

PARENT HANDBOOK

CONTACT INFORMATION

Alder Montessori 971-500-4326

Alder Elementary Main Office: 503-491-2722

Sandip Brar, School Manager

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Cell: 971-500-4324

Jill Silk, Program Coordinator (Habla Espanol)

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Cell: 971-500-4325

Cedar Class

Anna Varnelius

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Student Support Services-Floats

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Madrone Class

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Vacant- Teacher Position

Lupita Arias: (while hiring)

Classroom Support- Floats

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BASIC INFORMATION

Address: Alder Montessori – We are located within the Alder Elementary School
17200 SE Alder Avenue
Portland, OR 97233

Daily Schedule

Hours: 10:15am – 3:50pm Mondays, (Late Start)
9:20am – 3:50pm Tuesday-Friday

Schedule: 9:05 – 9:30am Arrival (10:15 – 10:45am on Mondays, breakfast 10:25 – 10:50am)
Arrival time accommodates the bus schedule.
9:35am or later arrival is tardy.

9:20 – 12:30pm Morning Work Cycle (Breakfast 8:50 – 9:50am Tuesday - Friday)

12:30pm – 1:15pm Lunch & Recess

1:45 – 3:40pm Rest/Afternoon Work Period

3:50pm Dismissal (children ride the bus or are picked up at the school's front doors)

Calendar: Alder Montessori's calendar closely follows the Alder Elementary School calendar, with a few exceptions. Please see the last page in this handbook for a copy of the Alder Montessori calendar.

Phone: **Main Line Alder Montessori: 971-500-4326** Manager: **971-500-4324** Coordinator: **971-500-4325**
Phone calls, texts, or messages for the Montessori program should be made to these numbers.
Voicemail and text messages can be left any time. Staff respond during standard office hours.

Manager/Site Director: Sandip Brar 971-500-4324
sandip@montessori-equity.org
Questions or comments about daily school life should be directed to Ms. Brar.

Substitute Jill Silk Anna Schlecht
Site Directors: Call Main Line 971-500-4326 Call Main Line 971-500-4326
jill@montessori-equity.org aschlecht@montessori-equity.org

Absences: ***Please call or text the Alder Montessori Main Line by 9:20 a.m. if your child will be late or absent: 971-500-4326***

Closures: We follow Reynolds School District with regard to school closures for weather and other needs. In the event of an emergency, schools may need to close, delay the start of school or release students early. All information about school closure is released to all local media outlets, including radio, television, newspaper and school and district websites. In most weather-related closures the announcement will be made by the school district. **Please subscribe to Flash Alert for RSD notifications: <http://flashalert.net/id/RSD7>.**

Remind: We use the Remind app to communicate directly with our families about school news, including schedule changes. Please make sure you are signed up to receive those notifications on Remind. **You can sign up for Remind by texting @cedarrm (if your child is in the Cedar Room) or @madrone (for Madrone Room) to 81010.**

Alder Montessori admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the school. Alder Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs. Alder Montessori has no religious affiliations

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ABOUT US

Welcome to Alder Montessori!

Alder Montessori is a program of Alliance for Equity in Montessori Education (AEME), in partnership with Reynolds School District, Preschool Promise and Preschool For All. Its purpose is to provide a free, high-quality early learning program to children living in the Alder Elementary neighborhood. We are thrilled to offer free of cost full-day early childhood education to your children. This includes free meals and snacks for the children during the school day.

Who was Maria Montessori?

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was an Italian physician and scientist who devoted her life to understanding how children develop socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. By carefully observing children all over the world, she discovered universal patterns of human development that are found in all children, regardless of culture or the era in which they live.

In 1907, Dr. Montessori was given the responsibility of caring for a group of children in a low-income housing district of Rome. She believed strongly that all children are eager learners, and that it is up to educators to create a learning environment which promotes each child to be a joyful and successful learner. Dr. Montessori designed a model of teaching which included child centered learning environments, along with teaching methods and materials designed for each developmental stage of the children, to meet and match the needs of each individual child.

What is Montessori Education?

Montessori is a method of education that is based on self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. In Montessori classrooms, children make creative choices in their learning while the teacher offers age-appropriate activities to guide them. Children work in groups and individually to develop their maximum potential. We will also offer parent evenings and events during the school year to share information with parents on the Montessori classroom and offer opportunities for you to provide us with feedback as well.

Inside the Classrooms

Child-sized furniture, bright and attractive colors, natural materials, fascinating cultural objects, music, and art all offer the children complex sensory and intellectual experiences. When children first enter our classrooms, there is an immediate and touching moment when they realize that this place is for them. Once they are oriented to the room, children move freely throughout the environment, choosing activities that interest them, working with the teacher, individually, or in small groups. Our classroom is scientifically designed to:

- Support social development through respectful, clear communication, and safe natural consequences
- Provide a large variety of activities for the control and coordination of movement, refinement of sensorial perception, and development of both literacy and mathematical understanding
- Offer opportunities for imaginative exploration leading to confident, creative self-expression
- Develop strong language skills that lead to writing and reading when the child is ready
- Foster within the child an awareness and appreciation of their collaborative role in both the classroom and their community
- Contain beautiful hands-on materials for the child and a trained adult to help guide the child's activities
- Provide the opportunity to exercise free choice and develop initiative
- Foster the growth of independence, task persistence, and self-regulation





The Staff

In the 2023-24 school year, Alder Montessori has a full-time School Manager, a full-time Program Coordinator (Also known as on-site administrators), with two lead teachers and five assistants making up the classroom staff. We have also added a new position, Student Services Specialist, who is starting mid-year and works Tuesday-Friday. In addition to college diplomas, the lead teachers hold diplomas from the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the training organization founded by Dr. Montessori.

Staff members participate in ongoing training and attend professional in-service days. All staff are enrolled in the Oregon Child Care Central Background Registry system, and are certified in emergency first aid/CPR, child abuse recognition and prevention training, and safe food handling procedures.

About Our Community Partners

Alder Montessori is an early childhood education program of the Alliance for Equity in Montessori Education (AEME). At Alder, AEME and our community partners work to collaboratively meet the needs of our students and families. The below list describes some of the roles each of our partners play:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Lottery & Enrollment School Staffing Montessori Method School Policies & Procedures Student & Program Staff Evaluation Parent Conferences Parent Observations Community Education School Tours Community Outreach and multi-agency interface
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilities Management Student Transportation Student Nutrition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Registration Student Attendance Student Health
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Engagement School Volunteers Facilitates community partner connection/collaboration

Licensing

Alder Montessori (CC503762) is licensed annually by the Oregon Department of Education/Early Learning Division's Office of Child Care. Sanitation and Fire inspections are conducted every year. Program policies and procedures are re-evaluated annually and updated as needed.

Office of Child Care Licensing Specialist for this facility: Jonathan Feero (971) 707-1229

SCHOOL LIFE

Daily Schedule

9:05 – 9:30am	Arrival (10:15 – 10:50am on Mondays, breakfast 10:30 – 11am) Arrival time accommodates the bus schedule and the building schedule. 9:35am or later arrival is tardy.
9:20 – 12:30pm	Morning Work Cycle (Breakfast 9:20 – 9:50 Tuesday - Friday)
12:30-1:15pm	Lunch & Recess
1:35 – 3:40pm	Rest/Afternoon Work Period
3:50pm	Dismissal (children ride the bus or are picked up at the school's front doors)

Arrival

Bus pick-up is between 9:00 – 9:25am. Parents/guardians are required to wait with children at the bus stop (please refer to bus route schedule provided by staff). A staff member will be on the bus to greet and assist the children with their safety belts. Once at school, the children will exit the bus with the staff members, who will walk them to the classroom and sign them in for the day.

School drop-off is between 9:05 – 9:30am. Parents are required to escort their children to the building. A school staff member will greet them and sign them in for the day. If you arrive to school after 9:30am, please stop in the school office. A staff member will walk your child to their classroom.

Work Periods & Recess

Work periods are blocks of uninterrupted time where children are free, within limits, to choose their own learning activities from lessons with which they have had a lesson, can join a small group activity, or may receive a new lesson from their teacher. In addition to the Montessori materials, the Montessori work periods may include activities such as gardening, working in the courtyard, sewing, music and art activities, and time outside.

Recess is a mostly unstructured play and movement time outside on our own playground. Our program goes outside in almost all weather, appropriate clothing and a full extra set of clean, dry clothes are necessary. We provide rain boots and rain jackets for all of our students to use at our school during outdoor activities.

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch

All Alder Montessori students are provided breakfast and lunch from the nutrition services program at Alder Elementary School. All meals are free of charge and follow the USDA food program guidelines set by the Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Alder Montessori students also benefit from Alder Elementary School's participation in the federally assisted Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), which supports providing children with fresh fruits and vegetables with their meals. Each meal served to the children includes a fruit and/or vegetable, a protein, and a whole grain. Milk is served at both meals. Water is available to the

children at any time throughout the day. If children enrolled in Alder Montessori have specific dietary guidelines, staff work with the nutrition services manager at Alder Elementary School to support the needs of the child.

Mealtime Routines and Expectations

Children wash their hands prior to every meal. After handwashing, they go to shelves where plates, bowls, cups, and cutlery are accessible for them to set their own place at a table. Children are placed in groups of two to four at a table during meals and it is expected that children will sit while eating. Once a child has set their place, they may carry their plate to where the food has been laid out to serve. Serving utensils that are sized to provide the correct portion of each food are provided by the nutrition services staff. It is a program requirement that each child receive one portion of every food provided, but it is not a requirement that they eat everything on their plate.

During mealtimes, the teachers and assistants sit with different groups of children to model how to have a meal together. The teachers and assistants engage children in conversation as well as facilitate and encourage children to have conversation among themselves. Mealtimes are naturally occurring times to talk about food and its nutritional properties with children. At the pre-school level it is important to talk about how different foods help our bodies grow.

Initially, the teaching staff is very involved in assisting children in getting their meals. As the year progresses, the goal is for children to be able to independently manage setting their place and cleaning up after they eat.

If you have any questions or concerns about meals in the classrooms at Alder Montessori, please speak with your child's teacher or a program Administrator.

If your child has allergies to any food items please notify your child's teacher, and School manager right away.

Afternoon Work Period

See Morning Work Period.

Rest/Nap

After lunch and recess, preschool-aged students rest for a minimum of 20 minutes. Each child is assigned a cot for the school year. The program provides a light-weight blanket and sheets to fit over the cot. The blankets and sheets are washed on-site every week. Children who do not fall asleep after 20 minutes of rest get up and choose work for the afternoon. Children who do sleep are woken up with enough time to put away their nap items, join the end-of-day group gathering, and prepare to go home.

Dismissal

Children leave their classroom at 3:40 to give them enough time to walk to the bus or the front of the school to be met by parents/guardians.

Bus drop-off is between 3:50 – 4:05. A parent/guardian or other authorized adult is required to be at the bus stop to receive their child (please refer to bus route schedule provided by staff). A staff member will be on the bus to assist the child off the bus and say goodbye. If a parent is not present, the child will be brought back to school. The parent will be called to come and pick up the child.

School pick-up is between 3:50 – 4pm. Children are released to their parents/guardians/or other authorized adults at the front doors of Alder Elementary School. Please be on time, as young children become anxious when their parent/guardian or family member is late.

If you need to pick up your child earlier in the day, please sign in at the school office and classroom staff will be notified. A staff member will assist your child in leaving for the day and sign them out on the daily attendance sheet. You must also sign up at the school office before exiting the building.

School Security

Parents are required to pass by the Alder Elementary office for a permit to access school premises at all times. This includes parent engagement events, open houses, as well as any other time parents might need to access the building.

Staff will only release a child to their parent, or another person named and identified by the parent(s). Staff will verify the identification of any person, other than the parent, who picks up the child.

If a child arrives at or leaves the building without a parent, there must be arrangements in advance, in writing, from the parent(s) for the arrival and departure times and what to do if the child has not arrived at school by the expected time. If a parent/guardian want us to release your child to another trusted adult, then you will need to complete a signed and dated statement/or form listing their name, relationship, phone numbers, and a copy of the person's photo ID.

FOR PARENTS

School Forms

At the beginning of school, your registration forms must be completed and returned to the Program Manager. The registration forms contain vital information. It is critical that these forms are accurate and up to date at all times. Any changes in telephone numbers, emergency contact persons, persons authorized for pick-up, or additional vaccine information must be submitted immediately so that our records reflect current information and ensure your child's welfare.

For families new to Alder Montessori, staff will meet with you near the beginning of the school year to get to know you and gain input from you about your child. The meeting will be at Alder Elementary School. Translation services will be available if needed.

Attendance & Absences

Our hope is that every child can arrive every morning on time throughout the school year. The mornings in our classroom are our most important time of the school day for your child to learn, gain, and strengthen their skills. Please notify us of any planned or unexpected absences. You can communicate with the Manager or Coordinator via email, text or phone call. If you do not contact us in the event of an absence, our Manager or Coordinator will reach out to you via email, text or phone call. Your child's daily attendance will help them learn and gain the skills they will need for kindergarten.

If your family is planning a short or longer vacation during the school year, please be sure to inform us. We are required by our funder to unenroll children if they have been out of our program and out of communication for 30 days. If your child needs to be absent for medical reasons, please notify the manager/coordinator right away.

Translation Services

We are committed to doing our best to arrange for translation services for our school families. In some situations, only phone translation services may be available. If the family has a trusted friend or adult family member, they would like to attend in order to have translation assistance at an Alder Montessori event, parent-teacher conference, or other meeting/conversation, please let us know. Translation services will be provided at no cost to families.

Supporting Children with Delays and Disabilities

During early conversations with our manager and teacher, we hope that you will share information with us about your child's strengths and needs, and about their struggles or challenges, disabilities, or developmental delays. Our staff is interested in learning more about your child and talking with you about how we can support your child in our classroom. We also can assist parents in learning about resources or connecting with Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP). If your child is working with MECP or has an Individualized Service Plan (IFSP) prior to starting with our school, please let us know so that a placement meeting can be quickly scheduled so that we can collaborate with you and your child's MECP service provider to incorporate your child's educational goals within our classroom activities. A release of

information will be arranged by MECP services. As of December, we have a new member of our team, Anna Schlecht, who is our Student Services Specialist.

Families Needing Additional Support

If your family is experiencing financial difficulties or needs help connecting with community resources or financial assistance, please communicate with our Program Coordinator or School Manager. While we are not a service provider, we have partners on-site at Alder who can offer assistance and information on food resources, emergency utility or rent assistance, health care access, culturally or language specific supports, and additional educational or family services. All requests for information will be confidential and decisions to access any services are voluntary.

Observations

Once the classrooms have settled in for the year, we welcome and encourage you to observe in your child's class. Keep in mind that your presence in the classroom may result in behavior from your child that is different from that which is displayed on a routine day. The child may "show-off," do nothing, or busy themselves with works they have already mastered. Knowing this, sit back and take in the whole environment. Your child's teacher or the Manager can take a few minutes with you afterward to discuss your observations and answer questions. Parents are invited to discuss appropriate observation times with their child's teacher and/or the Manager.

Parent Involvement

We want to offer you a variety of opportunities to take part in the Alder Montessori school community. We arrange for parent events and activities, including monthly Parent Coffee mornings, parent educational evening, volunteer opportunities, and our annual family picnic. We also may offer special presentations/training for parents based on parents' interests.

Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are offered up to three times a year: the first one will occur in the fall. Two of these events will be aligned with Alder Elementary School's parent/teacher conference days and hours. Conferences are an opportunity for you to share your observations of your child at home, and for the teacher to share theirs of your child at school.

Conferences also give both you and the teacher time to share concerns, exchange ideas, and ask questions. You are also welcome to schedule an appointment with your child's teacher at any time during the school year.

Assessments

Observation & Formative Assessments:

Staff conduct daily observations of each child. The purpose of using observation is to assess a child's developmental progress so the teacher can create informed lesson plans for each child. If we notice any issues surrounding a child's development or behavior, we will contact you, the

parent(s)/guardian(s), to set up a meeting to discuss how best to support your child. We welcome your ongoing communication about your child to assist us in supporting her/his learning and development. The teacher will complete two formative assessments per year for each child. Information will be provided to parents during parent-teacher conferences.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ):

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is a developmental screening program required by our Preschool Promise & Preschool for All funders which addresses five developmental areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social. The screening includes 21 questionnaires and covers ages one month through 5 ½ years of age. ASQ screenings are offered in English and in Spanish.

Alder Montessori is required to ensure completion of the ASQ for each child three times annually. Parents complete three assessments: once at the beginning, once in the Spring and again at the end of the year. If necessary, Alder Montessori staff can assist you with the ASQ, and can also arrange for help with translation with other languages outside of English and Spanish. *We request that the ASQ be completed, and a copy provided to us within 45 days of your child's enrollment at Alder Montessori, or by the first parent/teacher conference, whichever comes first after your child's enrollment.*

If the ASQ results indicate your child needs further specialized assessment to support them in their development, Alder Montessori staff can help you make connections with outside professionals and/or agencies.

Guidance and Discipline Policies

In the Montessori learning environment, children learn and acquire skills in socialization and practical living. The teacher establishes clear guidelines and limits as to acceptable behavior, reinforcing those behaviors gently but consistently. The teacher also carefully prepares and demonstrates lessons in Grace & Courtesy. As a result, the child builds their own self-control, which fosters harmony in the classroom.

If the teacher is concerned with a particular child experiencing recurrent difficulties, the school will work with the family to do whatever is necessary to support the child. This might include: observing the child, redirection of the child to positive pro-social behavior, discussing the child's behavior with the teacher, other staff, and/or the parents, or even seeking outside professional help. Sometimes the parents may request a temporarily modified school schedule for their child. The goal for Alder Montessori staff is to support the family in achieving a feeling of empowerment and to create a happy and safe learning environment for all children. In accordance with requirements from the Oregon Department of Education/Early Learning Division, Alder Montessori prohibits the suspension and expulsion of students.

Mandatory Reporting

As a licensed childcare center, and a provider of Preschool for All and Preschool Promise programming, all Alder Montessori staff are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect and must complete a mandatory State sanctioned training in Child Abuse & Neglect.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

The health of our community is dependent upon the health of the children. Please exercise careful judgement in the daily evaluation of your child's health. If your child is experiencing a health concern which makes it difficult for them to focus or participate in activities, or if they have symptoms which are likely contagious, please call our office and keep your child home for the day. Please call us daily when your child is absent due to health issues.

If a family plans for their child to be absent for more than 30 days due to medical leave, we are required to document this request. We will make all efforts to ensure your child can return to our school when they are well.

Exclusion Guidelines:

Ask your doctor for guidelines on when your child can return to school without risk of infection to others. A general rule for illnesses other than COVID-19 is that your child may return to school 24 hours after the start of antibiotics, the break of a fever, or the last episode of vomiting/diarrhea. More importantly, wait until your child's energy level is back to normal.

Note: if you notice any signs of illness, please do not send your child to school. Please call the school to report symptoms or any useful information about the illness.

Illness/Injury:

If your child becomes ill or injured at school, we will consult the school nurse and make them as comfortable as possible until you arrive to take him/her home (if necessary). In case of an extreme medical emergency, we will make every effort to reach you. However, if we cannot reach you, we will call 911 for an ambulance that will transport your child to an appropriate emergency room. We will make every effort to have one of our staff remain with your child, but we have mandated staff to student ratios which we must also maintain. Please be sure to provide us with current emergency contact information.

Medications:

Oregon law requires that **all** medications administered at school (prescription and over-the-counter) be dispensed from an original labeled container and be accompanied by written consent from the parent. The staff is not authorized to dispense any medication at school unless these requirements are met, and children are never authorized to self-administer medications. Please do not send medication to school without alerting program staff.

Hand Washing:

Proper and frequent hand washing is the easiest and most effective way to prevent the spread of illness. Staff and children wash their hands before and after certain duties and activities, including: arriving at school; preparing, serving, and eating meals and snacks; playing outdoors; wiping noses; coughing; toileting; and handling bodily fluids.

Lice:

Head lice can be a nuisance but have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice. Students diagnosed

with live head lice will not be excluded from school, but please notify staff if you notice or suspect signs of lice on your child so we can minimize spread. It is important to know that lice eggs (nits) may persist after treatment. Combing out the nits and lice with a fine-toothed comb is the only way to successfully eliminate head lice. Lice can only survive in human hair, and it is impossible for lice to live in school furniture, clothes, or cushions for longer than a few hours.

Transportation

Busing to and from school is provided by the school district. All buses and drivers meet Oregon motor vehicles division requirements. An Alder Montessori Staff rides the bus with the children to assist the operator in ensuring the safety of all children. If you decide to have your child ride the Reynolds district bus, it is with the understanding that AEME is not completing a background check on Reynolds district employees.

Field Trips

Occasionally, children may go on a field trip. Notice of upcoming field trips will be shared with parents and posted outside both classrooms at least one month ahead of time. Transportation will be provided by the school district, and lunch will be provided by nutrition services at Alder Elementary School.

Emergency Plan

Throughout the school year, staff works with the students to respond precisely, cautiously, and without fear during our monthly emergency drills.

Lockout:

staff and students return inside and participate in normal day-to-day activities. Staff takes roll and increase situational awareness.

Lockdown:

staff and students move out of sight and remain silent. Staff lock classroom doors, turn out lights, take roll, and wait for responder to arrive.

Evacuation (fire):

staff and students form a line and walk hand in hand to evacuation location. Staff takes roll and notifies responders of any injured or missing students.

Shelter (earthquake, tornado, bomb, hazmat):

staff and students take the appropriate shelter based on the emergency. Staff takes roll and wait with students for responder to arrive.

FLOOR PLAN & EMERGENCY EXIT ROUTES

