



Aspen Hill  
Montessori

# *Nido-Specific Handbook*

## 2022-2023

*As at July 20 2023*



# Welcome to Aspen Hill Montessori's Nido program!

Our common goal for the care of the children at our Centres is their social, emotional, physical safety, and overall well-being, at all times. The intention of our policies is to clarify for parents the policies and practices that guide our actions while your child is in our care.

Please note, the policies in this handbook supplement and expand on policies in our Core Parent Handbook specific to this age group. The Nido-specific policies do not replace the core policies; in case of discrepancy or absence of policy the Core Handbook applies.

Please ensure that all adults that are involved in your child's care has reviewed this handbook, as well as the Core Parent Handbook. If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to the staff's attention.

*This manual was updated as of July 20 2023, with additional review dates per section or policy as noted.*



# Your Nido child's day with the Centre: Arrival, During the Day, and Departure

*Created Feb. 18 2021; updated July 20 2021; updated Nov. 1 2021; updated July 18 2022;  
updated July 20 2023*

Thank you for trusting your child to us for their start into formalized care. Please write [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) if you have questions, or call 403-455-3133.

## **When is my first day of care?**

You will receive an e-mail that confirms your child's first day of care, about 1 month before your child starts with us. This information is also available in your original Placement Letter.

Your child starts school on the Monday within the week of the first day they are registered, providing the school is not otherwise closed due to statutory holidays. Generally, the Centre will confirm your start day with you a minimum of 2 weeks prior to your child's contracted entry date.

## **How do I communicate all the 'little things' about my child before they start care?**

We will be contacting you to schedule a parent meet and greet via ZOOM with one of our primary teachers in the Nido program 2-3 weeks before your child begins with the program. This will give you a chance to update us on your child's current feeding, napping, and developmental progress, and for us to share how we will be communicating home.

We will continue to communicate with you during your child's day via DailyConnect, a mobile application.

## **What do I drop off in advance of my child's start date?**

All items **MUST** be clearly labelled with your child's first name and last initial. (We recommend Oliver's Labels or Loveable Labels; please watch for an e-mail home with links). We will provide a time window and location to drop off supplies about a month before care begins. There may be things we've forgotten! 😊 If there are things that you know your child needs to feel comfortable at care, please include them and let us know.

- One pair of black or navy indoor soft leather shoes (Robeez or similar) – please write on the inside with permanent marker as labels may not stick – will be kept at the Centre
- Two wipeable (soft vinyl or rubber) bibs / smocks for eating (no cloth please due to health reasons) – we will wash and keep at the Centre unless ripped or damaged
- One set of utensils and plate/dishing bowl (as applicable) that you would prefer your child to use – these will be washed and kept at the Centre
- An extra sippy cup or non-spill bottle for milk or formula, to be kept at the Centre and washed
- Extra hoodie or sweater for warmth – will be sent for laundering when / if soiled

- Two extra sets of clothing for accidents / spills / stains – will be sent for laundering when / if soiled
- Two mini-crib sheets (24” x 38”) in a large Ziplock bag (we will return sheets home to you at the end of the week for laundering) – see [https://www.amazon.ca/American-Baby-Company-Portable-Mini-Crib/dp/B075QFSJ2R/ref=sr\\_1\\_8](https://www.amazon.ca/American-Baby-Company-Portable-Mini-Crib/dp/B075QFSJ2R/ref=sr_1_8) for example dimensions
- Two packs of diapers and a two packages of wipes (soft bag packages preferred with plastic snap and seal lids vs. tubs please; all labelled with your child first name in permanent marker - please write your child’s first name big for visibility)
- OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED:
  - o A waterproof mattress pad for a mini-crib – your choice, as there are many different materials and ‘crinkle’ levels that children may prefer – one example is... [https://www.amazon.ca/American-Baby-Company-Waterproof-Portable/dp/B001KZH69M/ref=sr\\_1\\_7](https://www.amazon.ca/American-Baby-Company-Waterproof-Portable/dp/B001KZH69M/ref=sr_1_7) – this will be sent home weekly for laundering to be returned on your child’s next week of care
  - o Blanket-style cover for sleeping (please note only sleep sacks are recommended for children under 12 months; over 12 months a lightweight blanket of your choice or sleep sack ([https://www.amazon.ca/Simple-Joys-Carters-Sleeveless-Sleepbag/dp/B0875FS7QD/ref=asc\\_df\\_B0875FS7QD/](https://www.amazon.ca/Simple-Joys-Carters-Sleeveless-Sleepbag/dp/B0875FS7QD/ref=asc_df_B0875FS7QD/) , [https://www.amazon.ca/Organic-Blanket-Quilted-Toddler-Hypoallergenic/dp/B086QSDBX3/ref=sr\\_1\\_10](https://www.amazon.ca/Organic-Blanket-Quilted-Toddler-Hypoallergenic/dp/B086QSDBX3/ref=sr_1_10)) – this will be sent home weekly for laundering to be returned on your child’s next week of care
  - o A pacifier or two if used by your child – these will be washed daily and kept on-site
  - o A soothing toy or clutch item for napping (please keep to child’s arm length or less) – this will be sent home weekly for laundering

### **What do I pack in the backpack each day?**

- An empty spill-proof bottle for water, or non-spill sippy cup with water
- Pre-mixed breastmilk / formula as needed in pre-portioned bottles labelled with your child’s name for the day – if you prefer the formula mixed on-site, please advise
- Outdoor items (see Outdoor Clothing Policy); sunscreen and sunhat if applicable
- If your child is eating solids at any stage, a variety of solid foods that is appropriate for their appetite and preferences (more foods are better than less!) See our separate guide for Healthy Eating.
- Pacifier for the day if your child uses one

*Please do not send additional toys from home for sanitization as well as safety purposes.*

### **How do I dress my child?**

- Recommended clothing applicable to the Nido program (see our separate Nido Uniform Policy)
- No hats, jewellery, clothing with strings or dangling items, or excessive hair adornments
- Appropriate and useful outdoor clothing for the weather.

- Please see our separate handout for the required Outdoor Clothing Policy
- We go outside each day. Please ensure your child is dressed warmer than you feel will be needed.

## Before you leave home

Please check your child's temperature and monitor them for signs of illness. **If they are showing ANY symptoms of illness, no matter how minor, or a temperature over 37.5, they cannot attend.** Please advise us via [absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:absent@aspenhillmontessori.ca). Please note, a slight clear runny nose is permissible, but heavy production or coordinating symptoms are not allowed. Thank you for understanding.

## Arriving at the Centre

Please park in the stalls indicated in the purple ovals below in the photo below for drop off and pick up. Entrance is through the doors marked with the yellow rectangle in the photo. Please ring the video / RING doorbell when you reach the doors.



**Only one adult per child is allowed at the Nido door for drop off.** Please arrive between 7:30AM – 8:40AM for before care, and between 8:45AM and 9:15AM for regular care. Please do your best to avoid late arrivals past 9AM. If you know you will be late, please phone 403-455-3133 so we can assist.

Your child may cry. It's OK and to be expected! We are experienced with crying, and will support your child through their transition into care. We will always call if we need to! ☺ **If you need more time with your child, please return to your car and check in again when you are ready.** We do recommend reading our Confident Goodbye recommendations as you prepare for care.

We will confirm that your child is illness-free. We will then say goodbye and bring the child and their belongings to their classroom for the day. Thank you for respecting that parents are not allowed in the actual classroom spaces while children are in care.

### **During your child's day**

Our cozy Nido classroom is focused on a fluid schedule that allows for activities that follow the child's interests and energy levels. Children will be engaged in gross motor skill development, language and cognitive activities, outdoor time, eating, diapering / toileting, and napping in varying schedules across their time with us.

Disinfecting based on Alberta Health Services requirements occurs throughout the day for mouthed toys, and as children move between shared equipment and spaces. Staff members sit and engage with children during eating times, providing support as required. Frequent handwashing occurs throughout the day, following mandated Provincial guidelines.

Children nap on their schedules arranged with families. Individual cribs, approved by Health Canada as per Alberta Health Services regulations, are provided for each child. A semi-darkened space with soft music and a white noise machine is provided; a staff member supervises children at all times while sleeping. If you prefer your child to be bottle fed before their nap, we do this in a comfortable chair with your child in-arms before laying your child to sleep. Children may be read a story, and / or comforted with back rubs and pats as they fall asleep. *Please note, we are not permitted to allow children to bring a bottle into a crib with them.*

**\*\*If at any point in the day your child develops any symptoms of illness, no matter how minor, we will call to have them picked up. Pickup MUST OCCUR within 30 minutes from the time of the call. Please ensure that you have emergency contacts on file that are aware of their responsibility to respond.\*\***

During the day, your child's teaching cohort will be making notes about your child's diapering, feeding and napping. Your updates via app will also include weekly photos of your child in the classroom, notes on your child's interests and progress, and activities that your child has been engaged in. Please watch for more information home once your child begins program on how to access the application.

### **At pickup time**

We will have your child ready to go for their scheduled pick up time. Please ring the doorbell when you arrive if you do not see someone present; we will check in and then prepare to bring your child downstairs. Thanks for understanding that it may take us 5-7 minutes to bring your child and belongings to the door. Your child will be dressed in their outdoor wear. Please ensure that your pickup adult is approved on our list; if it is someone other than a legal parent or guardian we need to know before the end of day to avoid delays while we call home.

- Core day Nido children pick up by 3:30PM



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- After care pickup before 5:30PM

Thank you for understanding that the teachers must return to focusing their care on the children still at the Centre, and may not be able to have extended conversations at the door. We do provide very regular updates through the DailyConnect app. If you have more detailed questions or concerns to review, please let us know that you would like to set up a parent-teacher meeting.

### **Early or late pickup**

If you need to pick up your child early for an appointment, you **MUST** call the Centre at 403-455-3133 a minimum of 45 minutes before your ideal time so we can get your child ready, or wake and prepare them on time if they are napping.

**Please be on time for pickup!** *See our regular Centre policies to learn more about late fees.* If you need to change your pickup person during the day, please call 403-455-3133 as early as possible so we can add a note to your child's file. The picking up person may be required to show ID if they are not known to staff.

## Uniform and Indoor Shoes Policy: Nido Program

*Created Feb. 1 2021; updated July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; updated July 18 2022; updated July 1 2023*

We request a neutral colour palette of solid whites, navys, light grey blues and greys for clothing worn to our Nido program. No logos, patterns, designs or visible brands are permitted in the program. Ideal vendors are Old Navy, Gap, or other online vendors.

### **The recommended daily outfit is any combination of:**

- Soft jogging pants / leggings / jersey pants that have a snug ankle, or are shorter than ankle length, to prevent tripping (beige, white, blacks, light greys, dark greys or navy blues or similar neutral colors recommended)



- A long or short-sleeved t-shirt or a short or long sleeve soft polo shirt (creams, beige, whites, light blues, greys, navy blues or similar neutral colors recommended)







- A soft zip or button-front cardigan OR an over-the-head sweatshirt / jersey shirt that is not too bulky in similar neutral solid colours



Two-piece, stretchable, comfortable clothing that encourages movement in jerseys, polar fleece, and similar materials is required. Children should wear/bring white ankle socks / sport socks.

**The following clothing items/fabrics are not allowed:**

- Loud patterns / stripes / dots / distracting patterns
- Dresses or skirts
- Footed tights
- Any shirt with a hood
- Overalls
- Onesies / sleepers
- Denim / jeans
- Indoor ball hats / toques / fashion hats

Plain clothing that is comfortable helps children enjoy the environment and provide for a professional learning environment. All families are expected to comply with this clothing approach on every day of care, unless there is a specified casual day identified on the Centre calendar. **All clothing items must be labelled to prevent loss of items.**

Clothing costs are paid for directly by the family and are not included in Centre fees or tuition fees. Families are expected to have extra pieces available in the child's at-Centre storage.

## Indoor shoes

Children must keep a pair of soft, leather-soled indoor 'first walking' shoes at the school. Permitted brands are similar to Robeez (<https://www.robbee.ca/robbee-camel-liam-soft-soles/>), or Jack and Lily (<https://www.jackandlily.com/shop/girls-shoes/girls-my-mocs/abby/> ; <https://www.jackandlily.com/shop/boys-shoes/boys-my-mocs/onyx/> ) Please choose brown, navy blue, black, white, grey or tan without patterns or designs.



*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Families Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

## Outdoor Clothing Policy: Nido Program

*Created Feb. 1 2021; updated for Nido July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; updated July 9 2022; updated July 19 2023*

Our program includes outdoor time every day. Children may be outside for 20 minutes to 45 minutes at a time, depending on the conditions and the activities. As such, **it is critical that all children keep the outdoor gear needed for that season on-site every time your child attends care.**

*Please avoid clothing that is intended for style (i.e. Gap, Children's Place, Gymboree, Tommy Hilfiger, etc.). Good shops (online or in person) to purchase true outdoor clothing from include:*

- Mountain Warehouse (online and in-store)
- Mountain Equipment Co-Op
- Atmosphere
- Camper's Village
- Great Outdoors Junior Outfitters (Calgary store)
- Patagonia
- Sport Check

All outdoor clothing must be clearly labelled with a family identifier / clothing label to prevent mixed up items.

Please look ahead to the forecast and make sure that your child has more than is needed to keep them warm, dry and happy at care. If you would like ideas or suggestions on how to acquire outdoor clothing on a budget, please let us know via [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) .

### Fall gear

#### REQUIRED:

- Extra change of clothing, especially pants!
- Whether your child is pre-walking or crawling, sturdy pull-on boots or runners without straps are best. Please ensure the soles are waterproof / are warm, as we explore all kinds of textures!



- If your child is pre-movement or crawling, a waterproof one-piece rainsuit.



- If your child is crawling, learning to walk or walking, NO 'all in one' rainsuits please. A waterproof rain coat (lined or unlined) – best slightly big so a polar fleece jacket can fit underneath.



... with a water-resistant soft-shell or polar fleece coat...



... and waterproof rain pants.



- Waterproof rain boots or snow boots (NOT Bogs or Uggs please) – true rubber ‘wellies’ or SOREL-brand style winter boots. *If it is even slightly wet from the night before, or looking chilly, wear boots!* This applies to ALL children who are crawling, learning to walk or walking. If your child is ‘in arms’ and will be in a one-piece suit with feet, this does not apply.



- Waterproof lightweight mitts / waterproof ski mitts



- Lightweight knit toque / beanie

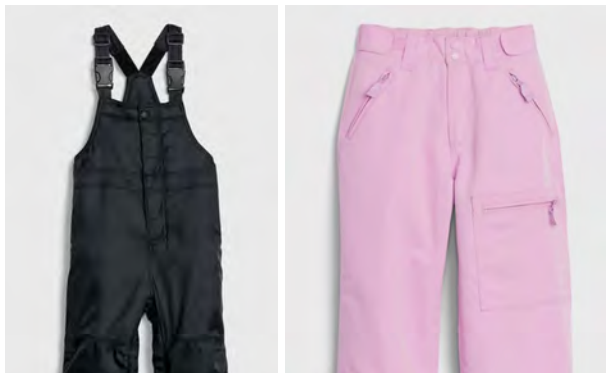


## Winter gear

- For children that are still 'in arms' and pre-movement, a one-piece snowsuit with feet is allowed.



- For children that are crawling, starting to walk or walking, a two-piece snowsuit is best. Pull on or bib snow pants – a bit of extra room is best for easy on and off



- Warm snow coat with a simple hood – go for one with an easy-to handle zipper for better independence and learning
  - o Avoid fur on the hood, they freeze up around faces
  - o Look for a weather rating on the coat – should be at least -20 degrees
  - o Look for water and wind resistant



- Polar fleece coat that fits under the winter coat as a layer



- Warm socks, one pair in the outdoor clothes bag in case of wet feet



- Waterproof snow mitts
  - **Please have 2-3 pairs at home in case of a lost mitt, wet mitts, or dirty mitts.**
  - NO gloves, 'stretch mini mitts', knit mitts, or inexpensive character / cartoon brand mitts
  - Look for a degree rating on the mitts – this is one place to spend money to ensure warm hands.
  - Ski mitts are ideal.



- Heavier toque / beanie
  - Aim for something lined, such as a wool toque lined with polar fleece



All children who are crawling / walking should have...

- SOREL style winter boots rated to at least -30 degrees C; - 40 is better
  - o NO 'Bog' brand boots please – they don't keep out the wet OR the cold well for little feet.
  - o WalMart winter boots can work, as long as they have a degree rating for the cold



- Neck toque
  - o Polar fleece or a ski tube are best – check in dollar stores
  - o NO SCARVES! These present a choking hazard and are hard for children to put on themselves.



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# Food and Healthy Eating Policy: Nido Program

*Created Feb. 18 2021; updated July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; revised July 18 2022; updated July 1 2023*

Aspen Hill Montessori creates a healthy eating environment by role modelling healthy eating behaviours and providing children with the opportunity to regulate their own eating needs. We provide regular check-ins with children around their scheduled eating time as identified by parents, and ensure that all children are fed and provided with preferred milk sources and / or water regularly.

Parents who enter the program breast-feeding are supported to continue this practice while their child is in Nido. A separate space is available for feeding, and a staff member will bring your child to you. You may also express milk and send milk in bottles for storage on-site in our fridge.

Children who are bottle-fed will be supported and supervised while eating. Children are not allowed to crawl, walk or be placed down to nap with bottles. Families are asked to provide bottles, commercial milk of choice, formula or breast milk, and preparation instructions before their child attends care. Bottles will be prepared fresh or stored pre-prepared in refrigerators on-site as per parent preference. At least one month before your child concludes their time in the Nido program, we recommend weaning off of bottles and moving to sippy cups to support a transition into Bambini.

We provide complete support for transitioning to solid foods, supporting children through hand-based self-feeding and learning to use a spoon and fork when they show readiness. We are happy to work with you on recommendations for foods that will help your child to safely make this transition.

Staff supervise solid food eating times sit at the level of the children and eat with them and / or offer feeding support where needed, always monitoring for safe food intake. We use transitional weaning chairs that children can enter and exit with little help from staff, at a close to floor level. We also have low-set tables so our oldest Nido children get used to eating independently.

Staff do not use bribes or rewards to pressure children to eat. We encourage mealtimes that are pleasant with positive conversations, and focus on independence of eating and selection. Children must remain seated while eating, and are allowed to take the time needed to explore food. Generally, mealtimes will end after 20-30 minutes.

We have the ability to thaw purees and spoon feed as needed. Children who have transitioned to more solid foods are asked to bring a selection of healthy snacks / food items based on their appetite as well as a bottle or sippy cup with milk and a second with water. More food is better than less. We encourage snacks and lunches to be balanced nutritionally, with as little sugar as possible. Good ideas for Nido children depending on their stage of development are:

- Child oatmeals

- Pureed foods
- Pasta bits
- Diced fruits without seeds or pits
- Rice
- Rice puddings / blends
- Yogurt
- Applesauce / fruit sauce
- Flat teething cookies
- Crackers
- Diced cooked meats and cheeses
- Bread / bun / pita pieces
- Small cooked and cooled vegetables (carrot rounds, broccoli)
- Small pieces of soft adult food (casseroles, lasagnes, frittatas are all popular!)

## Backpacks and lunch kits

All children must have a backpack for transferring items back and forth between home. This can be an adult-sized pack for the Nido program.

If you are using our meal program, please send a vinyl bib or rubberized smock for eating. NO CLOTH BIBS due to sanitization requirements. Please provide your own utensils from home for your child's comfort. Please also send a fresh non-spill sippy cup empty each day for water. If your child is confident with a straw and is able to open the flip lid themselves, you may send a spill-proof water bottle. *Please test the cup or bottle before sending by turning it upside down and shaking vigorously to ensure it is truly non-spill.*

If you will be sending your own food, please send a self-contained lunch kit each day. As per Montessori guidelines, please keep backpacks and lunch kits plain in design. No licensed cartoon characters or TV/branded logos. Please do not send multiple Tupperware containers / Ziplocks / self-sealing containers without a zippered lunch bag to contain them – thanks!

Please send food in microwave-safe containers with easy-open lids. If you are sending a larger portion of food to be used across multiple meals that day, please send a small plastic plate or bowl to allow staff to plate a small amount for your child.

# Supervision, Participation and Observation Policies: Nido Program

*Reviewed and updated Nov. 15 2018; updated for Nido July 21 2021; updated July 18 2022; confirmed July 1 2023*

## Supervision of children

Every child at Aspen Hill Montessori is supervised constantly, actively and diligently. This involves ensuring staff members are always in a position to observe each child, respond to the individual needs and intervene if necessary. Our supervision tactics include:

- Arranging the classroom to enable close monitoring of children
- Being down on the floor with children as often as possible
- Accounting for the number of children entering the classroom at start times and referencing attendance records throughout the day at key points of entry / exit into class
- Providing an appropriate ratio for supervision of teachers to students as per Alberta Provincial Childcare Licensing
- Ensuring that doors are secured with baby gates and / or monitored
- Ensuring visibility and accessibility in areas in which the children are engaged in activity and lessons, including calling for an additional staff member when necessary
- Being alert to and aware of the potential for incidents and injury throughout the classrooms
- Ensuring that no child or group of children are left alone at any time throughout the day without an educator being present
- Supervising children's daily arrival and departure from the Centre and being aware of the person who has authority to collect a child
- Evaluating supervision practices regularly

All staff members must complete and clear a Calgary Police Criminal Check Record including vulnerable sector categories before being employed by the Centre, must hold a Alberta Childcare Certification, and must carry valid First Aid certification.

The ratio of adults to children as per Alberta Licensing is a minimum of 1:3 for children under 12 months; 1:4 for children under 19 months; and 1:6 for ages 19 months – under 3 years.

## Outdoor play

The children are counted in and out as they leave the classroom and are placed in the group stroller.

As all infants are contained within a stroller or wagon with seatbelts until they reach the fenced play space, there is little opportunity for run risks to occur. Regardless, ensuring the safety of all

children in our care during transitions to and from the outdoors is an important part of our Centre mandate.

At the start of every learning season, staff are provided training about strategies for successful transition times involving the outdoors. Training includes how to better prevent and then stop children safely who may dart or run from staff due to challenges coping with transition times. In-person training is provided with demonstrations as part of the staff orientation, as well as sharing articles with best practices from industry. We also share the negative physical consequences that can occur to children when best practices are not followed. Staff must sign a policy confirmation stating that they understand the preventative strategies in place, and that they commit to implementing them.

We also train and monitor staff on our standard exit and entry approach for infants:

To exit the Centre for outside play, teachers dress the children inside the programming rooms and prepare items to take with them (water, milk, blankets, etc.). Supervising teachers do a head count. Teachers alternate with administrative support to bring the children downstairs and secure them in the stroller or wagon. Teachers unlock the exterior door, exit, and walk to the destination. When they arrive at the play destination, teachers un-seat the children and repeat the head count. When play is completed, they reverse this process (head count before departure, secure into stroller, unlock door, enter, lock door, repeat alternating lifts to the care room.)

Infant's outdoor experiences occur inside a fenced play space or via observation from a stroller to destination exploration locations, such as the pathway system or a natural forest space. Children are closely supervised at all times whether in or out of the stroller. In spaces that are fenced, staff are assigned to supervise small groups of no more than 4 children so every child has a direct set of eyes on them. In spaces that are not fenced, staff would be one-on-one with a child to ensure their safety if they are on the ground.

Children are encouraged to explore age-appropriate risky play to help them expand their physical abilities and vocabulary. Risky play is done with safety in mind and is focused on climbing, balancing and experimenting with materials that are available.

The first strategy in all classrooms is prevention. Preventative steps taken to reduce issues during transition times include:

1. Ensuring that children used the outdoor fenced play space at all times unless in a stroller or with one-on-one teacher support
2. If a class is finding that opening and closing the exit door is becoming a distraction, Securing assistance from an Administrator for opening and closing the entry door to allow teachers to focus on the children during movement outside and in.
3. If appropriate for older infants, use of a walking rope with handles to guide.

From time to time, a child may be noted to struggle with transitions during this process. Struggles may be identified by a child being unwilling to come back inside, be unwilling to hold

a teacher's hand / walking rope, or not being willing or able to follow directions on safety-related matters. It may also be noted if a child runs or dart away from a staff member.

Upon noticing concerns, the teachers in the class immediately connect with the Administration to make them aware of the challenge. The Administration will review the prevention tactics with staff to ensure that all strategies are being effectively implemented. Additional staff will also be made available to assist the class during transition times.

Solutions may include:

- Having the child be secured in arms or by hand with a caregiver before a transition is announced / occurs
- Having one caregiver dedicated to ensuring the child's successful transition between indoors and out
- Having the child hold a caregivers' hand at all times when in transition between indoors and outdoors, and in a non-fenced area
- Having the child be carried in-arms until the fenced space is reached
- Walking with the child in a child-safe backpack harness with the parents' permission while in non-fenced spaces
- Transporting the child in a stroller or wagon with the parents' permission while in non-fenced spaces

Solutions would be documented and added to the child's file. Any child that has been a run risk in the past will continue to have solutions applied for the remainder of their current learning season, unless additional consultation with the parents occurs.

## Classroom visitation and observation

Given time without distraction or disruption, Montessori classrooms develop into normalized environments where children are absorbed in their work and confident of their ability to engage in it, either in small groups or alone. If observers and visitors come into the classroom before the children have learned to attend to their own work, the children respond to the stimulation of observers and the very atmosphere that the observer has come to see will not exist.

We offer observation opportunities via an online app with photos and written observations of your child's day and activities.

## Parental involvement

*Expanded July 19 2023*

Some ways to be involved include:

- Helping to provide a photo board for birthday celebrations
- Preparation for events (We will ask for volunteers via email)
- Reading to your child at home

- Preparing a 'Life At Home' display with your child with photos for them to see in the classroom
- Attending your child's in-class birthday celebration
- Participating in parent-teacher interviews
- Joining for a walk with our Nido class

## Parent-teacher conferences

*Updated Nov. 19 2019; reviewed June 10 2020; updated Feb. 18 2021 and June 24 2021; updated July 19 2023*

Shared communication is an integral part of providing an optimum experience for your child.

We hold one parent-teacher interviews every four months that your child is in the Nido program, on a rolling schedule. Invitations to book a time are sent by e-mail. These may be held in person or by ZOOM conferencing.

Special meetings outside conferences may also be arranged. Should you need to address a teacher regarding a concern, please email [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) so that Administration can set up a meeting.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*

## Weather and Outdoor Experiences Policy: Nido Program

Created Feb. 1 2021; updated July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; revised July 18 2022; updated July 1 2023

Aspen Hill Montessori appreciates the benefits that time spent in the outdoors can bring. Children and staff spend time in the outdoors each day as weather permits. Time outside per instance can range from 15 – 30 minutes, depending on activities.

Activities for the Nido program may include:

- Stroller / wagon walks
- Exploration on grass / snow / ground at the Centre with or without toys or supplementary materials, within a fenced play space
- One-on-one time outside the fenced play space, in direct contact with an educator

The Centre uses Environment Canada as our single weather resource for official decisions:

[https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-52\\_metric\\_e.html](https://weather.gc.ca/city/pages/ab-52_metric_e.html)

Outdoor time for our Nido students may be limited in length or cancelled for temperatures below -15 degrees Celsius including wind chill, above 24 degrees Celsius, or where conditions render any beneficial activity high-risk. The best interest of the children and the likelihood of ability to conduct beneficial learning activities will always be considered (for example, shaded activities and drinking plenty of water for hot days; shelter from wind and exposure to sun where possible for cold days).

On days where outdoor activities are not ideal, we have a full gymnasium for the children to run and move in, with supportive equipment.

All children and staff attending and supporting our programs are expected to have full weather gear appropriate to the forecast on-site at all times. **Children who arrive without proper weather gear will be refused entry to the Centre at drop off to protect the child's best interests.**

Gear does not need to be new! Many good second hand and thrift stores are in Calgary to assist with used items. If you need assistance to locate gear, please contact the Centre **prior** to your child's start date. Please refer to our Outdoor Clothing Policy for guidelines on what to bring for your child.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Student Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



## Schedule Change Policy: Nido Program

*Added Dec. 10 2019; modified for Nido on July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; revised Feb 1. 2022; updated July 18 2022; updated July 19 2023*

During the learning year, a family may request to increase or decrease their child's schedule, or the Centre may recommend a schedule change for the benefit of the child. All schedule changes once your Placement Letter has been accepted and deposit paid are subject to a \$150 change fee as well as the policies below, as well as to availability of desired space within the Centre.

*For information on withdrawals, please see the Refunds and Withdrawals Policy.*

### Moving your child's start date

*Updated July 19 2023*

As families near the start of care, they may realize that they are not yet ready for their child to start care. Specific to the Nido program only, families may delay their child's start date by up to 30 days provided that a minimum of 30 days' notice is provided to the Centre via [admissions@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:admissions@aspenhillmontessori.ca). However, start dates delayed by more than a month are considered to be cancellation of contract, with all application policies applied. You will be responsible to pay a reduced fee (a portion of your tuition) to delay the care. Please see our Refunds and Withdrawals Policy for more information.

### Creating a rolling schedule for entry

Nido families are welcome to establish a rolling schedule of entry for their first month of care, if this schedule is established with a minimum of 30 days' notice prior to entry. Minimum attendance is 3 half days per week (mornings), and attendance must increase throughout the month period. The full tuition payment would continue to apply, regardless of the attendance pattern maintained.

### Decreasing your child's schedule

All requests to decrease your child's schedule would be considered based on best interest of the child and their adaptation to care, to a minimum of three full days per week. The family remains responsible for the current fees set in their Placement Letter for full-time care. Usually, these changes are temporary as the child adjusts to care.

### Centre-initiated schedule changes

From time to time, the Centre will recommend an increase or decrease in schedule for a child. In these cases, no change fees are charged, and individual timelines for fee submission may be established by working with the family. deposit increases / new cheques may be required as per the individual situation. The family agrees to abide by the timelines set out by Centre management in these opportunities.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Child Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*



Aspen Hill  
Montessori

## Evacuation Policy: Nido Program

*Added June 24 2021; modified for Nido July 21 2021; update Jan. 18 2022; expanded July 18 2022; updated July 20 2023*

To be prepared for potential evacuation at any time, all children in the Centre are required to wear indoor shoes at ALL TIMES. Indoor shoes for non-walking children should be pre-walking leather slippers that are sturdy and close securely. We strongly recommend that children wear indoor clothing options appropriate for the season (for example, long pants and long sleeves in winter).

We are required by Alberta Childcare Licensing as well as the Calgary Fire Department to practice unannounced fire drills once a month. There is a fire evacuation plan and a fire extinguisher placement floor plan posted throughout each Centre. All staff have been provided with instructions for emergency evacuations. The staff conduct a fire drill review monthly to ensure all staff are comfortable with the procedure in the case that a real fire should occur. At monthly meetings the staff go over the previous fire drill and record notes in the monthly meeting minutes. Evacuation routes are posted in each room to ensure clarity for all persons working at the time.

In a drill situation, we will mimic the fire bell, and do a human chain to pass children down to our evacuation crib and stroller wagon, depending on the weather. We gather immediately outside to do a headcount and time our ability to exit promptly. We then return inside as quickly as possible to minimize exposure of children to the weather, as they will not have their coats on (to simulate a real emergency). While we attempt to select days that have better weather, we also are required to prepare children and staff for a potential evacuation in less-than-ideal conditions.

The children will evacuate the Centre immediately if the fire alarms sound regardless of the situation. If the Centre is deemed safe, we will return to regular classes. Parents/guardians will then be notified at pick up time.

In the event of a true emergency that requires us to leave the immediate building, staff exit children in the evacuation crib/stroller wagon to the parking lot. Children will be wrapped in the emergency blanket in our emergency backpack, and will be placed in heated staff cars while waiting arrival of emergency services. Teachers are instructed to take the class Emergency Backpack, which will contain emergency contact information for children in the class and rescue medications for children requiring them. If possible, teachers will 'sweep' coats to be put on outside once the class is a safe distance from the building at the muster point.

## Birthdays and celebrations policy: Nido Program

*Updated May 1 2019; modified for Nido July 21 2021; updated Jan. 18 2022; reviewed July 18 2022; updated July 1 2023*

We look forward to celebrating your child's first birthday! Please email the Centre at [office@aspenhillmontessori.ca](mailto:office@aspenhillmontessori.ca) two weeks prior to your child's birthday.

To support the Montessori style of celebrating birthdays, please bring a horizontal poster board (24" x 36") with 5-7 photos pasted on of your child and your child with members of their family, pets, etc. You can decorate the poster as much as you like to express your child's personality. You can also search 'Montessori birthday poster' in a web search engine for other ideas.



Montessori birthday celebrations focus around a ceremony called a 'Earth Goes Round the Sun'. The staff sing a special song, and we look at the pictures with the children. Please expect that the poster will be touched and handled a LOT! ☺ This is an interactive occasion with Nido children. The birthday poster will be hung at children's eye level in the classroom for further exploration for the month.

In order to avoid the 'tourist trap' approach to multiculturalism, we do not celebrate any cultural holidays or holy days (for example, Christmas, Halloween, Ramadan, Hanukkah, Diwali, etc.). However, we do explore celebrations of the seasons, as well as learning about important cultural celebrations as we explore continents around the world. If you would like to share your family's culture, let us know! We would love to work with you to include every-day ways to showcase and share language, imagery, cultural dress and celebrations in our teachings to help your child embrace their culture.

*Acknowledgement of this policy occurs in our online Records application. In the case of discrepancy, this offline policy document will apply.*