Cornerspring Montessori School

Parent Handbook

2011-2012

Contact information
18 Hatley Rd
Belfast, Maine 04915
Telephone 207-338-5800
School Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Early care: 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
Morning classes: 8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
All day classes: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Aftercare: 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
www.cornerspringmontessori.com
Email: cornerspring@tidewater.net

"It is true we cannot make a genius. *We can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure and balanced human being."*
—Maria Montessori

ABOUT MARIA MONTESSORI

Maria Montessori: the woman, the educator

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), known throughout the world as the originator of the Montessori Method of Education, was the first woman in Italy to receive a medical degree. In 1902, while working with mentally challenged children, she was inspired to design a variety of learning materials which proved very successful with these handicapped children.

Her opportunity to have these materials used by a larger and more diverse group of children came in 1907 when she started a pre-school project for socially disadvantaged children in the San Lorenzo district of Rome. Her Casa de Bambini, or Children's House, became world famous; educational observers came from many different countries to watch the young children absorbed in learning with these unusual materials. Eventually Montessori gave up her medical practice and devoted her life to training teachers, writing and lecturing for any adults who cared for children. Her schools, which are still flourishing, have spread to six continents.

The most important thrust of all her educational efforts was to create a more peaceful world by nurturing the spirit of children. For this unusual approach to peace she was nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Cornerspring Montessori School strives to provide programs using a modified approach to the methods, philosophy, and teachings of Maria Montessori. Our goal is to provide an environment that will stimulate, foster and nurture the love for learning that will continue to develop throughout life.

We are committed to individualized education, allowing children freedom to develop at their own pace. We strive to satisfy a child's need to know, to belong, to feel safe and secure, and to develop self-esteem.

Goals for Children: Our goals for children are to support the development of:

- a sense of joy and wonder
- a sense of basic trust in the world and in relationships with others
- self-confidence and a positive self-image
- each child's ability to be a self-learner and problem-solver
- self help skills to increase independence and autonomy
- coordination, concentration and a sense of order
- internal control and motivation
- language, communicative competence and conflict resolution skills
- an understanding of themselves as members of a peaceful community

AS A MONTESSORI PARENT:

I am . . .

- Supportive of an educational method which focuses on process v. product. (Doing rather than memorizing)
- Supportive of peace education, conflict resolution, community service, and environmental education.
- Comfortable with curriculum that includes multiculturalism.
- Comfortable with an educational method that believes that children learn best through intrinsic motivation, where there are neither rewards nor punishments, and that competition hinders learning.
- Supportive of real-life learning situations.
- Supportive of the belief that children learn best when they have control over their own learning.
- Recognizing that objectives are usually met in a three-year cycle, as opposed to standardized grade levels.

ABOUT STAFF:

Rebecca Couch
Becca is excited to start her first year at Cornerspring as a part-time assistant in the Cardinal Classroom. Becca has eleven years teaching experience in Montessori education, and has been the head teacher of the toddler program at the Children's House Montessori School in Camden, for the past three years. She is a University of Maine at Farmington graduate and has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Becca recently moved to a little farm in Appleton with her husband Tim and their six year old daughter, Luisa. She enjoys spending time with her family, working on the farm, gardening, and horseback riding.

Chip Curry
New to the Cornerspring staff, Chip is very excited to return to the classroom where he will be co-teaching the Raven class. He has been engaged in experiential education and positive youth development initiatives for the past 19 years. Chip has a Masters Degree from Miami University where he studied higher education leadership and student development theory. He is an endorsed trainer and assessor for the Weikert Center for Youth Program Quality and served on Maine's legislative task force on quality after-school programming. Over the past year, he has gained a unique perspective on Maine's early care and school-age care sector, by serving as a program rater for Maine's quality improvement initiate "Maine Roads to Quality". Chip lives in Belfast with his wife Chris Goosman, mother in-law Ada Graham, and daughter, Ada Curry. He enjoys family adventures, kayaking, camping, Frisbee, building projects, volleyball, and theater.

Jennifer Ellis
Jenn Ellis is returning to the Cardinal room as a full- time assistant. She is a graduate of Eastern Maine Community College with her associate's degree in early childhood education. She is furthering her education both in Montessori and public education and obtaining her bachelor's degree this fall and eventually her masters. Jenn lives in Knox with her roommate and two cats Lari and Figero and enjoys spending time outside and at the ocean.

ABOUT STAFF CONTINUED:

Anna Johnson
Anna has been involved with the financial administration of Cornerspring in many different capacities since its establishment. Currently, she handles all financial functions including processing of tuition. She comes to the school with a bachelor's in financial services from the University of Maine and over 20 years banking and bookkeeping experience. She previously served on the Board for the Cornerspring Montessori School as treasurer of both the board and the fundraising committee. Anna lives in Belfast with her two children ages 12 and 10. She enjoys running, hiking, weight lifting, sports and any activity where she can enjoy her children.

Paula Johnson, Director
Paula is excited to start another wonderful year here at Cornerspring. She has been involved with Montessori education for over 20 years and brings to the school a wealth of experience. Along with ongoing trainings and educational classes and workshops, she attended the Northeast Montessori Institute where she received an accreditation by the American Montessori Society in Early Childhood Education. She was the founder of Cornerspring Children's House which first opened its doors in September of 2001. This year Paula will be teaching in the Cardinal Classroom as the Head Teacher along with her role as the Director of the School. Paula lives in Belfast with her husband and son Perrin (age 11). She loves spending time with her family, and when time allows, enjoys gardening, hiking and the great outdoors.

Christine Kelley
This will be Chris's 4th year as a member of the Cornerspring Community. Her first two years were spent as a parent of a student and this year will be her second as our Administrative Assistant. Chris is lucky enough to have lived in Hawaii for three years and for two of that she had the pleasure of working as a First Grade Teacher's Assistant. After attending Leeward Community College to pursue a degree in Education, she and her husband moved to upstate New York and lived in the Thousand Islands region for three years. After moving to Maine 14 years ago Chris worked in various Day Care facilities in the Belfast area for over two years. Always a person willing to learn more, Chris attended Beal College for two years before beginning work at Cornerspring. When not working she enjoys spending time with her husband of 24 years and their eight year old son…not to mention their menagerie of 1 dog, 2 cats, 1 corn snake and various fish. Chris loves crossword puzzles, beach combing and bird/nature watching as well as gardening and crafts.

Rachel Littlefield
This is Rachel's fourth year as Cornerspring's art teacher. She holds a bachelor's of fine arts degree and a master's degree in education. Rachel has been teaching and creating art for many years and especially enjoys painting, multi-media collage and 3-D art. When not teaching, Rachel loves gardening, baking bread, creating art and spending time with her family.

"The teacher if indeed wise does not bid you to enter the house of their wisdom, but leads you to the threshold of your own mind" —Kahlil Gibran

ABOUT STAFF CONTINUED:

Lori Pearson
Lori has 15 years experience working in the childcare field – 10 yrs. as head teacher in the aftercare program at Montessori Discovery School in Norwich, Connecticut and 5 yrs head teacher in the infant/toddler program at Pollywogs Child Development Center in N. Stonington, Connecticut. Last year she returned home after 30 years away, to Swan Lake in Searsport with her husband Jeff and son Ben. While her son is away at UMF, she loves to bake goodies for all his buddies at college, especially his baseball team and she enjoys traveling to all his games. Lori also enjoys being involved in the family antique business, crafting, weaving, gardening and reading.

Monique Roy-Whitcomb
Monique rejoins Cornerspring for her ninth year and will continue as head teacher in the Chickadee Room. She will also be teaching in the Cardinal Room this year with Kindergarteners in the afternoons. Monique received her associate's degree as a 3-6 year old certified Montessori Teacher in June of 2008. She has approximately seventeen years of a variety of experience gained in the field of early childhood care, development and education. She has completed several educational courses in child development as well as extensively studied the practice of positive discipline. Most recently she has become certified to teach as a parent educator for positive discipline. Monique has a strong dedication to her work with the children and their families and a firm belief in the Montessori Method and philosophy. She always very much looks forward to another year of discovery and learning alongside the children.

Outside of her love for working with children, Monique also very much enjoys her family time. She resides in Belfast with her husband, 21 year old stepson (currently a junior at Bentley University) and 17 1/2 year old daughter (who is a senior at BAHS). She also enjoys activities such as gardening, outdoor recreation, creating in the kitchen, reading and beach weather.

Cindy Scappaticci
This is Cindy's fourth year as Head Teacher in the Elementary I Classroom. Cindy received her BA in English with minors in art and education. She has more than 30 years experience working with children. Ten of the twenty years she taught in public school were in a multi-age class of 8-10 year olds. In addition to completing formal Montessori training at the Seacoast Center in New Hampshire, Cindy has had Project Wild and Project learning Tree Training. She lives in Montville with her husband, Louis. Next to being with her grandchildren, quilting and reading are her favorite pastimes.

Emma Seekins
Emma is excited to begin her second year with Cornerspring, this year as the full time assistant teacher in the Chickadee Classroom. She loves working with the 3-6 year olds and watching them grow as individuals and as a community. Outside of school, Emma enjoys running, snuggling with her rabbit and being creative!

Susan Therio
This is Susan's third year at Cornerspring. She has a Masters in Chemistry and has over 20 years experience working in scientific laboratories. She also attended the University of Maine to complete her professional teaching requirements. Susan lives in Stockton Springs with her husband Frank, son Isaias, and two dogs. She enjoys swimming, canoeing, hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

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"Within the child lies the fate of the future." M.Montessori

CURRICULUM:

Young children possess a remarkable ability to absorb the world that surrounds them. Maria Montessori believed that the years from three to six are the most critical period for nurturing a child's natural curiosity and for laying the foundation for all future development.

The goals of Cornerspring Montessori are to foster independence and to support children in moving towards the mastery of self in their environment. The classroom is designed to encourage children in their self directed discovery of the world. Interest based activities encourage children to develop a love of learning and trust in their own ability to learn. We provide an environment that will stimulate, foster, and nurture the love for learning.

The main goal of Cornerspring's program is to help children develop a rapport with their environment and support them as they develop physical, social and intellectual independence. The children's teacher follows the child, presenting carefully designed lessons and materials on a one to one basis at the readiness of the child.

The classroom environment unifies the psycho-social, physical, and academic functioning of the child. The primary objective of the classroom is to provide students with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, a sense of order, pride in the physical environment, abiding curiosity, habit of concentration, habits of initiative and persistence, the ability to make decisions, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility to other members of the class, school, and community. This foundation will enable them to acquire more specialized knowledge and skills throughout their academic career.

Cornerspring Montessori School chooses an organization to sponsor each year as part of its curriculum in teaching students about community giving and service. This type of work weaves into all types of our academic curriculum such as math, language arts, etc. and helps our students learn such skills as committee formation, working in a collaborative fashion and correspondence.

Cornerspring uses personal, cultural and religious holidays as educational opportunities to broaden and deepen the student's understanding of himself, his peers and his society as well as, of other cultures and beliefs. Cultural and religious holidays focus on celebrations as a part of life, either natural or societal. Children will be exposed to group presentations, individual activities or cultural/geographic topics that may surround a particular holiday and children may choose related work projects. These celebrations' goals are to aid the child's awareness, understanding and appreciation of the rich and vital heritage of many lands and cultural beliefs and allow him to respond to such events individually.

Preschool/K curriculum: The following areas of exploration are included in our program:

Practical Life: Through practical life activities, children acquire many daily living skills: preparing foods, fastening clothes and caring for their environment. These activities also help children extend their powers of concentration and develop coordinated movements, through activities such as pouring, scooping and tweezing. (Practical life enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of the environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement).

Sensorial: Through interactions with sensorial materials (which isolate one quality, such as color or shape children experience the world through their senses in a way that establishes the physical and mental foundation for further learning. (The sensorial area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch, etc.)

Language Activities: Through a variety of language activities and materials, children become familiar with sounds and symbols and begin the process of writing, which naturally leads to reading. (Language arts include oral language development, written expression, reading, the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature.)

Mathematics: In the math area, children begin to explore mathematical relationships by manipulating concrete materials (such as number rods that are designed to isolate a concept) and prepare them for abstract reasoning. The goal is to develop in the child a love of numbers, problem solving strategies and a confidence in using numbers in everyday life.

Cultural Studies: Art, music, science, and geography are integrated throughout the school year. Geography and science materials are available for hands on experience; however, a particular focus of study is determined each year. Cultural activities expose the child to basics in geography, history, and life sciences. In addition, these cultural activities allow for the integration of music, art, and movement education into the cultural curriculum.

Social Activities: In a Montessori classroom, children experience the balance between the freedom of the individual and the concerns of the group. In addition to the everyday learning of responsibility of oneself, respect for others, and the care for the environment, we also plan a mother's day tea event that aids in the practice of social graces.

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Elementary Curriculum: We offer an integrated, developmentally based, well rounded, academically challenging elementary curriculum:

Science: The study of the scientific process, scientific facts, the true nature of science, and the history of science, our students acquire a true engagement with and understanding of the scientific method. Our students come to appreciate, through their three years of study, that science is not the subjects that scientists study, but the process of studying the world, its end product being simply reliable information. Our curriculum is consciously integrated, incorporating topics from botany, zoology, physical science, technology, astronomy, geology, ecology, earth science, chemistry, and biology.

Mathematics: The use of concrete apparatus and the application of mathematics to real world tasks, with time-tested Montessori materials, allow students to grasp the underlying principals of mathematics.

Geography: The study of world geography (physical, cultural, political, and economic) allows students to develop a global perspective and international understanding.

History: The study of human endeavors, fundamental needs of humanity, cultures, lifestyles, and technologies of the past, with an anthropological orientation, allows students to acquire a strong historical perspective. Our curriculum also cultivates an appreciation of family and community heritage.

Anthropology and Myth: Our students study the basic elements of anthropology, addressing the question of what makes us human, the nature of culture, and how cultures have attempted to explain or illuminate the great questions of life through story, drama, myth and cultural archetypes.

Language Arts and Literature: The study of all forms of human communication and its history, along with writing methods and time-tested Montessori materials, encourages the student to become comfortable and fluent in reading and writing. Our students are presented with the opportunity to learn the skills and become comfortable with reading, creative writing, research, non-fiction writing, public speaking, and grammar.

The Visual and Performing Arts: The Fine Arts are emphasized in our curriculum through integration of art, music and creative drama within several aspects of our classroom.

Physical Education and Health: Our students will come to understand, appreciate, and adopt a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise, proper diet, intelligent choices regarding personal health, and stress reduction.

Peace Education: Peace education is as vital an element of our curriculum as traditional subject matter in the classroom. Study and understanding of human relations, conflict resolution skills, nonviolence, leadership training, cooperative teamwork skills and communication skills are all important elements of a Montessori Education.

Practical Life Skills: The elementary classroom provides opportunities for our students to develop their sense of independence and sense of capability through a variety of practical life experiences. These practical life skills include the following:

a. **Eye-hand coordination** and the use of simple tools.
b. **Grace and courtesy:** appropriate ways to handle situations kindly.
c. **Practical economics:** the value and use of money, including how to earn and manage spending money.

Technology: The students are presented with an opportunity to learn the safe use of technology, such as more complex tools, telephones, computers, classroom AV equipment, and household appliances. Students use the computer as a fundamental tool in the process of learning as it helps students find, manage, represent, and synthesize information.

Communication: The integrated study of communication, within all subject areas, teaches the appropriate use of personal and mass communication, technology, from writing letters to using the telephone, using the computer to type and prepare presentations and speaking before an audience.

Care of One's Environment: Students will practice how to clean and set tables, do dishes, cook, sew, iron, do laundry, and assist in the care of younger children. As participants of their classroom community, the children are given equal opportunities to make contributions, share something they have learned with the group, and to participate in evaluating the process.

Health and Safety: Students will develop sound habits of safety, nutrition, and hygiene, and will acquire first-aid skills.

"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn" — Albert Einstein

ADMISSIONS:
Children 2 1/2 years to age 12 may be considered for admission and placement shall be determined after consultation between the administrator and the teacher of the appropriate class. An open house takes place each year in the spring to allow prospective families to meet with the staff and parents of Cornerspring.

Families wishing to be considered for admission are required to tour the facility and visit the classroom. To be considered for acceptance, each family must apply and pay a non-refundable application fee.

Admission priorities are in accordance with the following school policy:

- Returning students
- Siblings of students at Cornerspring
- Montessori transfer students
- Children between three and four years
- Children five years or older

***It is important that parents considering enrollment of a preschool age child, look at our program as a 3-year cycle, noting the kindergarten phase of our program is an important cumulative step for that plane of development in your child's life.**

ENROLLMENT
Applications accompanied by an application fee need to be received before acceptance can be considered.

Once the school determines acceptance, parents will be required to complete the following forms and pay the appropriate fees and deposits to ensure enrollment of their child.

- Non-refundable enrollment deposit fee (applicable towards tuition).
- Emergency form
- Field trip and photo permission form
- Immunization records
- Parent participation form
- Contract

TUITION POLICY
The school year is considered continuous from September through June and parents/guardians enroll their children for that period of time. The September to June tuition is divided into equal payments according to a plan (annual, semi-annual, monthly) agreed upon and committed to through the tuition contract process. Monthly payments are due on the 15th of each calendar month according to your contract. Allowances will not be made for phasing-in, illness or vacations. Tuition and fees are adjusted annually by a small percentage to meet increasing cost of living expenses.

In order for us to meet our financial obligations, tuition must be paid promptly. A late fee of $15 will be assessed for payments made after the 25th of the month in which the payment is due.

In the event of default in the payment of any installment outlined in the agreed upon tuition contract, the student may not be allowed to continue classes until payments are made current. If the school is required to initiate legal proceedings to enforce this agreement, the parents or guardians will be held liable for the school's legal cost, including reasonable attorney fees as stated in the enrollment agreement. The director will consider extenuating circumstances; however, communication prior to this process will need to take place.

WITHDRAWAL

Any withdrawals from the school must be requested in writing 30 days in advance of the final date the child/children will attend.

Children are admitted for the duration of the academic school year and parents/guardians are obligated to make tuition payments for the entire school year. The student's withdrawal or absence for any cause does not reduce obligation of the full annual tuition. The school's budget and operation depend on fulfillment by all parents and guardians of their agreement to pay the tuition in accordance with their contract. If you have elected to pay monthly or quarterly, this is for your convenience only and does not limit the obligation to pay the entire tuition amount in timely installments.

Summer program: Cornerspring offers a summer program that may vary from year to year. Information about our summer program is made available by the first of April of each year.

Cornerspring does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies and admissions policies. As a result, Cornerspring admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin and provides rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND PARKING:

Classes begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. and arriving on time is essential to your child's day. It helps with the overall flow and routine of the classroom and allows for proper transitions from parents to teacher. If you will be late please call the school to inform the classroom teacher.

There is plenty of parking in the parking lot, but we ask that children 5 and under have a hand to hold when crossing the parking lot. Please be extra diligent when allowing children to walk in the parking lot. **No children can head to or from a car without a guardian. Please be extra careful and slow when backing up to leave, keeping an eye out for all children.** Please be respectful of the designated handicap parking spaces in the front of the building.

An in and out traffic pattern has been established in order to maintain a safe drop-off. **Please follow the signs for in and out carefully.**

For drop off:
We have incorporated a drop off in front of the school from **8:20 to 8:45.** Parents may pull up and drop off their child(ren) to the greeter in front of the school. **For safety reasons, please do not drop off a child when there is no greeter or the greeter is helping someone else.**

The drop off area is for those who will allow teachers to open doors and help children out. Please do not park in this area if you **do not** intend to pull up and allow teachers to help your child out and into the school area. If you plan to get out and walk your child in, please use a designated parking space.

We ask that you please pass on our parking policy to anyone who will be picking up or dropping off your child including the directional flow in and out of the parking lot.

Cornerspring strongly encourages carpooling.

LATE PICKUP: A charge of $7.50 will be assessed if a student is picked up past their scheduled time. Late pick ups past 5:30 p.m. will be charged $10.00 for every fifteen minutes past **your child's scheduled pick up time.** Please let the school know if you will be arriving late. After care may be available on a drop in basis; however, sign up must be done with the office before 2:30 p.m. each day unless it is an emergency.

ABSENCES: If your child is going to be absent, please call as early as possible to inform us of that. In the event of a communicable illness, please let us know so that we can inform other families as soon as possible.

SAFETY AND SECURITY:
For your child's protection, we will not release any child to someone other than a parent (or person specified on your emergency card). **Written authorization** is required by the parent or guardian for anyone picking up a child other than the parent or guardian. Identification will be required by anyone unknown to Cornerspring staff regardless of whether they are listed on the emergency card.

Children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult when leaving the gates or buildings. No child shall be left unattended outside the building.

Cornerspring Montessori School is a tobacco free facility. Please refrain from smoking during times on school property including the parking lots.

Playground Safety:
Please help us maintain a safe environment and positive atmosphere on our playground by reinforcing our playground guidelines with your children at all times.

Things to Do:

- Walk around children swinging on swings
- Slide in sitting position
- Only slide down the slide
- Go up ladders and down slides
- Watch out for each other
- Walk through gates when leaving
- Play peacefully ("Be kind, Be gentle, Be safe" is a motto we use)
- Sand toys and other equipment away when finished with it
- Say good-bye to teacher before leaving the playground
- Hold hand of grown up through the gate to car when leaving (five and under must have a hand of a grown up when leaving the gate)
- Stay within playground boundaries
- Sticks are for building only!
- Walking only with sticks

Things not to do:

- Run out gated area
- Leave playground without saying good-bye
- Leave playground without a grown up holding hand
- Go beyond the boundaries
- Climbing over fence to leave
- Weapon play
- Running with sticks
- Jumping off swings

FIELD TRIPS:
During the course of the year, the children take field trips to enrich their learning experiences. All trips are chaperoned by parents and/or teachers. Aside from general walks in the neighborhood, all field trips are announced in advance and all children must have a signed permission form on file at the school before participating.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION:
Parent conferences are scheduled twice during the school year. Please refer to your school calendar for scheduled dates.

The staff at Cornerspring encourages communication between parents and teachers. However, during the school day our focus is on the safety of the children and interactions of the children and we may not be able to readily discuss issues. If you have an important issue to discuss, please let us know and we will schedule a time that is more appropriate to talk. If you are relaying information you feel is important for us to know (such as someone else picking up or early dismissal) **please write it down** in a note as that is the best way for us to deliver it to the proper caregiver.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:
The involvement of parents in our program is a key ingredient in being able to offer a rich, rewarding and stimulating school experience for all children. Your participation not only enables us to provide a variety of skills and talents to enrich our program, but signals to your children that their school and their education are a valuable part of your family's life. Cornerspring's **Parent Participation Program** requires each family to provide service hours based on your family's enrollment each year, beginning June 1st and ending May 31st. (The number of hours will be listed in your contract.) The program will fulfill specific services that the school would otherwise need to hire out to accomplish. For families who do not fulfill all of their contracted participation hours there is a payment-in-lieu of hours option of $200.

A **Parent Participation Program sign-up** will be distributed for you to complete and will help us determine what areas you will participate in or what types of services you may offer. Skills such as carpentry, sewing, substituting, fundraising, as well as furnishing the school with art supplies or supporting the school and its public relations efforts are among the items needing your participation.

Another very important piece of parent involvement surrounds special events such as parent education night, special person's nights and annual fundraising events. We ask that parents make an effort to participate in the different annual school events. Please refer to your school calendar for all upcoming events.

Cornerspring participates in several ongoing and annual fundraisers throughout the year to help offset costs. Without your support and participation in these fundraisers, Cornerspring would not be able to keep tuition affordable, fund enrichment programs or fieldtrips, purchase materials and provide staff training. These fundraisers are easy, at no additional costs and can earn you time towards your parent participation hours.

Parent conferences are held two times a year and are scheduled as part of the school calendar in the fall and in the spring. This is a time for you and your child's teachers to come together for the sole purpose of discussing goals for your child's progress. Special meetings may be arranged at any time during the year.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

Cornerspring personnel will attempt to reach the parent or guardian should a child need medical attention. However, in cases where there is delay in reaching parents or physician, we will take steps to meet health and medical emergencies. In extreme emergencies, health officials will be contacted first and then the parents or guardian.

FIRE DRILLS:

Cornerspring practices fire drills on a regular basis. Every month, we are required to hold a practice fire drill in accordance with state requirements. In addition, we take these opportunities to teach about fire safety.

MEDICATION POLICY:

If a child must have a medication administered at the school, a Medication Release Form must be completed and signed by the parent and accompany the medication. In addition, the medication must be in its original container documenting the doctor's prescription. We encourage parents to medicate their child if possible prior to attendance to school.

It is very important for parents to inform the school of any medication a child is on regardless if it is administered at school or at home. If at any time a child is medicated outside of school, the parents must inform the classroom teachers so they are aware of any medications the child is currently taking in order to inform medical providers in the event of an emergency.

Medication release forms are available from the teacher. Medication and instructions should be given directly to the child's teacher and not sent in a lunch box.

The staff may not administer medication without the appropriate signed form. Also, please note, staff may not administer any non-prescription medicines (cough syrup, aspirin, etc.) without the same release form signed by the parent.

ILLNESS POLICY:

You are asked to please take the time to observe your child's health each day. Because the school's concern is for the welfare of **all** the children in the program, you are asked to help prevent the spread of contagious diseases by keeping your child home if she or he has:

- Symptoms of a fresh cold
- Had a fever during the previous 24 hours
- Vomited or had diarrhea during the previous 24 hours
- Behavior that indicates illness such as lack of energy, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, or severe congestion.

In addition to these guidelines parents are asked to be aware that an unwell child may be uncomfortable participating in the daily activities of school. This can affect everyone's day, and often requires the constant attention of a teacher. If a child is not well enough to play outside, he or she is not well enough to attend school. It is in everyone's best interest to keep a child with questionable health at home. The school is neither licensed nor equipped to care for ill children. If a child becomes ill while at school he or she will be isolated from the other children and parents will be called to arrange for the child to be picked up. If a child is considered to be too ill to attend school at drop off, he or she will not be admitted to the class. Please remember that when illness is accompanied by a fever, your child may not return to school until his or her temperature has been normal for 24 hours.

In the event of a communicable disease where a child is not immunized, they will be sent home right away and cannot return to school until meeting the Maine CDC requirements specific to the disease. If a child shows signs of chicken pox for example, CDC requires the child to stay home 5 full days after the onset of the rash or until the rash crusts over. In addition, any child exposed that has not been immunized must be kept out of school for a period of 16 full days from their last contact with a child who was infected. Because the choice not to immunize is a parental preference, no adjustments to the child's contract or billing can be made.

LUNCH, SNACKS AND NUTRITION:

Allergies: In the event of allergies, families will be notified at the beginning of the school as well as in the traveling snack basket. It would be helpful if parents would list ingredients to the best of their knowledge to accompany the snack basket when baking goods from home.

SNACKS:

Snacks will be provided by both the school and parents. A sign up calendar will be posted in your child's classroom for choosing a day to bring snack. We encourage you to sign up once a month (every other month for two dayers) for providing snack for the group. A snack basket will go home with your child indicating the number of children in the class, as well as snack suggestions. We expect healthful wholesome snacks and discourage snacks containing lots of sugar and artificial dyes. Providing snack for the class is a ritual here at Cornerspring because it allows a child to have special roles in the classroom, such as leading the class in and holding the door, daily calendar and choosing friends to start snack. In addition, it allows a child to participate in the preparation of the snack.

Please note: If it is your child's birthday please make sure to sign up on that day (See Birthday).

LUNCHES:

For those children staying for an extended day: children need to come with a prepared lunch from home. We encourage you to pack healthful, wholesome lunches and snacks. Candy will not be allowed in school.

We strongly encourage use of recyclable containers for food and beverages; please label lunch boxes, thermoses, etc. with your child's name. We have very limited space for refrigeration, so we ask that all lunches needing refrigeration have a cold pack. Please avoid lunch boxes or containers with violent or armaments-related motifs.

PARTIES, BIRTHDAYS, ETC.

Cornerspring participates in the celebration of one's birthday by a ritual of a circle walk. In our school, the birthday celebration is designed to give each child and parent the opportunity to reflect on the passage of time. It is a time to really focus on the celebration of the child, to revel in the joy of each accomplishment, to remember what was significant in the child's life, and to acknowledge the community of friendships the child has created in the classroom.

As part of the birthday celebration, the parents create a time-line representing the "history" of the child. A time-line is made up of one picture for each year of the child's life. Parents should see the head teachers for an example. Also, the child participates in a very special "walk around the sun" at circle. A candle is placed in the middle of the room representing the light of the sun. The child holds the globe, and walks in the direction of the months. The child's movement around the sun represents a year. This is done as many times as the child's age.

Children can enjoy having a birthday snack at school. We suggest that parents provide a special snack for their child's celebration. Healthful birthday snacks only please. Suggestions: carrot cupcakes, zucchini or pumpkin bread or muffins with cream cheese frosting (low sugar please).

If you are planning a home party for your child, please do not hand out invitations in children's cubbies. Likewise, if your child is attending a party after school please do not send gifts to school with your child. These situations can be upsetting for those who are not invited or able to attend, and can create hurt feelings and sad children. It would be more appropriate to mail invitations and plan weekend parties.

Book giving or Giving Tree: If you would like to donate a book to the school or purchase an item from our Giving Tree in honor of your child's birthday, you can do so at your child's birthday walk. This is a great way to honor your child's birthday as well as show him or her the value of giving. Do not forget to endorse and sign the book.

SCHOOL CALENDAR YEAR:
The school year will correspond **closely** to that of RSU 20 school system (i.e., vacations, holidays, etc.) however, some slight changes occur in calendar planning around scheduled workshops and parent conferences. Please refer to your school calendar.

School Closings:
There is no school if RSU 20 closes for inclement weather. In the event of a delay, school will start at 10:00 a.m. or may close all together and there will be no early care. It sometimes may be necessary to close school early in inclement weather. In the event of early closing, there will be no afternoon daycare. In these circumstances, the school will notify you or the person on your emergency form. Please refer to village soup and Wabi TV channel 5 and our facebook page for information concerning school delays or closings.

REST TIME: Preschool children who are at school all day may need to nap. Parents of "nappers" need to supply a blanket and pillow for use at naptime. Children may also bring a transitional object such as a stuffed animal, if they like. You are responsible for laundering the blanket and pillowcase weekly.

In accordance with Maine DHHS, all preschool children who stay longer than three hours are required to be given the opportunity for rest. This rest period begins after lunch/recess. The child will be provided with a resting mat that is cleaned on a daily basis.

SCHOOL CLOTHING:

Play clothes are encouraged - simple, washable, sturdy, and easy-to-manage. Please refrain from having children wear clothing that is media driven or that may have offensive or violent messages/images. An indoor pair of shoes is required (comfortable slippers, sneakers or rubber-soled shoes). It is necessary to put your child's name on all items.

The school requires each child to have a complete change of clothing including underwear (diapers if applicable) and socks. The clothing should be packed in a plastic bag with the child's name on it and brought to school on the first day. Any extra clothing and shoes are to be marked, as well as your child's nap blanket, pillows and any "cuddly nap toys." Please update regularly.

OUTDOORS:
The outdoor environment is an important part of the prepared environment and children will usually go outdoors every day. Please be prepared for outdoor play: i.e. hats, mittens, snow pants, raingear, etc. In case of extremely cold weather (below 20 degrees or cold wind chill factors) we either make it a choice for children to be out for short periods of time or make decisions on whether or not we will be going outdoors. Please do not send your child to school if you feel he/she cannot go outdoors. A child too ill to go outside must remain at home.

TOYS:

Explain to your child that toys (including electronic games, iPods, etc.) **stay at home and do not come** to school. Children are welcome to bring books, tapes or other special items which relate to class activities. Preschoolers are welcome to bring transitional objects to aid with separation.

Cell phones should be kept in students back packs unless other arrangements have been made with the classroom teacher.

Kindly CHECK pockets for unfamiliar objects when your child returns home; these may be part of school equipment and are often very costly to replace or render the material unusable to other students.

DISCIPLINE:

Our teachers are trained to use various techniques to redirect a child's behavior including encouragement, positive reinforcement, positive discipline, conflict resolution and natural consequences for actions. We strive to provide a loving, secure and supportive environment that focuses on children's positive behavior. We adhere to a safety model of Be Safe, Be Gentle, Be Kind. This goes for everything and everyone at Cornerspring.

A child having difficulty controlling his or her behavior is:

1. Redirected
2. Encouraged to discuss his or her feelings
3. Directed to a quiet place until he or she feels better.

Cornerspring adheres to positive discipline. When discipline is positive, the child establishes trust and learns to survive in a positive way. We strive to provide an environment that promotes self-discipline, respect, and safety for each person as well as the space we share. Corporal punishment will not be employed at Cornerspring.

The classrooms also utilize a peace area. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax and calm down, or to try to resolve conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area by her- or himself, or may be encouraged to visit the area by a teacher, or, in the case of conflict resolution, by another child. On occasion, in the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period of time to collect him- or herself and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

An incident report and a positive goal plan will be discussed and documented between the Cornerspring staff and the Parents in the event of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school and will be addressed in a timely manner. This goal plan will be reviewed and addressed on a monthly basis in order to make any adjustments or to cancel the plan all together. If it is necessary to involve parents in the resolution of a problem at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the aim of helping the child.