



# HELP ME DO IT BY MYSELF

Information Booklet for the Lower Elementary of the  
1e Montessori School Hoofddorp



1e Montessorischool Hoofddorp



Montessori Vereniging Haarlemmeer



## INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Your child will soon be starting school, and we would like to welcome you to our school! For you and your child, this is a new experience. Often children are already used to the daycare or preschool and in this information booklet, we hope to help make the step over to an elementary school a smooth one. What are the similarities between school and preschool/daycare and what can you expect to be completely new?

For example, there are many rules and agreements that apply to the entire Lower Elementary. Often new parents are just as anxious as their child and ask questions like “When do the children go to the gym? What do the children wear there? What does my child need for morning snack? What do children eat at lunch time?”

The purpose of this booklet is to help to answer some of your questions. The name of this book is ‘**Help me to do it by myself**’, a quote from **Maria Montessori**. Our teaching methods are based on teaching children independence, self-reliance, and taking responsibility.

We welcome you and your child to the school!  
On behalf of all the teachers in the Lower Elementary,

Hoofddorp, september 2018  
**Hanneke Dielen**, Lower Elementary Coordinator



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**I REMAIN  
CURIOUS**



## 1 THE PRACTICE MORNINGS (DE WENDAGEN)

### 1.1 GETTING USED TO SCHOOL

When your child turns four years old, they may start elementary school. To make the step from home/daycare/preschool to school easier, your child is invited to come to some Practice Mornings before they turn four. About three months before your child turns four, we will contact you to discuss these Practice Mornings. During these mornings, your child can get used to the children, the teachers and the class.

### 1.2 GOODBYES

When you bring your child to class, the inevitable moment comes: you have to say goodbye to your child and leave. The children can discover their new environment best without their parents. As soon as you are gone, they make connections with other students easier and are more focused on their surroundings. Our experience has taught us that a loving but firm goodbye is the best. Try to do this from the first day.

Sometimes, children are sad when you leave. This can be hard on parents, but remember that as soon as you leave, 9 times out of 10, this is quickly resolved. Of course, not all children are the same, and some children adjust to new situations easier than others. If it is difficult for your child, please talk to the teacher about this. We will also contact you if there is a problem.

### 1.3 EXHAUSTING

The first weeks can be very tiring for your child. There are many new impressions: new children, new teachers, unknown rules, tasks and lessons. This all has to be processed. You know your child best, that is why we advise you to pay close attention to your child and make sure that it is not 'too much'.

Building the days up by only sending your child to school in the morning in the first two weeks after your child turns four is best. Your child can then have a nap or rest in the afternoon. Discuss with the teacher when your child can stay for lunch and after that when your child can stay for the whole day. We like to build this up together step by step.

## 2 A SCHOOL DAY

Every school day is, of course, different but the routine is the same. In the Lower Elementary there are many standard practices. This allows for a certain routine and order. This routine in the day gives the students a sense of stability and clarity. This stability also makes it easier for new students to feel at home in the group and they are able to join in the daily activities quickly. Throughout the day, as much as possible, the student is encouraged to do everything by themselves.

The following chapters describe how the day usually goes.

### 2.1 THE MORNING

At 8.30, the school doors open and all of the students can come inside. Your child should then (themselves) take their jacket off, hang up their jacket and book bag on their personal coat hook.

Allowing them to do this by themselves also makes it easier for them to find their things later. At the classroom door, your child will say goodbye, shake the teacher's hand and say "Good mor-

ning". They can put their morning snack and drink in the agreed location.

#### Little plant

Every student brings their own little plant to school. At the end of the day, the plant is put on their desk. During the day, the plant

is put in the windowsill. Your child is responsible for caring for and watering the plant. The students empty their table in the morning and clean it, if required. When this is done, they pick their teaching material and start working.

At 8.45 the classroom door is closed. This is a sign that school has started. It is important for your child and the whole group that you make sure your child is in the classroom before this time.

### The day can start

The day can start in many ways: working, reading names, going over the schedule for the day, learning what day of the week it is, what the weather is like, seeing who is sick or students telling stories about something they have done. Sometimes the day begins in 'de kring' (the circle) with an activity there and other days start in the gym.

A big part of the morning is spent doing individual lessons. There is only one of each of the teaching materials in the class. The reason for this is simple: it limits the choices and it teaches students that sometimes you have to wait on each other. Often two children at a time can work on the teaching material.

Besides all the 'hoeken' (corners) (building corner, doll corner and water corner) there are many Montessori and other teaching materials available. The teacher walks around the classroom to observe and assist based on these observations. The students are to walk and talk quietly in the classroom.

If the teacher wants to say something to the whole class, they will ring a bell to ask for the student's attention. All students

then look and listen to what is being said.

### Short recess

All students get their own snack (pauzehapje). Morning snack is always a drink and clean fruit that you cut into pieces - NO candies, cookies, chocolate or sweets. Please label everything! Children sometimes forget what they have brought to school, and if their containers have labels, it is possible for the teacher to help them find their snacks. Students sit at their desk for morning snack.

When the student is done their snack, they clean up their own desk.

The next activity depends on the schedule, sometimes they continue working on the previous activity, sometimes there is a group lesson, singing or story time.

If it is not raining, the students always go outside during recess, even in the winter when it is cold. Please provide appropriate clothing.

### 12.15 uur - 13.00 Noon Hour (Overblijven)

Lunch boxes stay in the student's bookbag on the coat hook until lunch time, then the students get their own lunch box. Leftover food stays in the lunch box and is taken home - this is so you can see what your child is eating.

At 12.30, all students go outside where they can play under the supervision of the parental volunteers (overblijf-ouder).

When the weather does not permit outside play, the students stay in the classroom under the supervision of the same parental volunteers, who organize games or allow the students to draw. At 13.00, the teacher takes over the class.

## 2.2 THE AFTERNOON

### 13.00 - 15.00

The afternoon is filled with the same kind of activities as the morning. Teaching material is chosen, and group activities are offered. At the end of the afternoon, around 15.00, we have a general cleanup. The students put their plants back on their desks with a napkin under it. Finished work and sometimes letters are handed out to go home with the student. Jackets and book bags are retrieved and jackets are put on.

### 15.00

The teacher comes to the outside door and shakes each student's hand before they go home.



## 3 RULES AND AGREEMENTS

### 3.1 GENERAL

The classroom belongs to the students. In the first week after the big holidays, parents are welcome to have a look in the classroom until the door closes at 8.45. There are many classroom rules and agreements, so, to help our students, we ask that all parents and visitors also follow the rules as outlined below.

#### I the classroom

- There are often rugs and teaching materials on the floor. The rugs are a work place and everyone walks around the rug.
  - We are careful with all the teaching materials.
  - We walk quietly in the class.
  - We talk quietly in the class.
  - Before we start, it is the intention that all students choose a teaching material. After school, students can show their parents what they have done that day.
  - All the teaching materials have a set place in the shelves.
- In this way, all the students can easily find and put away the teaching material. We take good care of our teaching materials.
- Before we start, no one is to play in the 'corners' (building corner, water corner and doll corner) and no one plays in the hallway. This includes younger siblings.
  - Toys and personal items from home should stay home - they can get lost or broken. There is sufficient material at school to work and play with.

#### Gym class

- On Tuesday and Thursday the Lower Elementary classes have gym class in the gym at school. There are a variety of classes offered - climbing, circuit training, play, dancing are all part of the fun.
  - The children need a gym bag with gym clothes (preferably a t-shirt and shorts and some gym shoes).
  - The students get changed by themselves. Please pay attention that, especially on gym days, they are dressed so they can easily get changed themselves.
- The gym is used for other activities as well, so for hygiene reasons, gym shoes are put on before going to the gym. Look for shoes without laces that fit well and have a hard sole.
  - Label all the items in the gym bag, then we can easily find lost items.
  - The gym bags stay at school in a classroom-specific box.
  - The bags are sent home before each holiday so they can be washed.

#### Birthdays (Verjaardagen)

- There is a set celebration ritual for birthdays - discuss with the teacher when your child can celebrate their birthday in the classroom.
  - Birthdays for the 4 year olds are often celebrated at the daycare, so we do not celebrate these birthdays at school.
  - The student brings a treat for their classmates and (optionally) all the teachers as well.
  - Parents and siblings that are already at the school are welcome to join in the birthday celebrations that generally start as soon as school starts - at 8.45.
  - To ease some disappointments, the birthday invitations for the birthday party held outside of the school should be given
- to the parents of the children your child wants to invite. It is best to do this outside of school hours and outside of the class.
- If your child has any allergies, please let the teacher know immediately.
  - Treat Tips: Cake, fruit, cheese, sausages - nothing fancy!
  - Please do not send sweets like candies or chocolate and absolutely no toys!



**I PROOF  
THAT I CAN**

**I DO IT  
TOGETHER**

## 4 PARENTS HANDBOOK

### 4.1 IN THE CLASSROOM

- Let your child do things by themselves: taking off jackets, hanging up jackets, shaking the teacher's hand, putting away the morning snack - they can do it all themselves!
- Pay attention to your younger children and make sure they don't get into the teaching materials in the hallway.
- As an adult, please be a role model by interacting kindly and appropriately with others.
- If you find something in the pocket or backpack of your child, ask them if it belongs at school and bring it back. Don't make a big deal of it - this sort of thing happens. The teaching materials are often irresistible for the children, but it is good to teach your child that school materials really belong at school.
- Young students sometimes lose things. Make sure to put their name in/on everything. If they do lose something, look in the lost and found box in the hallway beside the office. Take a peek occasionally to see if you recognize anything.
- We play outside every day as long as the weather allows it! Remember to send gloves, mitts, hats, and a warm jacket, because even if it is cold - we go outside!
- Teach your child to go to the toilet themselves - including wiping themselves and washing their hands after they're done. If your child is prone to accidents, tell the teacher and send some extra clothes in their book bag in a plastic bag.

### 4.2 ARRIVING ON TIME AND MAKING APPOINTMENTS

**It is important that you make sure your child is in the classroom on time. We begin at 8.45 sharp and the classroom door will be closed.** *At that time there is no time for a quick chat.*

- If you are too late, let your child go quietly into the class themselves. It disrupts the class when the door is opened after class has started.
- It is also important that you pick up your child on time. It's not pleasant for your child to have to sit in the classroom and wait. Your child's teacher might also have an appointment and not be able to sit with your child at that moment.
- If your child is sick, call the school before 8.30.  
Phonenumber: 023 - 561 15 00
- Requesting days off has to be done at least 4 weeks in advance. A form is available in the office.
- Short questions can be asked between 8.30 and 8.45 when you bring your child. For longer questions, please make an appointment with your child's teacher after 15.00 when the teacher has more time. In the morning, the teacher's attention is mainly for the students.
- Don't hesitate to make an appointment with your child's teacher if you have concerns.
- Clearly communicate with your child and the teacher so they both know who is coming to pick your child up. If your child goes to a daycare, let your child's teacher know which days they will be picking your child up.
- If your child wants to have a playdate with another student, please arrange that outside of the school.
- When your child's teacher is sick, the 4 year olds can go home, if possible. If a substitute teacher can not be arranged, the rest of the students will be split up across the remaining classes. They will then follow the schedule of the other Lower or Middle Elementary class.

### 4.3 HOW YOU WILL BE KEPT INFORMED

General school information, group information or specific classroom information is all shared digitally.

*Check that your correct email address is registered!*

- Information letters are also hung by the classroom door.
- The Newsletter - every month, current information is shared in the newsletter that will be sent by email. The newsletter will also be hung up in several places in the school, like the whiteboard in the hallway.
- Classroom door - Practical information and questions can be found here.
- Report Cards - Your child's report card will be sent home twice a year. The first report after your child turns four will be a verbal report during the parent teacher meeting. The following reports will be hard copies.
- Meetings – after the initial acquaintance meeting (about 6 weeks after the 4th birthday of your child) and the parent teacher evenings, it's possible to have meetings with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher can also initiate extra meetings.
- Class Evening/Information Evening – at the beginning of the school year, an evening is organized to discuss general class subjects.
- The ALV (Algemene Ledenvergadering/General Board Meeting) during the school year, a general meeting will be held to discuss board affairs.

### 4.4 PARENTAL HELP

Parents can help the teachers organise activities. During the year, there are activities organized like track and field, class trips, Christmas dinner, visits to the library or long walks where your help is appreciated. Also, one Wednesday per month, the children do (supervised) woodworking.

At the end of the school year, the school organises a **Montessori Day** to celebrate the end of the year. It is a very special, fun day for everyone and we rely on your help to make this possible.

Ideas for fun things to do are always welcome! Maybe you want to come bake cookies, or tell about your work/pets/new baby - children love that! Discuss the timing and possibilities with your child's teacher.

Parental help is also required for lunch supervision. Ask your child's teacher if you would be interested in helping.

### 4.5 A PEEK IN THE CLASSROOM

To give you the opportunity to see what the Lower Elementary class is like, we organize 'A Peek in the Classroom'. The purpose is to allow you to sit in on a normal work period to get a taste of the daily atmosphere. The teacher will invite you for this and provide a registration sheet. This 'Peek in the Classroom' is allowed one time during the child's Lower Elementary school period. In September, during the Class Evening, you will learn more about this.





**I LOOK FOR  
SOLUTIONS**

Help me do it by myself - Information Booklet for the Lower Elementary of the 1e Montessori School

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