the opportunity, kids really do love to help and have responsibility. If you're looking for ideas for at home, [here are some age-appropriate chores you could try](#).

Local Events and Resources

Gleaners

Gleaners provides food boxes to any family in need. No registration, ID, etc., required. There are several locations and times throughout December:

City of Woodhaven

23101 Hall Rd

Woodhaven

2/14/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

2/28/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

City of Wyandotte

3131 3rd St.

Wyandotte

02/03/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

02/17/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

Ford Community and

Performing Arts Center

15801 Michigan Ave

Dearborn

02/07/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

02/21/2023 9:00 - 11:00am

Local Libraries

Wyandotte Library

Makerspace Crafting: Spikey Hedgehogs

Monday, February 06, 2023 Friday, February 10, 2023

Bacon Memorial District Library Maker Space Room

Stop by the front desk to pick up a hedgehog craft kit. Kits are limited so grab one quickly!

Slime-the-Makerspace: Chocolate Slime

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Bacon Memorial District Library Kitchen: Learn how to make CHOCOLATE SLIME. All ingredients and a storage container will be provided. Registration required.

Southgate Library

Take your Child to the Library Day, February 4

Silly Songs Dance Party 11AM-12PM

It's time to shake some sillies out and get ready for a new year of programs! Join us for this drop in dance party. We'll have an hour of fun music that's sure to get your feet tapping.

Valentine Extravaganza 3PM-4PM

Get ready to spread the love! Drop in and make valentines with us! Everyone deserves to feel loved this holiday, so feel free to make one for anyone in your community. We have everything you need, all you need to bring is your creativity!

Other Local Events

1. [Motown Love on Feb 3](#): Celebrate everything you love about Detroit at Motown Love weekend at Valade Park! Valentine's Day comes to the 313 with a local vendor market, activations from your favorite sports team, and a classic Motown soundtrack courtesy of local DJs and dance groups.
2. Downtown Trenton Winterfest: Fun outdoor activities, food, vendors, ice sculptures, live entertainment and more! On Feb 3rd from 4-8pm and Feb 4th from 10-8pm.
3. Celebrate Lunar New Year 2023: February 4th from 10:30 am to 11:30 am at the U-M Museum of Natural History. Celebrate the Lunar New Year with a live introduction to the lunar-solar calendar, China's space program, star mythology, and Chinese New Year customs from new moon to full moon. Cost is \$8.
4. [Try Hockey For Free Day](#): February 25th from 12pm to 1pm at the Southgate Civic Arena. This event is designed to provide kids ages 4 to 9 the opportunity to try hockey in a FUN, safe environment with trained coaching staff. No experience necessary! There will be plenty of assistance on hand to be sure your child has the best first hockey experience and answer any questions you might have.