

# Distance Learning at



## A Handbook for Parents

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of this school resource.

# Learning from A Montessori Perspective

When embarking on a time of distance learning, our aim is to create a Montessori-based framework that serves our students while supporting parents as we all adapt to a different daily routine. It is important to us that the children's activity during this time be enjoyable, thoughtful, challenging, and rewarding.

Replicating what happens in our classrooms is not something we can achieve during this period. Our goal is to work in collaboration with families to keep alive the culture of learning that is unique to Montessori and provide families with support and activities that match the developmental needs and characteristics of each child in our community.

## HOW DO WE ESTABLISH THIS AT HOME?

- The Montessori method is all about the process. While completion of work is important, it is our approach that makes all the difference. Learning is most effective when it is within a greater context. When we connect subjects and concepts, we establish meaning which fuels motivation in students. Above all, we want children to feel connected to their learning, not simply "complete assignments" while at home.

Learning together with a sense of exploration, curiosity and discovery results in deeper and more meaningful experiences for children. This instils a great sense of ownership and responsibility for the child.

It is important to us that we maintain a feeling of connectedness through this process. We will be in regular contact in a variety of ways, and continued communication between teachers and families throughout the period of closure is assured. The guidelines in this Handbook outline how OakHaven's faculty, administration, and staff will support all our families throughout this period.

# The Prepared Environment



For our Primary and younger Elementary students, the learning environment is your home and surroundings. This means finding ways to support independence, engage in meaningful tasks and supplement learning through various activities suggested by teachers.

For our older Elementary students, this will mean all of the above, plus establishing a quiet space, expectations and routines for any specific assignments shared by teachers.

Where age-appropriate you might like to discuss learning from home with your child and include them in some decision-making processes:

- Ask them where to set up their space (if applicable)
- Make a schedule together that works for your family (when to take breaks, have time outdoors, etc.)
- Gather ideas for activities and projects
- Organize materials

For our older students, it will be important for them to maintain their routine of handing in work and receiving feedback from their teachers. Overall, we can approach this as an opportunity to be creative and collaborative—we are here to support you through this process.

# Practical Life

Practical life is an important part of experiential learning. It is part of every Montessori classroom and can be mirrored at home. These activities assist students in developing purposeful life skills for their continued growth and development. This includes refining fine motor and movement skills and practicing coordination, planning and problem solving. Practical life activities:

- foster order and sequence;
- develop concentration;
- foster physical independence;
- foster the development of fine motor control; and
- provide opportunities for planning and carrying out tasks.

*The Practical Life area also provides children with opportunities to contribute to family life.* Inherent in these activities is the development of key executive functions: decision making, organization, problem-solving, impulse control, collaboration and communication. These skills form the foundation of a child's academic learning. For example, sequencing a task is a pre-reading skill.

Examples of practical life might include:

- setting the table;
- watering plants;
- tidying and organizing rooms;
- planning an outing;
- taking care of pets;
- preparing a snack/meal;
- helping with shopping lists/budgeting; or
- planting a small garden.



Practical life is engaging for children at all stages of development and tasks are designed according to their level of coordination and independence. You can organize a job chart or list of family projects as a way to help guide your child's interests. Planning and gathering resources to complete the tasks is purposeful work. These ideas foster a sense of contribution, responsibility, shared experiences and satisfaction.

As our children get older, these activities lead naturally to volunteer experiences and beginnings of community work. Once these children mature into adolescents, many of these practical life experiences are the foundation of their sense of belonging and personal vision.



# The Uninterrupted Work Cycle

Establishing a routine that works for your family is an essential first step to creating a successful learning environment at home. Children are very familiar with this framework from school. In a Montessori classroom, children are given large blocks of time in order to explore their work deeply. This contributes directly to the development of concentration and provides opportunities to collaborate and problem-solve. It is the framework that fosters child- centered as opposed to teacher-directed learning.

## OWNERSHIP OF TASKS AND SHARING IN LEARNING

Montessori learning environments are often referred to as “optimal learning environments” because of the inherent skills and outcomes that result from being in a rich and interesting classroom, coupled with the dynamic of interactions amongst peers and teachers.

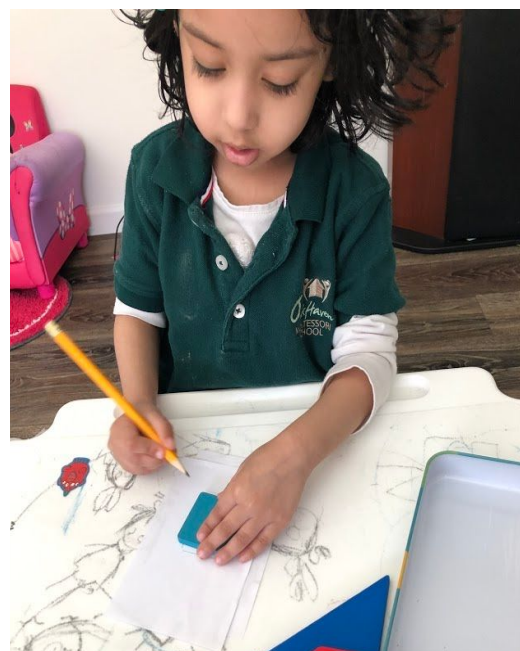
In order to foster a deep sense of ownership in their learning, we focus on two things: the developmental needs and characteristics of the child and their interests. Here are a few key points that aid in cultivating a child’s self-direction and attention to their work:

- Choice
- Participation in planning and organizing tasks
- Conversation
- Finding good resources
- Sharing of knowledge

You will be receiving regular communications from your child’s classroom teachers in the coming weeks. We encourage parents to follow teacher suggestions and guidance when completing work at home. The more children are involved in developing and detailing their activities, the more they can achieve.

### *A note regarding sharing and presenting work:*

It is a regular occurrence in an Elementary classroom for children to present their work or projects to one another. This can be replicated at home. Planning a presentation or sharing time at the end of a project is very exciting for young children and gives our older students an opportunity to use their voice. It is an essential part of the learning process as it requires synthesis of learning to describe, explain and express yourself clearly. It feels celebratory as well!



# Responsibility and Contribution to Community

OakHaven is often described by students as being part of a big family. All of the aspects detailed above result in a feeling of belonging to a community and with that, we learn that there is a responsibility to ourselves, others and the environment. It is our commitment to each child at OakHaven that they reach their fullest potential and feel that they are a valued part of our community.





# Primary

## SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR PRIMARY

Early Morning	Set up and clean up breakfast, load the dishwasher. Basic chores: collect dirty clothes, sort laundry, help load the washing machine. Prepare a morning snack (place in an accessible area to be eaten later), clean up.
Mid-Morning	Uninterrupted work cycle. Children should engage in activities to practice skills for practical life, sensorial work, language, or math.
Lunch	Prepare (set up, clean up) lunch. Spend time outdoors. Quiet Time: this may include nap, reading books, handwork, reflective time. No screen time.
Afternoon	Afternoon work time. Include time for care of the environment and preparation for the next day's work.

Preparations for the next day and chores can be performed throughout the day.  
Activities can be modified according to a child's readiness and developmental needs.





# Primary Program **Expectations**

## **STUDENTS MAY BE EXPECTED TO:**

- Enjoy family life with developmentally appropriate contributions.

## **PARENTS ARE INVITED TO:**

- Remain mindful about your child's stress or worries during this time of change.
- Monitor communication about your child from your teachers.
- Initiate communication with teachers about questions, ideas, concerns, or feedback.
- Support your child's independence in daily life activities.
- Be mindful of and allow children to continue periods of concentration.
- Establish daily routines and expectations.
- Limit screen time.
- Provide opportunities for daily physical activity.

## **PRIMARY TEACHERS WILL:**

- Initiate individual communications based on student needs.
- Give guidance in setting up a daily routine.
- Make suggestions for appropriate house chores.
- Offer guidelines and suggestions for screen time.
- Provide both general and individual suggestions for activities developing fine motor skills, gross motor skills, language, and math.
- Be prompt in replying to your emails if you need additional guidance and support.
- Share a daily "Morning Greeting" via Zoom.

## **PROGRAM-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- Children aged 3 to 6 thrive in environments that promote repetition, routine and the mastery of purposeful movement.
- Allow your child to choose activities and give the opportunity for periods of time without distractions.
- The key to a successful learning environment is order, access to tactile resources, space to explore and meaningful activity. For the Primary child, work and play should be interchangeable—a natural, fun and exciting part of life.

# Activities for Primary at Home

## PRACTICAL LIFE

Ages 3 to 4:

- Meal or Snack Preparation: slicing vegetables, fruit, cheese, etc.
- Baking: measuring and mixing ingredients.
- Kitchen Care: loading and unloading the dishwasher, washing dishes by hand, sweeping floors
- Pet Care: walking, playing with, and grooming.
- Dusting: the leaves of plants with a soft cloth or furniture around the house.
- Nature walks in the yard or about the neighborhood with a list of things to find.
- Walking on the Line: make a masking tape line throughout the house and walk carefully on the line.
- Art: coloring, painting, collage, sidewalk chalk.
- Cutting and gluing - for example find and cut all of the plants in a magazine; glue into a collage.
- Sewing shapes/pictures onto napkins, hand/kitchen towels, etc.



Ages 5 to 6 – Any of the above plus:

- Cutting (advance searches: mammals, birds, amphibians, etc.)
- Baking: reading, measuring and mixing simple recipes.
- Handwork: crocheting, finger knitting, or sewing words, initials, or pictures on napkins, hand towels, etc.
- Origami

## SENSORIAL

Ages 3 to 4:

- Exploring the home for 2 dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, circles, etc.).
- Exploring the home for 3 dimensional shapes (spheres, cylinders, cones, cubes, prisms).
- Explore the home for textures that are rough or smooth.
- Exploring sound by tapping on different objects (pot, glass, wooden cutting board, etc) with different objects as well (tap with a metal spoon, then a wooden spoon).

Ages 5 to 6:

- Exploring spices and attempting to recognize them by scent.
- Comparing the various shapes of leaves found amongst the house plants.
- Drawing a picture that includes certain shapes i.e., 1 circle and 3 rectangles, or 1 square and 4 triangles).

## MATHEMATICS

Ages 3 to 4:

- Scavenger hunt/counting objects collected.
- Counting objects (beans, pennies, etc.).
- Sorting laundry.
- Sorting silverware.

Ages 5 to 6:

- Hopscotch math—all operations can be done, just make your hopscotch go higher than 10.
- Math facts with dice.

## LANGUAGE

Ages 3 to 4:

- Sound Games/I-spy: Something that begins with the sound “s”.
- Question Game: Have a conversation using who/what/when/where/why questions.
- Singing new songs (different languages).
- Tracing shapes, letters in flour (pour flour in a cookie sheet).

Ages 5 to 6:

- Write a letter to a friend or family member to mail.
- Assist in writing a list of things to do for a day or a week.
- Write a story or a play and read aloud or act out when finished.





# Lower Elementary (1st-3rd year students)

## SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR LOWER ELEMENTARY

Early Morning	Make breakfast and clean up. Complete chores (i.e. pet care, care of self, make bed, laundry, etc.)
Mid-Morning	Uninterrupted work cycle. Children should engage in activities to practice skills for math, language, geometry, and geography. Teachers will send specific instructions. Make sure to make time for snacks and movement.
Lunch	Make lunch and clean up. Spend time outdoors.
Afternoon	Afternoon uninterrupted work cycle. Children should engage in activities for biology and research. Make time for at least 30 minutes of silent reading.

Preparations for the next day and chores can be performed throughout the day.  
Activities can be modified according to a child's readiness and developmental needs.



# Lower Elementary Program Expectations

## STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Plan and organize work with guidance from parents.
- Follow teachers' guidelines and academic expectations.
- Work with integrity on assigned tasks—do your best!

## PARENTS ARE INVITED TO:

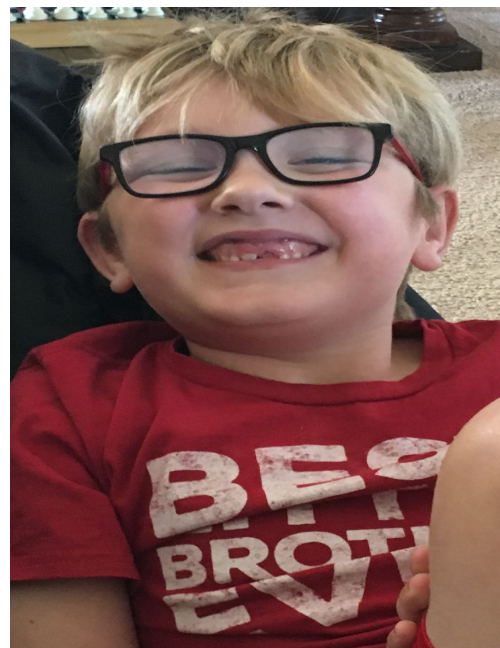
- Guide your child to set up a prepared environment at home.
- Establish a consistent routine and work schedule together.
- Follow along with the teachers' suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts.
- Provide opportunities for your child to share and present work to you.

## ELEMENTARY TEACHERS WILL:

- Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home in order to maintain and move their learning forward.
- Communicate in a consistent fashion with parents, replying to emails within 24 hours.
- Share a daily "Morning Greeting" via Zoom.

## PROGRAM-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Respect the stage of development—many Lower Elementary students are at a "concrete level" and require the Montessori materials to complete certain tasks. Teachers will guide you regarding what works makes sense for your child.
- Develop ideas that allow the opportunity for Lower Elementary students to build from their interests. Examples may include projects, journals, creative writing, geometry constructions, Practical Life at home.



# Upper Elementary (4th - 6th year students)

## SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR UPPER ELEMENTARY

Early Morning	Make breakfast and clean up. Complete chores (i.e. pet care, care of self, make bed, laundry, etc.)
Mid-Morning	Uninterrupted work cycle. Children should engage in activities to practice skills for math, language, geometry, and geography. Teachers will send specific instructions. Make sure to make time for snacks and movement.
Lunch	Make lunch and clean up. Spend time outdoors.
Afternoon	Afternoon uninterrupted work cycle. Children should engage in activities for biology and research. Make time for at least 30 minutes of silent reading.





# Upper Elementary Program Expectations

## **STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO:**

- Plan and organize work as independently as possible.
- Follow teachers' guidelines and academic expectations.
- Be own advocate when assistance or further clarification is required.

## **PARENTS ARE INVITED TO:**

- Establish a consistent routine and work schedule.
- Follow along with the teacher's suggested activities to maintain skills and concepts.
- Meet and review your child's assignments; provide opportunities at home for work presentations.
- Guide your child to set up a prepared environment at home.

## **ELEMENTARY TEACHERS WILL:**

- Prepare a variety of appropriate tasks and activities for children to complete at home in order to maintain and move their learning forward.
- Communicate in a consistent fashion with parents, replying to emails within 24 hours.
- Share a daily "Morning Greeting" via email.

## **PROGRAM-SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

- Respect the stage of development - some students may still be at a "concrete level" and require the Montessori materials to complete certain tasks. Avoid "teaching" shortcuts for subjects such as Mathematics.
- Develop ideas that allow the opportunity for Upper Elementary students to build from their interests. Examples may include projects, journals, creative writing, geometry constructions, Practical Life at home.
- Upper Elementary students are extremely social. At this time, not being able to be directly with their friends can feel challenging. We strongly encourage parent monitoring of texts, emails, and group chats to ensure that the students are using grace and courtesy towards themselves and others.

# Activities for Elementary at Home

## MATH FACTS (LIMIT TO 10 MINUTES AT A TIME)

- Create flashcards of multiplication math facts 0-9.
- List all the factors of 18, 24, 36, and 54.
- Dice Rolling
- Jump rope while skip counting.

## FRACTIONS

- Follow a recipe.
- Construct something using measurements less than one inch.
- Order fractions on a number line from least to greatest.
- Divide figures into fractional amounts and label them.

## DECIMALS

- Have your own "Showcase" and price household items, then add them together.
- Look for advertisements in the mail and add prices together.
- Create a shopping list and add items together.

## BIOLOGY

- Spend 15 silent minutes a day in nature and record your observations.
- Sketch plants inside or outside.
- Research an endangered animal. Why is it endangered?

## LANGUAGE

- Make a poem book.
- Try to write a poem in an author's style.
- Memorize a poem.
- Go on a word hunt in a novel: make a list of adjectives on a page and write an antonym and synonym for each one.
- Find sentences in your current book, identify the subject and predicate.

## GEOMETRY

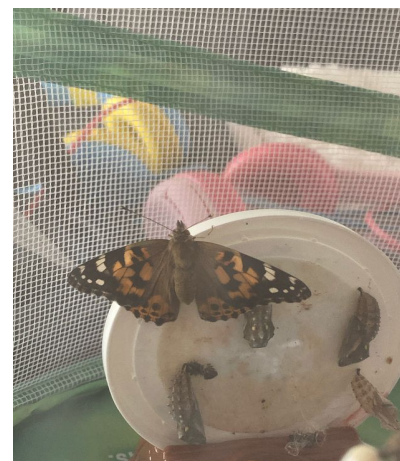
- Identify shapes around the house.
- Identify angles as either: right, acute, obtuse, or straight.
- Look for congruent and similar figures.
- Find the perimeter of things.
- Find the area of rectangular figures.

## GEOGRAPHY

- Teachers will be sending home map assignments and country/state researches.

## HISTORY

- Make a timeline of your life.
- Make a timeline of your day and include it in your work journal.
- Interview a family member in your house or over the phone about their life.



# Resources for Families

## Podcasts for Children

- [Brains On!](#) - Hosted by Molly Bloom and a different child co host each week. This podcast encourages children's natural curiosity and wonder by using history and science.
- [WOW in the World](#) - Hosts Mindy Thomas and Guy Raz guide children through a journey of the wonders all around us. They go into the brain, journey into space and discuss new stories relating to science and technology.
- [Peace Out](#) - Short stories designed to help children calm down and relax through guided visualization and breathing exercises. Perfect for practicing mindfulness and self-regulation.
- [But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids](#) - A podcast for kids, by kids! Each episode, the children search for answers to questions about nature, words, and more!
- [Story Time](#) - The perfect storytelling podcast for children ages 2-13. Each story is typically less than 20 minutes long. Perfect for nap or bedtime!
- [Ear Snacks](#) - A family friendly, musical podcast about the world.
- [The Past and The Curious](#) - A History podcast for kids and families. Fun and interesting stories about history are shared every episode!
- [The Unexplainable Disappearance of Mars Patel](#) - A Peabody Award winning podcast. Each episode tells the story of the mysterious disappearance Mars Patel. The story is performed by kids and is perfect for listeners ages 8-12.
- [Tumble : A Science Podcast for Kids](#) - Join hosts Lindsay Patterson (science journalist) and Marshall Escamilla (teacher) as they explore stories of scientific discoveries.
- [Earth Rangers](#) - Join wildlife biologist and roaming reporter, Emma, as she explores the mysteries of nature. Emma goes into the deep jungle, the frozen Arctic, and more!
- [The Purple Rocket Podcast](#) -An engaging and educational podcast that provides entertainment without the added aspect of screen time.
- [Classics for Kids](#) - Each 6 minute episode introduces children to different classical music and composers in a fun and entertaining way!
- [ABC Kids News Time](#) - A weekly summary of the amazing stories happening all over the world. Each week, join Ruby as she counts down the week's most interesting news stories in a way that is understandable for young children and gives them a safe space to engage with the wider world.
- [Reading Bug Adventures](#) - A story podcast for children. Each episode explores new books, new concepts, and new worlds. Children are encouraged to grab paper and crayons to create their own illustrations to go along with the story.
- [Forever Ago](#): A history podcast for the whole family that encourages critical thinking. Each episode explores the origin of one thing - sandwiches, cameras, emojis, you name it!



### Virtual Tours, Live Streams, and More

- [Digital Montessori Tools](#)
- [Young Chefs' Club](#)
- [American Museum of Natural History](#)
- [The Smithsonian](#)
- [National Geographic for Kids](#)
- [Daily Virtual Events](#)
- [25 Virtual Tours from weareteachers.com](#)
- [Hershey Chocolate Factory Tour](#)
- [Anne Frank Home](#)
- [Rome: A Virtual Tour of the Ancient City](#)
- [Buckingham Palace Tour](#)
- [Virtual Tour of the Eiffel Tower](#)
- [Kansas City Zoo Animal Cams](#)
- [Louvre Virtual Tour](#)
- [Nasa Mission Operations Virtual Tour](#)
- [Missouri History Museum Virtual Tour](#)
- [Classics for Kids - All About Classical Composers](#)
- [Indoor Montessori Ideas](#)
- [Art Resource Collection for Children of All Age Groups](#)

*"We discovered that education is not something which the  
**TEACHER** does, but that it is A natural process which develops  
spontaneously in the **HUMAN** being."*

- Dr Maria Montessori

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