

Lower Elementary Program Handbook 2025-2026

(UPDATED JUNE 17, 2025)



2933 Baldwin Avenue
Makawao, HI 96768

Welcome to the MOMI 'Ohana and the Lower Elementary!

On behalf of everyone here at MOMI, we look forward to sharing this year with you and your children. The students will be guided to learn and explore their potential throughout the school year.

We hope you will find the information that follows to be helpful as you navigate your child's and your own school experiences. This guidebook contains important information about our program. ***It is essential to read before the first day of school and to use it as a reference throughout the year.*** In some cases, reference is made to the MOMI Family Handbook. To access this, visit <http://www.momi.org/parents/familyhandbook.cfm>.

Communication is the key to all successful relationships. To best serve your child and your family, we look forward to having frequent communication with you and working together to establish a partnership based on trust.

Contact anyone at MOMI by using the staff member's first name and the first letter of their last name, followed by the extension @momi.org.

You should expect that e-mail messages will be returned within 24 hours. Should your message be time-sensitive, please contact the Office.

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

School Phone: 573-0374
Business Office: 573-1230

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Overview of a Montessori Elementary Classroom

One of the most important components of a Montessori classroom is the belief that children are capable of independent learning. Through lessons, work choice, and guidance, children will reach their full potential. The realization that an elementary child can affect outcomes in their own life, the life of the community that surrounds them, and most profoundly, the life of the planet, is a humbling and awe-inspiring revelation.

A key part of the goal of an elementary classroom is to teach children to act deliberately and responsibly. To achieve this, Dr. Montessori designed a classroom environment that supports the child's independent work, leading them to a broader understanding of society as a whole. She believed that civilization and peace depend on the way we educate children today.

A child at the elementary age has a great imagination, reasoning mind, desire to collaborate, and an ability to do great work until self-satisfaction is attained. Dr. Montessori designed her elementary lessons with these characteristics in mind. The child practices reasoning through stories of history and past civilizations to identify similarities and differences with their current society, as well as develop empathy toward societies, groups, or individuals. This helps the child form a grounded perspective of their own lives. Dr. Montessori's lessons spark the child's imagination to find academic challenges that could never be dictated. For example, creating giant math problems, measuring large surface areas, and writing creative stories and poems.

Dr. Montessori designed Five Great Lessons to provide children with an orientation to elementary studies. The first is the *Story of the Universe*, which sets the stage for the arrival of human beings and allows children to gain perspective on the length of time the Earth has existed before human beings. The *Story of the Coming of Life* depicts various animals and plants throughout history, telling the story of how they adapted to their environments. The *Story of Human Beings* aims to highlight the special place that human beings hold in the story of life and their unique gifts: the mind that can think, the heart that can love, and the hand that can work. From the story, students come away with a sense of their own dignity. She also wrote the *Story of Communication in Signs* and the *Story of Our Numerals* to provide a practical context for how math and language were used and applied throughout human history. These lessons also help children understand that they are part of the story as it is still unfolding.

The stories open up the elementary curriculum to the child, and the classroom materials enable the child to explore these themes and concepts. To really understand something, a child needs time, space, and freedom to explore using these materials. This is truly a holistic learning environment without limits and without a separation between subjects, which leads to disconnect.

"Educationists generally agree that imagination is important, but they would have it cultivated as separate from intelligence....in school they want children to learn dry facts of reality, while their imagination is cultivated by Fairy Tales, concerned with a world that is certainly full of marvels, but not the world around them in which they live ... On the other hand, by offering the child the Story of the Universe, we give him something a thousand times more infinite and mysterious to reconstruct his imagination." (To Educate the Human Potential, Dr. Maria Montessori, 11).

A Brief Note on the Second Plane of Development

Children entering the elementary classroom are beginning the Second of Four Planes of Development that Dr. Montessori identified: 0-6, **6-12**, 12-18, and 18-24. The elementary classroom is carefully prepared to meet the needs of the students in the Second Plane of Development. For many children (and parents), growing into this new plane can be a big transition.

This new Second Plane child can be markedly different from the sweet and innocent little one in the primary class because they will be venturing out into the larger world offered in an elementary classroom. The second-plane child has significantly different developmental needs than the primary child, and it is essential to recognize that when nurturing your child.

New elementary children will most likely find some comforting similarities between their old classroom and their new one. For example, some of the same materials may be present on the new classroom's shelves. They will see children choosing work and using grace and courtesy as they did in the primary. However, new elementary children need time to adjust to the new classroom environment. The elementary environment offers much more freedom than the primary class, and elementary children tend to focus on their new freedom, friends, and group work during the work cycle. All of these things are necessary to help the elementary child reach their full intellectual and social/emotional potential. Some new children get a little overly excited with their newfound freedom and may initially go through a period of disorientation. However, the duty of the Lead Guide and work of the older children is to guide them and show them what productive work looks like in an elementary setting. A significant component of an elementary classroom is learning to balance the freedom and responsibility that comes with it.

Adjusting to a New Experience

A child entering an elementary classroom has undergone an enormous transformation in development. The child in the age range of 0-6 is in what Dr. Montessori referred to as the First Plane of Development. The First Plane child is focused on constructing themselves. An elementary child, in the Second Plane of Development, is building their space within society. Dr. Montessori also nicknamed this stage the "age of rudeness," as strange and unattractive behaviors can sometimes manifest at this stage, but they don't last forever. A supportive Montessori classroom will help a child to work through these behaviors with compassion. Here are a few helpful tips that we hope will assist you and your child in adjusting to this stage.

- When problems arise, or your child is upset about something that happened in class, listen **without judgment**. Try to empower your child by being their listening board and helping them reason through to a solution or simply just vent. Young students often like to tell an adult something that happened to them to gauge the adult's reaction, so if you overreact, they will, too. If you are calm and collected, they will probably feel that way as well.
- Try to keep to a consistent routine during the school week, making sure that your child has plenty of rest and nourishing food to eat.
- Be truthful. Unless something is inappropriate for your child to hear, please try and include them in any correspondence with me. They can sometimes feel betrayed if the adults in their lives are talking around them rather than with them. It also can make them feel like you or their teacher do not have confidence in them, and this can make them feel incapable.

Some of the child's learning takes place using manipulative materials and nomenclature that will be familiar from their time in primary. These, along with new material, will enhance learning within the lower elementary environment. By the time the child leaves this environment, s/he has developed a concrete understanding of key concepts and is ready to move away from material usage towards abstraction.

The guides facilitate learning within the prepared environment, enabling children to be masters of their own learning. Assignments provide opportunities for the child's active imagination and creativity. With enthusiasm for work and confidence, the ability to concentrate increases, and the child moves towards inner discipline, both emotionally, intellectually, and socially. Children with similar interests or similar developmental skills are encouraged to work together, tapping each other's strengths and capabilities. Children are engaged as learners within the community and, together, are given ownership of the environment, ultimately taking responsibility for its care and maintenance.

The children progress through their studies in all subject areas with the aid of lesson logs. These, along with the teachers' guidance, teach children to structure and organize their work time. They develop healthy work habits and take responsibility for completing their assignments. Routines and the work in the academic subjects lend themselves to building the child's individuality, character, and self-esteem.

Resource programs, such as Hana No'Eau, Physical Education, Spanish, and the Living Classroom, are designed to support the Montessori philosophy and are offered to enrich students' experiences beyond the regular classroom setting. Collaboration between individual instructors occurs formally and informally to better support the work of each across all disciplines. Montessori-certified instructors, professionals within the field of study, or other interested professionals teach all programs. Students in the Lower Elementary participate in all programs throughout the year. However, exceptions do occur within individual programs. Generally, all

students attend class as members of their respective homerooms or by grade level for forty-five minutes or more per week.

Daily Schedule

Arrival: School begins promptly at 8 am. Students arriving earlier than 7:55 am will need to sit quietly outside of their classrooms. This will be a good time to exercise independence and responsibility, electing to read, draw, or otherwise occupy themselves as their teachers and support persons prepare for the day ahead. You are welcome to stay with them on campus until the classroom is open. However, please note that prior to this time, we appreciate the prep time afforded to staff. If your child is arriving after 8 am, please send them to the office to get a tardy slip.

Lunch and Snack: Children in elementary school are responsible for bringing their own snack each day to school. We eat lunch at 11:45 am every day, except on Wednesdays when we eat at 11:30 am. Many classrooms have a microwave that students can use during their lunch break. Please be mindful of the time it takes to heat a healthy snack and lunch, as the microwave is shared among all users. Additionally, please don't let your child forget his/her cloth placemat, cloth napkin, and utensils.

Recess: Recess is from 12:15-12:45 pm every day except Wednesday.

Afternoon: The afternoon work cycle goes from 12:45-2:45 pm. Sometimes, children go to resource classes during this time.

- Please schedule as many appointments as possible after school.
- We are a sustainable campus. Please send plastic or glass containers for lunch. Foil, plastic bags, and wrap are discouraged.
- We hope that you will plan your vacations to coincide with our school calendar. We give individual and group lessons every day. The dynamic and enthusiasm of a group lesson cannot be duplicated. We want your child to be part of every lesson and aspect of our curriculum.

For additional information related to the daily schedule, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Arrival/Dismissal, Student Attendance and Punctuality, and Extended Day School Policies.

Lower Elementary Program from A to Z

Birthdays

For information related to Birthdays, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Birthday Celebrations.

Communication

Communication is key to any successful relationship. The most effective partnerships are characterized by clear and honest communication. It is essential to update your child's teacher about things that may affect your child, such as any joys or concerns, changes in schedule, trips, and illnesses. We are all a team, and with your support, we can continually serve your child's needs.

- Email is the most effective way of communicating with the lower elementary teachers.
- We are also available to speak with you outside of classroom hours **set by appointment**. Please take the time to schedule a meeting time if you have a question or concerns regarding your child. This way, the teacher can be prepared and set aside time to have an uninterrupted discussion. Entering the classroom once school has started does a disservice to the classroom community. It prevents the teacher from engaging with the students at a key point in their day and doesn't allow for any privacy for discussion.
- Each classroom can also be reached by phone before or after school hours. Please try and make a plan the night before a school day on where your child is going after school. The phone ringing during the work cycle is disruptive to the classroom and should be used only for urgent communications.
- Each teacher emails updates and utilizes Transparent Classroom throughout the year. You will also receive printed communications from the school. Montessori School of Maui utilizes the Family Portal to keep all classroom information centrally located. You can log onto your account at www.renweb.com under the login tab in the top right.
- You are encouraged to observe the classroom in action so you can see your child at work in their environment. Observations begin in October and can be scheduled through Andrea Kresy, our administrative assistant, in the office.

For additional information related to communication, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Channels of Communication.

Community Building

Working in an environment of mixed age and gender promotes a sense of inclusion rather than exclusion. The students learn to befriend each other. There is no tolerance for put-downs of any sort. We strive to create an atmosphere of trust where everyone feels more willing to take risks, make mistakes, and be their true selves.

We also work on participating in a positive way in the larger school community. We share some of our projects and discoveries with other classes, as well as taking opportunities to participate in campus-wide activities.

Conferences

Specific tools used by the teacher to guide the Montessori student are observation, the work diaries/plans, curriculum scope and sequence, and regular conferences. Conferences take place on many levels. There is a great deal of informal “conferencing” that occurs in our classroom: in the morning, when students write in their lesson logs, and throughout the day as work is chosen and completed. At the end of the week, more formal conferences are held. We meet to discuss goals and the work accomplishments of the student. At this time, the student and teacher establish a plan to help the student make better work choices, if necessary, or for setting their own reasonable due dates to reach completion of a chosen work. When a work is chosen or undertaken, it must be completed according to appropriate standards of effort and presentation. The conference agreements are noted in the student’s work diary and the teacher’s record book.

Formal parent, student, and teacher conferences are scheduled for the Fall and Spring. Please see the school calendar for these dates. If you know that you and your child will not be able to meet during these scheduled school times, an alternative date and time can be arranged in advance. These 20- to 30-minute conferences are an opportunity for your child to share their work and progress. Therefore, student and parent attendance is required. Typically, the fall conference is between the parents and the teacher. Spring conferences include the student as an active participant in the conference.

Additional conferencing times may be requested during the year. Just call or email your child’s teacher to schedule an appointment either before school or after school. A teacher may request that your child attend or not attend the conference based on the topic or concern being discussed.

For information related to conferences, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Conference and Progress Reports.

Field Trips and Going Outs

Throughout the year, we will be going on various outings. We will let you know as these come up. We will also notify you if we require a chaperone.

For information related to field trips, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Field Trips and Going Outs. At this time, however, all Field Trips and Going Outs have been postponed.

Gates

Please park in the main parking lot. Entry to the campus may be through the upper lot, breezeway, or through the gate at the front of the school facing Baldwin Ave. The lower lot is designated for curbside drop-off for elementary students ONLY.

Health and Wellness

For information related to health and wellness, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Health- When to keep a sick child home from school.

Homework

Homework is expected of students within the lower elementary program. Cognizant of ensuring life balance for your child and your family, it is set to enhance the work that is introduced in the classroom environment. It allows students to practice taking responsibility and provides them time outside of the school day for independent study.

Goals of homework include, but are not limited to, informing parents about what is happening within the classroom as well as encouraging parents to support the development of time management skills within their child over the course of each school week.

Expectations for homework are aligned but vary between classrooms, by teacher, and by student. In general, the following could be expected as part of homework on a regular or intermittent basis:

Reading

Each student should plan on reading for at least 20 minutes each school night. This time is the responsibility of each family and may include chapter books, quality newspaper or magazine articles, and informational non-fiction appropriate to the child's reading ability. Ideally, each student will have quiet time and a comfortable place to read; the goal is to have reading for enjoyment become a lifelong habit.

It is important that the books are appropriate to each student's reading level and that the selected books throughout the year vary in genre (fiction, non-fiction, etc.). A good rule of thumb for comprehension level is to have no more than five (5) unknown words per page.

Spelling

Spelling practice will be completed at home. We ask that you review the correct spelling of each word with your child by spelling words aloud, writing them on paper, and speaking them in sentences.

Other work to be completed at home.

Certain work requires continual repetition and practice (such as memorizing math facts), and as such, there may occasionally be additional homework intended to reinforce concepts previously taught in class. This work could include book reports, among other assignments. When other work needs to be completed at home, complete directions and other important information will be communicated.

Lunch

Nutrition is essential and crucial for all young children. **No candy, chocolate, juice boxes, or carbonated sodas at school, please!** Water is available for the children to drink during lunch, so no supplemental juices are needed. Ensure that your child brings a water bottle to school to access drinking water.

When packing lunch, try to involve your child in the process by offering two choices of items (e.g., a sandwich or a wrap). Allow your child to help prepare the food (e.g., spreading or cutting, closing the containers, etc.). Doing so helps create ownership and skills that lead to independence, providing a sensorial experience rich in concentration, repetition, movement, and language. Please provide a small ice pack to keep items cold because lunch boxes are not refrigerated.

For additional information related to lunch, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Lunch.

Parent Participation

You will be notified of volunteer opportunities through the office and your classroom teacher. Opportunities may include chaperoning a field trip or sharing a special skill with the class.

For information related to parent participation, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Parent Participation Hours. Also see Guidelines for Chaperones and Drivers.

Parent Permission

Your child is not permitted to leave campus with another parent or guardian. A permission note must be included with orientation documentation or provided in a timely manner in order for your child to be released to persons other than those listed.

Physical Education

All elementary students are expected to participate in physical education (P.E.) classes twice a week. To participate in P.E., students must wear closed-toed athletic shoes and bring a water bottle. Please do not send drinks such as Vitamin water, Gatorade, etc. It is strongly recommended that your child leave a water bottle, a pair of socks, and a pair of athletic shoes at school so you don't have to remember which days are P.E. days. Please ensure your child is dressed to participate in P.E. They should wear breathable, cotton clothing that allows for movement. Jeans and skirts should be saved for other school days. Children will be responsible for bringing dirty socks home to be cleaned.

Snack

For information related to snack, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Nutrition and Snacks, Snack Suggestion List.

Student Contract

As each Montessori School of Maui student grows and matures, he/she assumes more responsibility for meeting academic expectations and for supporting the values of this community. Committed to this idea of responsibility, students should strive to improve themselves daily, to make positive contributions to their peers and the community, and to encourage others to do the same. Students can achieve this by adhering to our Program Handbook and exhibiting other prosocial behaviors as defined herein.

MOMI students make five promises to themselves, their peers, their parents, and their teachers.

1. The promise to build community. This means that students agree to be role models and leaders, setting an example for the inclusion of everyone. Each student promises to value friendliness, openness, and helpfulness to every other student. Each student pledges to act in ways that demonstrate a willingness to ensure everyone a sense of safety, inclusivity, and happiness at school every day.
2. The promise to appreciate the unique and positive contributions of others. Each student makes a commitment to value and respect each other as individuals. Each strives to understand the unique personal and human qualities of others in our international community.
3. The promise to put forth their best effort at completing and accomplishing academic growth and development. Each student is expected to work diligently to meet all academic challenges, complete assigned tasks, and fulfill assessments.
4. The promise to participate in unique learning opportunities offered by MOMI with a positive attitude and strong desire to further the sense of community for all involved. Students understand that day trips and outside experiences are unique to MOMI and serve to fulfill the school's vision of learning beyond the classroom. Students are expected to participate in preparation activities so that they may, in part, work together with peers to lead the trip(s) and fully experience the possibilities for independent and collective growth.
5. The promise to display efforts that support the needs of the school and others. Each student makes a commitment to arrive at school daily in a manner befitting of learning, including appropriateness of dress, careful consideration of positive behavior, wellness in health and attitude, and preparedness of tools and materials for full engagement in the classroom.

The aforementioned goals and promises are set forth to ensure that opportunities for individual growth, independence, and responsibility within the community are fully practiced and experienced.

As a student at MOMI, I understand and agree that the goals and promises outlined in this contract are important. As a member of the larger community, I will make my best effort to meet the expectations outlined for the benefit of my peers, my parents, the MOMI community, and myself.

Technology & Software

Technology: Use & Safeguards

Technological advances are commonplace at MOMI. Devices include DVD players, televisions, digital cameras, projectors, desktop and laptop computers, and iPads. While staff and faculty are permitted to use them at times, the following must be followed:

- According to the Acceptable Use Policy, access is provided to enhance the educational program and, thus, to ensure that all students and staff have the necessary tools to meet and exceed the objectives outlined in the Mission Statement and the curriculum guides created for each level.
- Available technology assigned for student use is to be used by students first.

Internet: Safeguards-To ensure compliance with USE OF THE INTERNET by students and staff, the following is employed:

- Assures that all online activities engaged in by students are carefully monitored by classroom teacher(s) and assistants.

Acceptable Use Policy

All students in Primary through Middle School have School Accounts through Google Suite. As applicable, students in Lower Elementary through Middle School use them for various means. Therefore, the following Student Electronic Communications Policy encompasses what is Acceptable Use to whatever extent observable.

Student Electronic Communications Policy

All electronic communications using Montessori School of Maui (MOMI) equipment are school communications, and all records of such communications are school records. Therefore, MOMI reserves the right to examine email and other messages, and students should not have an expectation of privacy when using school networks or resources. The same holds true for communications produced on student-owned devices while utilizing school networks and resources.

Students are expected to use internal and public networks respectfully. Hence, harassing network users and/or posting messages that are in poor taste is prohibited. The communication, generation, and/or storage of offensive information are prohibited.

Emails, electronic messages, and files are to be treated as private business correspondence. Without explicit authorization from the Head of School, no one is permitted to read another individual's email without that individual's permission. Such permission will not be unreasonably withheld. All students are granted a reasonable license to examine misaddressed mail but should not disclose it in an undue manner.

Since email is transmitted over a network and any network is inherently insecure, confidential or sensitive messages should not be routed over external networks. If you have a specific need to email a parent or an individual critical to the success of your work, you may ask a teacher to do so, and the right remains with the teacher as to the applicability of the request.

All students must comply with MOMI's policies regarding school conduct. Special care should be taken since information sent over a public network identifies the sender with MOMI and thus may be viewed by network users as speaking for MOMI, regardless of any disclaimer that might be used.

Prohibited activities that may result in disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

- Accessing the files or communications of others without appropriate authorization
- Use of online chat rooms or instant messenger programs
- Downloading of software or attachments (which have the potential to spread viruses and worms throughout the entire school network)
- Advertising or listings for personal benefit
- Communications that are addressed to another user in any manner that could reasonably cause him or her distress, embarrassment, or unwarranted attention, as this may constitute harassment
- Personal attacks, including attacks based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristics protected by law
- Browsing, retrieval, display, or distribution of vulgar, offensive, or inflammatory language, material, or images, including sexually explicit materials, language, or pictures
- Engaging in any illegal activity
- Sending messages that adversely affect the reputation of the school or its students, parents, or community members. Email is the property of MOMI.

Ukus (i.e., Head Lice)

For information related to ukus (i.e., head lice), refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Uku Policy.