



Parent Handbook

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La Casa dei Bambini

PARENT HANDBOOK

701 Scott St.
Kyle, TX 78640 (512)
262-2999
www.kylemontessori.com

School Year

1. GENERAL INFORMATION/OPERATIONAL POLICIES/SCHOOL HOURS

Hours of Operation

7:15 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, August through July

Montessori Instructional Program

Half Day Program 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Full Day Program 7:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Extended Day Program 7:15 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

2. SCHOOL HOURS, PICK UP AND DROP OFF INFORMATION

School opens at 7:15 a.m. for students. The Montessori Instruction Program begins at 8:30 a.m. Parents need to say goodbye to their children at the classroom door or window. As part of the children's development, we encourage the children to take care of their personal belongings by putting their lunch box in its place, any personal items in their own drawers, and sweaters/jackets on the hooks in the hallway. Half-day students can be picked up at 12:30 p.m.; full day students can be picked up at 4:00 p.m.; Extended day students can be picked up between 4:00-6:00 p.m. We encourage parents to visit with each other at the school when dropping off or picking up their children. Use the outside parking area to chat! Please park in our parking spaces if you plan to stay a few minutes. We aim to keep the circular driveway free for parents who simply wish to drop off and/or pick up their children.

Your cooperation with this policy is greatly appreciated. Parents should collect children immediately upon arrival. Please do not park and remain in your vehicle upon arrival as this is difficult for the children.

In the Montessori approach to learning, teachers are called "Guides." La Casa dei Bambini believes that Parent-Guide communication is very important. Your child's Guide welcomes the opportunity to talk with you. Please feel free to call and make an appointment to meet with the Guide. The Guide does not leave the children alone to answer the phone, so please leave non-emergency calls until after 3:00 p.m. When you drop off your child in the morning and have a message for the Guide, please write it down with the date and leave it with the staff that greets your child.

The school is interested in any information providing insight into your child's behavior, such as inability to sleep for several consecutive nights, the birth of a sibling, stress occurring at home or in school, etc. Any incident occurring at school which has disturbed the child should be reported to the Guide as well.

When you come to pick up your children, we encourage you to reaffirm your love for the child before asking him/her about the day's activities. Questions such as, "What did you do today?" imply an expectation of an evaluating nature. Instead, tell your children that you missed them, that you're happy to see them, and that you love them. When a child brings work home, give your true interest and reflect his/her pleasure without negative criticism, and also without excessive praise. Questions and remarks regarding the child's progress or the meaning of the work should be addressed to the Guide.

We have small items in the room that are attractive to the children: rocks, shells, imported material, etc. Please return these as soon as possible if you discover them in your child's pockets as they are an important part of the classroom materials and are often difficult to replace.

The parents have the right to visit their child during operational hours without prior approval. However, please be aware that if, when you are leaving, your child has separational anxiety, you are required by La Casa to take your child home with you.

PLEASE INFORM US IMMEDIATELY OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IT IS VITAL THAT WE ARE ABLE TO REACH YOU OR YOUR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE AT ALL TIMES. PLEASE GIVE US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.



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3. GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

In Montessori, as a guide for discipline the method of logical consequence is implemented. In Montessori, discipline is not thought of in the traditional sense of discipline. Helping a child build his/her own self-discipline allows for all of the freedoms that are inherent in a Montessori classroom (as in life, if you want to have freedoms, you must have self-discipline). The following list illustrates more specifically how this guideline will be implemented:

1. Guidance will be given clearly through Grace and Courtesy. Children will be helped to understand why certain conduct is unacceptable, and what is acceptable in a given situation.
2. Staff members are to ensure that guidance is consistent, based on individual needs, and promote self-discipline.
3. Children are to be treated with respect, patience, and understanding at all times. There will be no harsh or unusual treatment of any kind. No corporal punishment is permitted at the school.
4. Any staff person who violates the discipline policy will be immediately dismissed.
5. When a staff person deems it necessary, a child may be separated from the group, for a brief period of time. These separations are not "time-out" periods, and usually entail only that the child conduct his/her activities closer to the Guide (so the Guide is better able to attend to the child's needs).
6. Suspension and expulsion of children.

In the situation that the school deems it necessary to suspend or expel a child the step will be:

- Communication with the parents of child(ren) assessing the conflict.
- The family will have one week to fulfill requirements from the assessment.
- If there is no fulfillment of the requirements the family will have two weeks to find another center.

At La Casa we had never had to ask a child to leave, unfortunately some families do not share the same values as the school. There will be zero tolerance for violent language or behavior towards any La Casa staff, or threat of destruction to La Casa property. If a parent or family member chooses to allow themselves to this type of behavior under any circumstance, the child will be dismissed immediately. There will be no monetary refunds.

4. ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Fill in the application form and make a nonrefundable yearly payment. After all payments are made and a contract is signed, the child/ren will have 3 consecutive thirty-minute visits to the school. After these visits child/ren can start school. La Casa dei Bambini does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, or religion. Nor do we screen children through I.Q. scores. We seek to have children from a broad spectrum of backgrounds, lifestyles, and economic levels. **We are interested in serving children whose parents support our goals of providing high quality low cost early childhood education, based on the gift-economy.**

5. PHONE CALLS AND MESSAGES

La Casa dei Bambini believes that Parent-Guide communication is very important. Your child's Guide welcomes the opportunity to talk with you. Please feel free to call and make an appointment to meet with the Guide. The Guide does not leave the children alone to answer the phone, so please leave non-emergency calls until after 3:00 p.m.

6. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL / PROCEDURES FOR RELEASE OF CHILDREN

The manner in which your child starts the day affects the rest of his/her day. It is important that your child arrives promptly and begins his/her day with the rest of the children. A good and leisurely breakfast, after a good night's sleep with plenty of time to dress at his/her own pace do much for your child's attitude the rest of the day. When a child is brought to the school, he/she must be left in the presence of a staff member. Upon registration, parents/guardians are to provide the school with a list of person/s authorized to pick up your child. Staff will request identification from any person/s picking up children until they know them well.

La Casa dei Bambini will not release your child to anyone other than yourself or the persons listed in the **Enrollment Packet**. Make sure this list is up-to-date and that the staff is aware of any times that another



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person may pick up your child. Anyone you ask to pick up your child must be 18 years of age or older. Anyone you ask to pick up your child will be required to show a photo I.D., such as a driver's license, before the child will be released. When your child out of our care please supervise them closely. Keep them in your sight. Do not allow them to stay outside or go to the car alone. Their safety is very important to us and they need to be direct supervision of an adult when they are on school property. Please notify the school immediately of any changes in your Pick-Up Authorization Form.

7. SCHOOL AND PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

The primary method of communication at La Casa dei Bambini is via Facebook. Please be sure to provide updated email addresses to the school and check your inbox regularly. We will send important correspondence in your child's lunch box. It is important to check your child's lunchbox daily. All calendars, event notices, and other important information will be posted outside the classroom on the bulletin board.

8. BIRTHDAYS

In keeping with the Montessori Method, each child will have the opportunity to share their life's history on the day of their birth. We ask that you bring **two** 4x6 or 3x5 pictures the first year they are celebrating with us and one picture for each year after. You may also bring a special snack to celebrate the occasion. This is the only manner we will celebrate at the school; we encourage all traditional celebrations outside of school hours.

9. CALENDAR

You will be notified in on the school year calendar of conference days, staff development days, vacations, and holidays. Generally, but not always, these days will coincide with the Hays Consolidated Independent School District.

10. HOLIDAYS

Holidays are celebrated at La Casa dei Bambini's discretion and you will be informed about these during the school year.

11. STUDENT PROGRESS AND CONFERENCES

Feel free to make an appointment with your child's Guide at any time during the year to discuss your children's progress. We welcome your input, questions, and concerns.

A traditional Montessori method of observing student progress is through scheduled parent observations. These are scheduled in both November and May. Once your child has been with the school for a year you will receive an invitation to come into the classroom and visit with your child for 30 minutes for your child to show you his/her work.

12. CLOTHING

The child should be dressed comfortably for school in clothes that he/she can manage for the bathroom. The children wear aprons for messy work but this is by no means foolproof. Clothes, which are too good to get dirty, should not be worn to school. Soft soled shoes are the most practical for climbing outdoors, working indoors, and for other activities calling for sure footing.

13. FIELD TRIPS

A notice will be posted at least forty-eight hours before a field trip. The notice will show who will be going, when and where the trip will take place. Parents are always encouraged to join us for field trips. If children join the field trip in progress, it is the parent's responsibility to let the list keeper know when the child arrives or if the child is removed from the field trip sight.

14. ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

Toys, gum, money, candy, and jewelry should be enjoyed at home. We welcome **educational** books, CD's, items the child has made (please label for return), etc. In order to insure that these items are appropriate for the Montessori classroom, please contact the Guide before sending it with your child to school. Please do not send books with characters (such as Winnie the Pooh, Dora, Spongebob, etc.)



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15. SCHOOL CLOSURES

If severe weather demands that school be cancelled for HCISD, then La Casa dei Bambini will also be closed. Please listen to local radio stations during inclement weather to hear school closure announcements. Closures may also be provided on the school's private Facebook page.

16. PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS

Parents will be notified in writing of any changes to La Casa dei Bambini's operational policies and enrollment agreement. One copy of the Parent Acknowledgement of Receipt of Parent Handbook signed and dated. The signed agreements will be kept in the student's folder.

17. HEALTH AND MEDICINE

The department of Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (licensing) requires that all children must have a completed health record on file *before* the child is allowed to attend the program. In order to protect the other children, we ask that you keep your child at home when he/she is ill until twenty-four hours after his/her temperature has returned to normal. **Medicine of any kind, even baby aspirin, may not be given by the Guide, except with written instructions from the Parent.**

If your child needs to be given medicine during the school day, you must complete a "Medication Authorization" form. All prescription medications must be in the original containers labeled with the child's name, date, directions, and physician's name. All medications must be administered as stated on label directions. Non-prescriptions medications must be labeled with the child's name and the date that the medication was brought to the school. Non-prescription medication must be in the original container. It must be administered according to the label directions, and administration must be approved in writing by health personnel or the child's parent. **DO NOT SEND MEDICATIONS THROUGH CHILDREN OR IN LUNCH BOXES, GIVE THEM DIRECTLY TO A STAFF MEMBER.**

When medications are no longer needed, they will be returned to the parent. When a child withdraws from the school or the medicine is out of date, the medications will be disposed of. Each dose of medication given is documented showing the child's name, the name of the medication, date, time given, and amount administered; and the name of the staff member giving the medication. The record is kept for two weeks.

Researchers on childcare and health recommend the following precautions as children in group care are at greater risk for illness:

1. Thorough hand washing for staff and children, and
2. Exclusion of ill children.

These methods have been determined to be the best ways to reduce risk of illness. Parents can help by picking up an ill child promptly and arranging to keep the ill child home. The staff at La Casa dei Bambini will use the following criteria to determine whether or not to send a child home:

- If a child has a raised temperature of 99, the parent may be notified. This child may remain at the school if there are no other signs of illness.
- If a child has a temporal temperature of 100.4 or above, or a temperature under the arm of 99.4 or above, the parent will be asked to take the child home.
- A rash you cannot identify which has not been diagnosed.
- Diarrhea three or more times within 24 hours (watery or greenish BM's that look different and are more frequent than usual).
- Vomiting
- Teachers can send a child home if their behavior indicates that they are too ill to participate in the day's activities.



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- Excluding children from outside play for reasons other than extreme weather conditions is against Minimum Standards. If they are too ill to participate in the school's daily programs, including outside play, they are too ill to be at the school.
- **Children sent home with fever may return after the temperature has returned to normal for without Tylenol or other fever suppressants a minimum of 24 hours. If a child returns and runs a fever within 24 hours of returning a physician statement will be required to re- enter the center.**

If at any time a staff member suspects that a child has been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused, they must immediately report their suspicions to their supervisor, in compliance with the Texas Family Code. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services will be notified along with a local or state law enforcement agency.

18. ILLNESSES AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

It is vital that the school be notified when your child has developed a contagious illness so that we can notify other parents and watch the rest of the children for symptoms. If your child is ill during hours not in attendance, please let us know so we can be aware of the types of illnesses being spread with in the group.

19. SUN CARE – SKIN CARE

The staff will NOT apply sunscreen, sun lotion, or any insect repellent to the children unless given a doctor's order. A button up sun shirt is required for all children. As well as a sun hat. Please ask the staff if you have questions about where to purchase these items.

20. SURGERY

Children may not be in care on the same day that they have surgery. Young children recover quickly, but there is always a risk of reactions to anesthetics. The school does not have the materials or staff to react to such emergencies.

21. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

In the situation that the school has to suspend or expel a child the step will be:

- Communication with the parents assessing the conflict.
- The family will have one week to fulfill requirements from the assessment.
- If there is no fulfillment of the requirements the family will have two weeks to find another center.

There will be zero tolerance for violent language or behavior towards any La Casa staff. If a parent or family member chooses to allow themselves to this type of behavior, or threatens damage to school property, under any circumstance, the child will be dismissed immediately. There will be no monetary refunds.

22. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of critical illness or injury during school hours, parents will be contacted immediately. If the parent, Guide, or child's physician deems it necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance service to the nearest emergency room. A staff member will accompany them in the ambulance if the parent is not present.

23. MEDICATIONS

When you bring medications to the school for your child, you will be asked to fill out a medication form. Child Care licensing requires that medication must be in their original containers, have current expiration dates, and in the case of prescription, it must have been prescribed for the child receiving the medication, not the sibling. The label on the prescription must include the child's name, date, specific instructions on dosage, times to be given, and physician's name. Any medication, which would ordinarily be a prescription but is a sample given to the patient by the doctor, cannot be administered unless a signed note accompanies it from the prescribing physician stating the type and name of the medication, the times and amount to be given, and the date.

All non-prescription medications must be labeled with the child's name and date the medication was brought to the school. Non-prescription medication must be in its original container. The school will administer it according to the label directions if approved in writing by health personnel or the child's parent. If the dosage instructions on the bottle do not apply to the child's age/weight, we will require written instructions from the child's doctor.



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Medication will be stored in the locked medicine box and refrigerated if necessary. It is not safe to keep medications in a child's cubby or lunch box. Teachers are not allowed to administer any kinds of vitamins or medications by adding them to the child's cup or thermos.

If a child has an allergy that may lead to anaphylaxis and needs an epi-pen, the parent may provide an epinephrine auto-injector for La Casa in case of an emergency. Like all other medications, there must be written authorization with a doctor's note, full instructions for usage and storage, and original packaging. The school does not provide any non-prescription epi-pens. In case of an emergency, we will call 9-1-1 and take the child to the hospital.

24. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Children who are four years old before September first of each school year must have a vision and hearing screening done by a health care professional.

25. TUBERCULIN TESTING REQUIREMENTS

DFPS does not require TB skin testing for Hays County.

26. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Each child enrolled at La Casa dei Bambini must meet the immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services. All immunizations required for the child's age must be completed by the date of admission. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children require frequent boosters and immunizations in early childhood. Although they may be current with required immunizations when they enroll, they can miss future required immunizations. Since the risk of vaccine preventable disease is increased in group settings, ensuring appropriate immunization is an essential responsibility in child care.

There can be exemptions to immunizations, however, exemptions for immunization requirements must meet criteria specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services rules in 25 TAC §97.62 (relating to Exclusions from Compliance).

You can find more information in the Texas Department of State Health Service's rules at 25 TAC Chapter 97, Subchapter B (relating to Immunization Requirements in Texas Elementary and Secondary Schools and Institutions of Higher Education). You can access it on the Texas Department of State Health Services Internet website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize>, or you may obtain a copy from Licensing or your local or state health department.

27. NUTRITION POLICY

La Casa dei Bambini believes that good nutrition is a vital component to the development of the whole child. For this reason, we highly discourage children from consuming foods with refined sugars, preservatives, and additives while they are at school. We ask respectively, that parents refrain from including items in their children's lunches that include these items. The school encouraged that lunch drinks be 100% juice or milk. La Casa dei Bambini will provide a list of suggested lunch items that meet the nutritional needs of the child.

28. LUNCH POLICY

The children who attend La Casa dei Bambini School bring their own lunch. We prefer soft, non-metal lunch boxes, as they are easier for children to manage. Lunch box, thermos, and containers need to be labeled with children's names. In the Montessori environment, independence is a basic principle. For this reason, we request that when parents are packing the lunch they keep in mind the child's appetite (most children need smaller portions). It is best that the lunch food is home prepared. Please send drinks in thermos. Only tighten the top enough to keep it from leaking. It is best that containers are reusable and of the kind that a child can open and close easily. The food should be prepared in such a way that the child may be able to eat without help from another person. Remember to put something from each food group in your child's lunch. Please do not send food that requires to be cooked in a microwave, nor any uncooked noodles.



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SUGGESTIONS FOR LUNCH

It is best that the food is home prepared rather than ready-made or store bought.

Portions: In packing your child's lunch, please keep in mind his/her appetite. Most children need only small portions.

Sample lunch: ½ peanut butter sandwich on whole wheat bread, ½ orange (sliced), and thermos of milk or fruit juice.

(This lunch provides the four food groups: protein, grain, fruit/vegetable, and dairy)

Remember to put something from each food group in your child's lunch Protein

Cereal/Grains Fruits/Vegetables Dairy

Deviled eggs, Whole wheat bread, Carrots, Cream Cheese, Beans,

Grain bread, Cucumbers, Swiss cheese,

Tuna salad, Wheat berry bread, Oranges/apples, Yogurt, Sour cream, Tofu

salad, Whole grain muffins, Grapes, Bananas, Milk (almond, cashew, goat or

whole), Chicken salad, Homemade bread, Pears, Cottage cheese Pita Bread,

Rice cakes

29. SNACK PROGRAM

Each parent will be responsible for sending a week's worth of snack for your child's class once or twice a year. You will receive a snack calendar that will let you know which is your week and suggestions on what to bring. Please follow the Nutritional Policy and provide fresh ingredients when supplying the snack.

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO BRING THE SNACK ON YOUR ASSIGNED DAY! Snack provides the essential energy for the children to remain focused and active throughout the day. Snack should be sent all on Monday. The staff will prepare it every day. Please send enough to feed 30 children twice a day.

30. TUITION & PAYMENTS

Tuition is based upon a yearly fee consisting of 11 monthly payments (August-June). The first tuition payment is due upon enrollment prior to the first day of school. Please note that the amount of monthly payments is equal regardless of the actual number of days in school. Tuition is due on the first day of the month. If the first day of the month falls on a weekend, the tuition is due on the closest school day.

For current rates, please see the Tuition / Enrollment Contract portion of the Enrollment Packet or visit our website.

Please note: If you enroll after August, you will be responsible for a full month's tuition in July plus the registration fee for the upcoming year if you plan to re-enroll your students.

31. EARLY WITHDRAWAL

If during the school year circumstances require you to withdraw your child, you may do so with a 30 –day notice. A 30 – day notice will not be accepted in the months of April, May, and June. If you choose to withdraw your child in these months, you will still be responsible for the remainder of your outstanding annual tuition.

Note: When you enroll your child, we will request a check for the last month tuition. This check will be held until June 1st when it will be cashed. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please let us know. If you provide a 30-day notice, then it will be used for your child's last 30 days in the school.



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32. LICENSING PROCEDURES

Parents have the right to review a copy of the most recent licensing inspection report, which will always be posted on the bulletin board in the school office. If parents wish to view the full minimum standards for childcare centers, they may access it online at: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>

If you would like to contact a licensing representative, you may reach them at: (512) 938-8710.

At La Casa, we take abuse and neglect very seriously. As mandated reporters, if we suspect abuse or neglect, we are required to report our findings to THHS within 48 hours of when our suspicions begin. Our staff take a yearly training course where they learn techniques to manage stress levels during the day so they may be the best caregiver they can be for the children. In the same training, they learn how to identify unusual childhood injury and physical and non-physical indicators of possible abuse and neglect. If you suspect abuse or neglect, please call 800-252-5400 or 9-1-1 if there is immediate danger.

All information regarding how to access public records, acquiring social benefits, and more can be found at the Texas Health and Human Services website, or hhs.texas.gov

33. BREASTFEEDING PROVISIONS

Parents have the right to a comfortable place with an adult sized chair to breastfeed their child while they are at the school. If you need to feed your baby, please feel free to let us know. We will make the office available for you to use. Parents have the right to also provide breast milk to their children, which we can store in the refrigerator and serve the child with instructions for feeding.

34. PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL CARE NEEDS

If a child has special care needs, a statement must be included in the admission packet. This statement must include:

- Any limitations or restrictions on the child's activities
- Special care the child requires, including:
 - Any reasonable accommodations or modifications, any adaptive equipment provided for the child, including instructions for how to use the equipment
 - Symptoms or indications of potential complications related to a physical, cognitive, or mental condition that may warrant prevention or intervention while the child is in care and
 - Any medications prescribed for continuous, long-term use

As a school, we will facilitate activities that a child with special needs can always participate in. We educate our children on the beauty in differences and how to be respectful to others.

35. GANG FREE ZONE

Under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1,000 feet of a child -care center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty.

36. VACCINATION POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

The staff are free to make their own choices regarding vaccinations unless it is required by Texas Health and Human Services.

37. IN THE EVENT OF SEVERE WEATHER OR FIRE EMERGENCIES

If there is a watch on sever weather with no immediate action needed, such as possibility of a tornado or flooding, the first action is to call all parents to pick up their children. If there is immediate danger with no time for parents to pick up their children, staff will follow tornado/flood/lockdown protocols and notify parents of the next step after the danger has passed.

In case of a fire, the staff will follow fire drill protocol and notify parents to come pick up their children.



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There are many benefits to physical play both inside and outside. At La Casa, we encourage the children to run and jump and play outdoors during outside time. We have two periods of outdoor play-time during the school day, each taking place on the playground adjacent the school building. Weather permitting, we will have about an hour in the morning and an hour before naptime. During afterschool hours there may also be another short period of outside time.

During these outdoor play periods, the children usually engage in open-ended, unstructured (always supervised) play. This allows the child to explore their outside world, play imaginatively, build relationships with their peers, and develop their motor skills. The staff will periodically facilitate structured outdoor activities, such as tug-of-war, sidewalk chalk, and gardening. In the event of poor weather, such as rain, there will be dance parties inside or on the covered deck. The staff may also increase music time with emphasis on songs that encourage movement to compensate for the lack of outside time.

We recommend that parents dress their children in comfortable, weather appropriate clothing so that they can move freely and safely on the playground. Every child wears rainboots on the playground. These rainboots are provided by the parents but stay at school to ensure they are available for use every day the child is present.