

# Toddler and Primary Program Handbook



2933 Baldwin Avenue  
Makawao, HI 96768

Welcome to the MOMI Ohana and the Toddler and Primary Programs!

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

We hope you will find what follows to be helpful as you navigate your child's and your own school experience. This guidebook contains important information about our program. **It is important 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 using the extension @momi.org, using the staff members first name and first letter of their last name.

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  
Finance Office: 573-1230

School FAX: 573-0389

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## Overview of the Toddler Classroom

To be a toddler is to be curious—to be an explorer of one's world. Toddlers begin to create and develop their identity, confidence, social skills, and language skills for learning—giving them purpose as part of the community. The environment is a prepared community in which the child

is encouraged to become a functioning member of the community and to explore it fully. The toddler environment aids in their independence, a key aspect of our educational approach.

The Toddler classroom provides a nurturing place for toddlers to begin what Maria Montessori referred to as their “education for life.” Maria Montessori created the toddler environment to help children develop independence, allowing them the freedom to explore and manipulate objects freely, which in turn supports their language development and guides them in exploring ways to grow their minds and bodies. This carefully created environment enables toddlers to explore, refine their movements, and develop their language skills in a language-rich setting, all while progressing toward independence in a safe, warm, and stable environment where they acquire the skills to “do it myself.” The child is in an environment that fosters social relationships with peers and begins to understand the importance of working together, developing grace and courtesy, and acquiring the skills to use their words effectively and advocate for themselves. This safe space was created for toddlers, allowing them the freedom to learn and explore a specially designed place just for them. The freedom to choose comes from the toddler's values that will benefit a lifetime: respect for oneself, respect for others, and respect for the environment.

The following areas to explore in our Toddler Program:

- 1) Practical Life: Toddlers enjoy learning essential life skills. Adults help them with activities that they can continue to repeat and be able to do on their own, and this work seemingly brings joy and purpose to the toddler, such as getting dressed, participating in snacks, washing dishes, and sweeping the floor. By using breakable objects for the first time, rather than their plastic substitutes, through this purposeful work, they find their place in their community and within themselves.
- 2) Language: Language is the basis for conveying human thought and knowledge. Through communication, we can exchange ideas, share and relate experiences, meet our needs, and reveal our personalities. A young child in the toddler environment is practicing the overall pattern of language. Everything in the environment lends itself to the incorporation of language and the increase of vocabulary.
- 3) Fine Motor: Fine motor skills are acquired and refined using specially selected manipulative materials. Having these types of work helps strengthen the child's hand-eye coordination, allowing them to move their fingers in movements such as grasping and manipulating small objects. The development of their hands is an essential part of their development, allowing them to build on those skills and further development.
- 4) Gross Motor: Movement is a key component in a toddler's ability to learn. Children must have unlimited opportunities to move purposefully throughout their environment to become

more agile, spatially aware, and knowledgeable about the world in which they live. The toddler environment offers optimal opportunities for engaging in gross motor activities, both indoors and outdoors.

5) Sensorial: Toddlers are sensorial learners. They absorb everything through their senses. The children's cognitive skills will develop while they engage in activities that children discover in their environment, such as matching and puzzle development.

6) Social/Emotional: A key component in a toddler's social-emotional development is trust. Children must have confidence in the adults around them, in their peers, and the environment. Adults in the environment are available to children when they need guidance and support. Allow the child to feel safe.

7) Food: Carrying their lunch is an opportunity for children to bring a part of home to school each day. Parents volunteer to provide healthy snacks in the morning.

8) Naptime: Rest is essential for a child of this age. Each child in the environment has a cot on which to rest and sleep. The naptime ritual is soothing and predictable, which enables children to prepare for and relax.

## Overview of the Primary Classroom

The Montessori primary classroom is designed to foster independence and the development of the child's potential. The materials and activities within the classroom are tailored to meet each child's academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. Each child experiences many opportunities to make choices throughout the day. The child works independently with the materials, and this process is more important than the final product. The child feels satisfaction from applying their maximum effort and concentration that builds skills, confidence, and even greater independence.

Current research on brain development supports Dr. Montessori's observation that young children have immense potential to learn and take in all experiences from their environment through what she called "the Absorbent Mind". The classroom provides experiences and concrete materials that draw in their attention and interest. These materials offer "keys to the world," so that the children can build their own knowledge following their interests and working at their own pace. Most work is done individually, however, there are opportunities for work in small groups and for collaboration throughout the environment. Community is fostered through the Prepared Environment, a mixed age group, and the responsibility of caring for the environment, and each other. The mixed age groups allow older children to take a leadership role and act as role models, and the younger children learn to seek help from their more experienced classmates. There is a balance between freedom and limits, in which the needs of the individual as well as the needs of the group are met. Foundations of self-control, responsibility, respect and independence are laid in the child's primary years. In a Montessori program all activities have purpose and are organized within four main areas:

- 1) *Practical Life Activities*: These are familiar tasks children see as part of the daily routine that help establish, maintain, and restore the environment and relationships with others. These activities are culturally appropriate and include how to carry objects, pour liquids, prepare foods, fasten clothes, wash hands, wash dishes, wash linens, polish (e.g., a mirror, wood, or silver objects), iron, and care for the indoor and outdoor environment. Other activities aid the development of socialization through lessons of grace and courtesy. Children are in the process of discovering who they are and through these lessons the children learn how to live in a community. These lessons include how to greet others, how to push in a chair, how to give and receive compliments as well as and others. The adults model these behaviors daily in the environment, as do the older children. Practical Life activities help prepare the child further by coordinating movements and developing concentration, working from the beginning to the end—foundations essential to being able to work within other areas of the environment.
- 2) *Sensorial Activities*: Dr. Montessori developed the Sensorial materials to help children learn through their senses (i.e., sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing). These materials provide concrete experiences and clear information about abstract concepts such as color and

dimension. This in turn aids the children in understanding the world around them. Each piece of sensorial material isolates one quality such as dimension, color, weight, texture, shape, smell or sound to help provide the basic information for children to establish building blocks to further build intelligence. The senses are the gateway in which children absorb information about the world, and experience with the sensorial material helps children create organization in their minds. The sensorial materials also enable children to refine all of their senses, including vision, lightness of touch and hearing, all of which are essential in preparation for spoken and written language.

3) Language Activities: Young children are receptive to *all* language in *all* its forms (i.e., different languages, spoken language, and written language). Our first emphasis is on the development of spoken language, through naming objects in the environment, giving scientific classifications to leaf shapes and parts of animals, and through daily conversations. Children first learn the sounds orally through games like I Spy, and the symbols with the sandpaper letters, which utilize both auditory and tactile senses. Then they begin to construct words with the Moveable Alphabet, and with lots of experience the children begin an explosion into writing and reading. In addition, a broad range of cultural materials expand the children's oral and written language experience in different areas including art, music, science, and geography. These areas are carefully integrated into the whole environment and learning experiences of the child. The Prepared Environment responds to children's natural curiosity with living plants, animals, and the world around them. Children are also encouraged to share research projects, natural objects (e.g., flowers, leaves, etc.), things from other cultures or times, and quality books as a beginning step towards public speaking.

4) Mathematics: All children are born with what Dr. Montessori called the "mathematical mind". The Primary classroom promotes the child's innate mathematical ability in its early stages of development. Children learn and understand the concepts of math by manipulating concrete materials that are designed to isolate a concept and prepare children for later abstract reasoning. The mind-body connection is developed further in this area through the use of concrete materials such as the number rods that represent numbers 1-10, or the golden bead material to aid exploration of the decimal system (i.e., 1, 10, 100, 1000). The goal of the mathematical materials is to lay a strong foundation with numbers 1-10, followed by the introduction of the decimal system, math operations, then materials leading to more abstraction and memorization of facts (e.g.,  $2+2=4$ )--ultimately to build confidence using numbers in everyday life.

## Adjusting to a New Experience

With most children, adjusting to any new experience is a slow and gradual process. In school, everything is unfamiliar and new. The hardest part is being away from you. In the beginning, your child may not fully understand why you are leaving.

The first few weeks of school can be both exciting and overwhelming for children. All children respond differently to new experiences, however, you may see new or different behaviors in your child once school has begun. Some behaviors you may see are:

- \* Your child's sleeping and eating routines may need to be adjusted. Some children may be very tired or have lots of energy after a day of school.
- \* Your child may regress in his/her toileting skills, language skills, or emotional behavior.
- \* Your child may not share much about his/her day at school and may need some time to process this new school experience before sharing it with you verbally.
- \* Your child may be teary at arrival and/or departure. Children adjust to transitions differently. Some children may have difficulty at arrival, where others may get emotional at departure.

After children have had time to adjust at their own rate to the school experience and routine, these behaviors, if any, should dissipate. Remember to give your child the time to process his/her new experiences, and to *get plenty of rest*. Empathize with your child and validate all feelings regarding school, without indulging in them. It is okay to be mad, happy, scared, or sad and still go to school. Speak confidently and positively with your child about school. Your attitude affects theirs.

Separations and attachments are what allow us to continually grow. When two people come together they create something new and wonderful. This is the opportunity you give your child by coming to school. We know that you are trusting us with your child, life's most precious gift, and it is not always easy saying good-bye. Separation does not need to be painful. Have faith that separation is a way to continue growth for you and your children. We all will make new attachments that will help us on our life journeys.

Independence is one of the primary goals in the toddler/primary environment. We feel that when a child enters the class on his/her own accord it helps build confidence. At times, children do have difficulty with the separation. In order to assist you and your child with this important task of development, we would like to make a few recommendations:

- Encourage your child to be responsible for his lunchbox and/or belongings. Your child will be in charge of these things at school; putting them in his/her cubby, unpacking and repacking the lunchbox at lunch time, and finally, carrying his/her things to the car at the end of the day to complete the cycle.
- Give one final "good-bye" with a hug and/or kiss and then allow your child to enter the environment and begin a full day of growth and learning.



Be confident! Your child will sense any and all anxieties you may have. If necessary, arrange a time to talk with us to help you feel secure about your child's school experience. We are here for your child, and the entire family. We are a team working for the best interests for your child.

If your child has difficulty making the transition, you could try some of the following ways to make him or her feel at ease:

1. Reassure your child that you love him/her, that you have confidence in him/her, and that you will be back at the end of the day.
2. Be sure your child has a good night's sleep and a nourishing breakfast.
3. Try to spend some one-on-one time with your child every day. Every child needs exclusive time with each parent.
4. Do not be surprised if he/she worries or cries. We try our best to keep transitions of short duration by engaging your child as soon as possible. We will always notify you if your child is unable to calm down.
5. Be truthful with him/her, telling either that you will be back after lunch, after nap, etc.
6. Have confidence that your child will adjust at his/her own speed. Sometimes children may "wait and see" before joining in new and different activities.
7. Do not keep your child home because he/she says, "I don't want to go to school." Not only is this setting a precedent that your child might become accustomed to, but it also allows your child to make a decision that should be up to an adult.
8. Say a quick goodbye, making your farewells brief. The longer you linger and let your child feel that you are worried, the more difficult it is for your child to transition. Children live up (or down) to our expectations, and can pick up on a parents' worry or concern. Trust me, the teacher, to help your child transition successfully and positively, because this will inspire your child to trust me as well.
9. Avoid offering bribes to encourage your child to attend school.
10. If you have special interests or concerns, consult and talk with me, the teacher. Feeling close and working together can have an almost magical effect in easing your child's adjustment to school.
11. You, too, may have an adjustment to make. This will be easier if you try not to have expectations of how your child is going to react when meeting this new experience.

## A Typical Daily Schedule for Toddler

8:00 - 8:15	Arrival and Morning Greetings Start morning work cycle
8:15 - 10:00	Morning Work Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Individual and small group activities</li><li>- Presentations of new activities</li><li>- Stories</li><li>- Singing</li><li>- Music/Movement</li><li>- Diapering/Toileting</li><li>- Includes Open Outside Time 8:15 - 10:00</li></ul>
10:00 - 11:00	Outside Yard Play/Group Time
11:00 - 11:15	Get ready for lunch
11:15 - 11:45	Lunch/Lunch Clean Up
11:45-12:15	Get ready for nap <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Diapering/Toileting</li><li>- Nap set up</li></ul>
12:15 - 2:30	Goodnight Story and Nap
2:30 - 3:00	Student Pick up

**\*\*\*Pick-up time is 1:30pm on Wednesdays\*\*\***

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

## Daily Schedule for Primary

- 8:00 - 8:15 **Arrival.** Arrival begins at **8:00 a.m.** It is essential to be to the classroom no later than 8:15 a.m. to help minimize distractions and disruptions for the children as they transition and begin their day. Please sign children in on the bulletin board daily as they put their belongings away.
- 8:00 - 11:00 **3-Hour Morning Work Period.** This is a time in which children work independently, choose their own activities, and receive individual, as well as small group lessons, based on the interests and needs of the children.
- 11:00 - 11:15 **Transition.** This is when children will sing songs, talk about weekly events and prepare for lunch (washing hands, setting the table, etc.)
- 11:15 - 11:45 **Lunch.** The children set the table. Children have lunch at their designated tables , where they enjoy lunch. Afterwards the children are excused and clean up, repacking any leftover food, and cleaning the table and sweeping the floor.
- 11:45 - 12:30 **Outdoor play time (designated times by individual classrooms will be determined)**
- 12:30-12:45 Children who nap or rest transition back to class.
- 1:00 – 1:30 All other children who do not rest then wash hands, join a mindfulness exercise, a story, engage in a gross motor activity, and then return to afternoon work.
- 1:30 - 2:45 **Afternoon Work Period.** The children continue to choose their work and have lessons.
- 2:45 - 3:00 **Dismissal & Pick up.** In this last part of the day, children may choose a job such as taking out the trash and compost. The children also help to put the chairs up and ready the classroom for the next day. We may end the day with stories, songs, and movement.

\*\*If you need to pick up your child early please let me know ahead of time so I can make sure to dismiss them promptly when you arrive.\*\*

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

## Primary Program Information from A to Z

### Birthdays

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

### Clothing

Please label every article of clothing, especially shoes, boots, and socks. Clothing should allow your child to dress with little or no help from others. Children wear aprons while working with paints, polish, but clothing may get dirty during the day. Please take this into account when your child is getting dressed and keep expensive clothing home for special occasions. We ask that no character t-shirts (e.g., spider man, batman, Disney characters) come to school because it can distract from learning. Comfortable shoes should be worn to school, and they should be easy for your child to put on and take off independently. Please have your children leave jewelry at home so it does not get broken or lost. If it comes to school, we will ask them to put it in a safe place (i.e., cubbie).

### Communication

Be confident that if there is anything we need to discuss with you regarding your child we will reach out and contact you to set up a time to meet. In general, talking before or after school is best for short/brief comments, not detailed conversations. If you find you have questions or concerns throughout the year, please contact me through email or phone so we can set up a time to talk. Good communication is key to success! Please be sure to check your email, the bulletin boards, and your Family Portal for updates and information throughout the year. If you need help navigating the Family Portal, you can ask Andrea Kresy, our administrative assistant, in the School Office.

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

### Conferences

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

## Incursions (PreKindergarten and Kindergarten)

For information related to incursions, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Field Trips and Going Outs.

## Gates

**Please park in the main parking lot. All toddler/primary children must be escorted to and from class by a parent or designated other, every day.** Entry to campus may be through the gate at the front of the school facing Baldwin Ave. **The lower lot is used for curbside drop off for elementary students ONLY.**

## The Living Classroom - Garden (Primary)

The children will have the opportunity to work in our community garden multiple times a week as the weather permits. They will visit the garden with either of the two classroom teachers or work under the supervision of our Gardener/Naturalist, Lukela. This will allow them to explore under a tree, to dig in the earth, or to search through the bushes for bugs, butterflies, worms, or other creatures. **In order to visit the garden, all children will be required to wear close-toed shoes or rubber boots which are to be kept at school. It is also recommended that all children wear sunscreen daily or keep a visor in their cubbies for sun protection.**

## 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.

## Lunch

No candy, chocolate, go-gurts, juice boxes or carbonated sodas at school, please! Please provide a small ice pack to keep items cold because lunch boxes are not refrigerated. Water will be available for the children to drink during lunch so no supplemental juices are needed. However, due to precautionary measures, all children should bring their own hydro flask or refillable water bottle daily.

Nutrition is important and crucial for all young children. Please provide as many “single ingredient” foods as possible as this will support eating rather than preparation during the lunch period.

Lunches will not be heated at school so please take this into account when creating lunch (e.g., use a temperature regulating thermos for hot items). When packing lunch, try to involve your child in the process, offering two choices of items (e.g., a sandwich or 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 leading to independence and provides a sensorial experience rich in concentration, repetition, movement, and language.

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

## Napping

For information related to napping, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Licensing Requirements, safe sleeping environment policy.

## Parent Participation

For information related to parent participation, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Parent Participation Hours.

## Snack

For information related to snack, refer to the MOMI Family Handbook, Nutrition and Snacks, Snack Suggestion List. Important, children are now required to bring their own snack daily. Please, designate one labeled container for Snack.

## Teas (Primary)

There are three Primary Teas during the year where parents are invited to come into the classroom and see what materials your children have been working on. This is a time to enter the classroom, have some tea, and watch your child work. Please no siblings. See classroom bulletin board for dates.

## Ukus (i.e., Head Lice)

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

## Work Folders (Primary)

Every child has a work folder in their own designated area. The children place their finished work in these folders, and on a regular basis children will pack their work in a “take home folder” with their name on it to take home to share with you. When your child takes his/her bag home please remember to bring it back the next Monday. It is part of your child’s responsibility, as well as your responsibility, to bring the reusable bag back to school.

The work folder is your child's personal belonging; please ask your child's permission to look in her work folder. In the primary classroom, we focus on the process of doing rather than the product of materials; therefore, the amount of work your child will bring home will vary.