



Parent Handbook September 2026

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Welcome to MAYS!

MISSION STATEMENT: The Mays School (MAYS) provides an exceptional learning environment where children feel safe and respected. We support and encourage the relationship between students, families, and staff. Our priority is to provide nurturing care and high-quality education for infant, toddler, preschool, kindergarten, and elementary aged children.

PHILOSOPHY: MAYS is a Reggio Emilia Approach inspired school providing an inquiry-based learning program for children from birth through 5th grade (age 12). We believe that children learn through meaningful interactions, inquiring about new ideas, and exposure to new opportunities. We are committed to providing the best experiences, education, and nurturing care to children enrolled in our program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: MAYS is a **year-round** private nursery school (birth to three years), preschool (three to six years), and elementary school (six through 12 years). We provide an exceptional learning environment where children can learn, grow, and play together. Children at MAYS feel safe and respected because we view our students as capable and competent individuals with a world of potential ahead of them.

One of the most unique aspects of MAYS is that parents also benefit from participating. While children are loved, cherished, challenged, and encouraged, their parents find a community of support, ideas, and unconditional respect. MAYS is a truly beneficial experience for both the child and parent, and we feel that families share an equal role in their child's education while at MAYS.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL: At MAYS, our students benefit from an international mindset. It's not just about flags, food, and fun; it's woven into our values, curriculum, staff, and community. We focus on nurturing ethical, globally-minded citizens, giving students the personal skills they need to succeed in a connected world. Our international staff bring diverse perspectives, helping students develop a deeper appreciation for cultural differences and encouraging independent thinking. Additionally, our families represent a variety of countries, cultures, and languages, and we cherish the opportunity to learn from their traditions and experiences. This international identity shapes our vibrant, inclusive school community, ensuring that our students are well-prepared for the global challenges ahead.

FAMILY STRUCTURE: We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where all family structures are respected and valued. We recognize that families come in many forms—nuclear, single-parent, blended, foster, adoptive, same-sex parent, and families with non-biological caregivers. Every family deserves to feel included.

ART-BASED EDUCATION: At MAYS, art-based education is a cornerstone of the learning process, seen as a powerful tool for self-expression and exploration. Children are encouraged to use a wide range of materials—such as paint, clay, fabric, and natural objects—to represent their ideas, feelings, and understanding of the world around them. Art is integrated across the curriculum, allowing students to make connections between different subjects while deepening their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Through hands-on, sensory-rich experiences, children not only develop artistic techniques but also gain confidence in their ability to communicate, reflect, and collaborate. In this environment, art is not just an activity, but a way for children to engage with their learning and express their unique perspectives.

RELIGIOUS INCLUSION: Our school is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where students of all religious backgrounds are welcome and respected. While we do not teach or promote any specific religion, we encourage mutual respect and understanding among all students.

MEMBERSHIPS: MAYS is a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC), the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA), the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC), and Texas Rising Star (TRS). All of these programs ensure that childcare, preschool, and school programs not only meet all of our state standards but go above and beyond to ensure quality care and education for young children. We exceed all Texas state standards. MAYS is also accredited by Cognia, the international Curiosity Approach and Nature Explore programs and is in the process of receiving SAIS and TAAPS accreditations.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP: Our school-wide focus on teaching students to be good citizens and overall good humans emphasizes the development of core values like respect, responsibility, empathy, and integrity. These values guide not only academic behavior but also social interactions, helping students navigate their personal and community relationships with kindness and fairness. We integrate these lessons into all aspects of school life, including classroom discussions, community service projects, leadership opportunities, and ethical decision-making exercises. Our goal is to cultivate a sense of social responsibility and encourage students to contribute positively to their school, family, and wider community. By focusing on the holistic growth of our students, we aim to create an environment where children learn to appreciate diversity, resolve conflicts peacefully, and take the initiative in supporting others.

The Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach is founded on the belief that every child is inherently strong, capable, and resilient. It recognizes children as rich with wonder and knowledge, driven by an innate curiosity to understand themselves, their world, and their place within it. This philosophy celebrates the idea that children are not passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in their learning journey. Their natural curiosity propels them to seek answers, explore their environment, and form meaningful connections, making learning a dynamic, engaging process.

Reggio Emilia Approach schools, which originated in the 1940s in the town of Reggio Emilia, Italy, are rooted in this view of the child. The approach encourages classrooms that can consist of same-age or multi-age groups, with the central focus being community. Relationships among children, teachers, and parents are seen as foundational to a child's growth. Classmates stay together for several years, fostering a deep sense of connection and continuity that supports social, emotional, and academic development.

The curriculum in Reggio Emilia schools is emergent, driven by the interests of the students. Teachers carefully observe the spontaneous questions and actions of the children and use these observations to guide the development of projects that reflect their curiosity. Children are encouraged to make mistakes, as these moments are viewed as valuable opportunities for learning and growth. In this environment, all participants—children, parents, and teachers—are seen as learners, with equal opportunities to shape and influence the learning process. Learning is documented in multiple ways, including through photographs, videos, and the words of the children themselves, allowing both teachers and parents to track progress and reflect on the children's thinking. This documentation serves not only to assess progress, but also as a tool for children to see the value of their own learning and understand that their actions have meaning.

Creativity and artistic expression are integral to the Reggio Emilia Approach. Children are encouraged to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions through various forms of art, including drawing, painting, sculpture, or dramatic play. This emphasis on creativity supports cognitive and emotional development, as children use art to explore abstract concepts and express complex feelings.

The learning environment itself plays a key role in the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Often referred to as the "third teacher," the environment is meticulously arranged to stimulate curiosity, foster communication, and promote collaborative learning. Classrooms are designed to be aesthetically pleasing, with natural materials, open spaces, and visible displays of children's work. This thoughtfully prepared environment invites children to engage with the materials around them, encourages social interaction, and provides a rich backdrop for exploration and discovery.

In Reggio Emilia-inspired classrooms, teachers are viewed as guides, facilitators, and advocates. They create a learning environment that is both inspiring and supportive, encouraging children to explore and take risks while providing them with the tools and guidance they need to succeed. Teachers also document and interpret children's learning, acting as scribes to capture and reflect the learning process in real-time.

At our school, the Reggio Emilia philosophy comes to life through hands-on, project-based learning. The classroom is a place where natural exploration is encouraged, and new materials and concepts are introduced regularly. These experiences are designed to help children develop across the ten learning domains: social-emotional development, language and communication, reading, writing, math, science, social studies, physical development (gross and fine motor), fine arts, and engineering/problem solving.

Each month brings new opportunities for creative expression, helping children deepen their understanding of the world around them while developing skills that will support lifelong learning.

Examples of Reggio in Action!

Exploring Geometry Through Architecture 2nd Grade Classroom

In one project, students express an interest in buildings or structures after a field trip to a local park. Observing the various shapes and patterns in the architecture, the teacher sees an opportunity to explore geometry in a meaningful, contextual way.

- **Observation and Inquiry:** The teacher notices the students' excitement about the different shapes, angles, and textures of the buildings they saw. She prompts the class with questions like, "What shapes do you see in the buildings around us?" and "How are different shapes used to make a strong building?" The students engage in a discussion, identifying squares, rectangles, triangles, and circles in the architecture.
- **Hands-On Exploration:** The teacher provides a variety of materials, such as building blocks, geometric shape sets, and drawing tools. The children work in small groups to design and build their own structures using these materials. As they create, they are encouraged to discuss the shapes and angles they are using, helping them recognize geometric concepts like symmetry, parallel lines, and angles in their own designs.
- **Documentation:** Throughout the project, the teacher documents the students' progress by taking photos of their structures and recording their conversations. The children might dictate their thoughts, such as "We used triangles to make the roof stronger" or "This shape makes the building look like a pyramid." These recordings help the teacher assess understanding and provide insights into the students' mathematical thinking.
- **Reflection and Deepening Learning:** After completing their models, the students reflect on their designs, discussing what worked well and what they might change. The teacher might ask, "How did you decide what shapes to use for the roof?" or "Can we count the number of sides on each of these shapes?" This reflection process helps deepen their understanding of the geometric concepts they've applied.
- **Connecting to Real-World Math:** To further connect the project to real-world math, the teacher might introduce the concepts of area and perimeter, encouraging students to measure the sides of the shapes they used in their structures. Students calculate the perimeter of their building models or the area of rectangular spaces they have created. This hands-on application of math concepts allows children to see how geometry is used in the real world, particularly in design and construction.

By using the Reggio Emilia Approach, the students not only explore geometric concepts, but also develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They engage with math as a living, dynamic subject, deeply connected to their world and their own experiences. Through observation, inquiry, hands-on exploration, and reflection, they discover math as a tool for making sense of the world around them, rather than a set of abstract rules to memorize.

Examples of Reggio in Action!

Developing a Love for Literacy and Pre-Reading Skills Preschool-aged Classroom

In a preschool classroom, while playing outside, a group of children find an interesting collection of sticks, leaves, and rocks. They begin arranging these objects on the ground, pretending they are building a "house" for some imaginary animals. The teacher observes their play and sees an opportunity to bring in storytelling and reading in a way that connects to their spontaneous interests.

- **Observing and encouraging language development:** The teacher joins the children in their play, prompting them with open-ended questions: "What's happening at the house you're building?" "Who lives there?" "What will they do today?" As the children describe their play, the teacher encourages them to use more detailed language to express their thoughts. This dialogue helps develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills.
- **Introducing books and stories:** Noticing the children's engagement with the concept of animals and their "house," the teacher gathers a few books related to the theme, such as *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, or *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*. She invites the children to sit in a circle and reads the stories aloud, using expressive voices and emphasizing the story through the pictures. She may pause to ask predictive questions, such as, "What do you think will happen next?" or "What shapes do you see in the house they are building?"
- **Reinforcing concepts through repetition:** The teacher notices that the children enjoy *The Three Little Pigs* the most, so she invites them to retell the story in their own words. She provides props, such as small pigs, a wolf figure, and building materials, allowing the children to act out the story with their own interpretations. This role-playing encourages them to recall the story structure, recognize recurring phrases, and understand the beginning, middle, and end of a story.
- **Documenting the learning process:** As the children continue to play and act out their own versions of the story, the teacher takes photographs and records some of their dialogues, capturing the children's words and ideas. For example, one child might say, "The wolf huffed and puffed, but the house made of sticks fell down!" These snapshots of their storytelling are later displayed in the classroom, allowing children to revisit their own words and ideas. This documentation supports their understanding of how stories are constructed and deepens their engagement with language.
- **Inviting family involvement:** To expand on the theme, the teacher invites parents to bring in books related to animals, construction, or other interests that have come up in the children's play. This strengthens the connection between home and school, encouraging a shared approach to reading and literacy development. Parents might also be encouraged to read aloud to their children at home, helping to reinforce the idea that reading is a valuable and enjoyable activity.
- **Creating a literacy-rich environment:** Throughout the day, the teacher creates a print-rich environment by labeling objects in the classroom, displaying the children's written work (even if it's just drawings with "scribble writing" representing stories), and providing materials like storybooks, picture dictionaries, and letter tiles. These resources are always available, allowing children to interact with written language naturally during their play and exploration.

Through these experiences, reading in a Reggio Emilia Approach classroom is woven into the fabric of the children's play, stories, and everyday activities. Rather than focusing solely on letter recognition or rote memorization, the approach encourages children to engage with language as a means of expression, understanding, and communication. The teacher's role is to guide, support, and document the children's learning as they explore reading in a way that is meaningful to them, fostering a love of books and storytelling that will last throughout their lives.

Examples of Reggio in Action!

Exploring Texture and Grasping through Sensory Play Infant Classroom

In an infant classroom, the teacher sets up a sensory exploration area filled with various textured materials, such as soft fabric swatches, textured balls, rubber toys, wooden blocks, and fabric strips. The goal is to invite infants to use their hands, fingers, and bodies to explore and manipulate the materials in ways that promote fine motor development.

- **Setting the stage with sensory materials:** The teacher arranges different materials on low, accessible tables or soft mats, where infants can easily reach them. The teacher selects materials with different textures, such as smooth, bumpy, soft, and rough. Some objects are small enough for the babies to grasp with their hands, while others are larger and encourage reaching, grasping, and manipulating.
- **Observation and interaction:** As the infants begin to explore, the teacher observes how they interact with the materials. One infant might start by reaching out and touching the soft fabric, while another may grasp a rubber ball with both hands. The teacher gently encourages further exploration by demonstrating how to roll a ball or manipulate a textured strip of fabric with their own hands. The teacher might softly say, "Can you grab the ball with your hands?" or "Look, I can feel the bumps on this toy," to guide their attention to different ways of using their hands and fingers.
- **Fine motor practice through grasping and releasing:** One infant, noticing a wooden block, picks it up and holds it for a moment. The teacher encourages this action by saying, "Can you hold the block?" and offering a gentle touch on their hands to show them how to grip. The teacher might show them how to drop the block into a basket or shake it gently to make noise, helping them practice releasing the object. This simple back-and-forth action of grasping and releasing builds hand strength and dexterity.
- **Developing hand-eye coordination:** As the infants interact with objects, they naturally start to make connections between their hands and what they see. For example, one baby reaches for a soft toy hanging from a low hook. The teacher encourages them by gently holding the toy near their hand and saying, "Try touching it." As the baby grasps the toy, they begin to develop hand-eye coordination by connecting what they see with their physical movements.
- **Supporting emerging skills with repetition:** The teacher knows that infants develop fine motor coordination through repeated practice. The teacher continually offers new and engaging materials, adjusting the complexity of the objects to challenge their growing abilities. For example, once the babies are comfortable grasping and manipulating the softer, larger items, the teacher introduces smaller objects, such as smooth wooden rings or soft blocks, encouraging more precise gripping and handling.
- **Documenting and reflecting:** The teacher captures moments of the babies' exploration in photos or videos, documenting their progress as they engage with the materials. These records, along with the children's facial expressions and gestures, help the teacher reflect on each infant's developing fine motor skills. The teacher may share these observations with parents, helping them understand their child's growth and fostering a deeper connection between home and school.

Through this kind of sensory-rich, hands-on play, infants are given countless opportunities to practice and refine their fine motor skills in a natural, engaging context. They build the foundational coordination needed for later skills, like drawing, writing, and manipulating small objects, all while feeling supported, valued, and respected in their learning process. The teacher's role is not to "teach" in the traditional sense, but rather to observe, facilitate, and provide a safe space for the infants to explore and grow.

Examples of Reggio in Action!

Researching and Writing about Plants 5th Grade Classroom

In a Reggio Emilia Approach-inspired 5th grade classroom, students learn about the plants on their playground through inquiry-based, hands-on exploration.

- **Spark of curiosity:** While playing outside, students notice a variety of plants and wonder about them. The teacher encourages further investigation by asking questions like, "What are these plants? How do they grow here?"
- **Investigation:** The class spends time exploring the playground with magnifying glasses, plant guides, and clipboards to observe and document the plants—looking at their shapes, sizes, textures, and colors. Students make notes and take photos.
- **Group collaboration:** Back in the classroom, students share their findings and categorize the plants (e.g., flowers, grasses, trees). They use books and resources to learn more about each plant, including their scientific names and ecological roles.
- **Research paper:** Each student writes a research paper on one plant they studied. They include an introduction, their methodology (how they observed and researched the plants), detailed findings (plant descriptions and facts), and a conclusion reflecting what they learned.
- **Creative expression:** In addition to the research paper, students create drawings, models, or digital presentations to represent their plants. These visual projects help reinforce their understanding.
- **Sharing and reflection:** Students present their findings to the class, sharing what surprised them and how the plants impact the playground ecosystem. This fosters public speaking and collaborative learning.
- **Expanding learning:** To extend the project, the teacher might connect it to environmental topics like ecosystems and sustainability, encouraging students to appreciate the natural world and consider conservation efforts.

Through the Reggio Emilia Approach, students engage in self-directed learning, develop research and collaboration skills, and connect with their environment in meaningful ways. The teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding students as they explore and express their discoveries.

Policies

TOURS AND VISITORS: We encourage all families to tour MAYS before enrolling. Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the center director and are allowed in the school only at the discretion of the Director. Visitors must provide MAYS with a current state ID to be considered for a tour of the facility. An employee of MAYS will accompany visitors at all times while touring the facility.

Parents of currently enrolled students are welcome to visit the school or their child at any time during our normal hours of operation.

BREAKS

Each year, MAYS is typically closed for the following teacher training weeks:

- Six days in August
- Five days in January

Each year, MAYS is typically closed for the following holidays:

- Five days in November for fall break
- Five days in December for winter break
- Five days in March for spring break
- Five days in July for summer break
- Five days for Good Friday or Easter Monday, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Juneteenth, and MLK Day

PARENT CONTACT: Parents are contacted by email and text if early dismissal is necessary due to inclement weather or an emergency.

Special Instructions

If you have special instructions or notes for the teachers or the Director, please put the request in writing and ensure the teacher or Director receives it.

Student-Requested Contact

Occasionally a student may request to call home for a forgotten item, minor upset, minor illness, etc. If requested, the teacher will text home to inform the parent of the situation and schedule a time for a phone call with the student, if the parent deems it necessary. We make every effort to not interrupt class time, so a slight delay may occur between a request and a text to parents.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY: At MAYS, confidential or sensitive information will only be shared on a “need to know” basis with our employees and advisory board members in order for them to safely and appropriately care for your child and plan activities. Confidential or sensitive information about other children, other parents, teachers, or employees will not be shared with parents. MAYS strives to protect everyone’s rights. Parents do not have the right to share any confidential information that they may observe in the classroom with anyone besides the center Director.

INCIDENTS: Parents are required to sign any incident or illness reports at pick-up time. The teacher will be able to briefly discuss the incident with you at pick-up. However, if you feel an in-depth discussion is needed, then please schedule a meeting, conference, or phone call for later in the day or week. If a child receives a minor injury, the parents will receive an injury report to sign or a text message that describes the nature of the injury, when it occurred, and how it happened. Parents are contacted immediately if an injury requires emergency attention.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE PROCEDURES: During inclement weather and other emergencies, MAYS will inform all parents about the situation and may temporarily close the school to ensure the safety of students and staff. Emergency closings are posted on our website and Facebook page, and parents receive emails and text alerts. Parents are expected to pick up their children within one hour of the notification. Staff will stay with the children until the Director releases them.

EVACUATION AND RELOCATION PROCEDURES: If evacuation of the MAYS campus is deemed necessary, we will relocate to South Rice Apartments (5612 S Rice Ave) located next to the school. If South Rice Apartments are not safe, we will post relocation information on our website and Facebook page, as well as send email and text alerts to parents, if possible. We will attempt to call parents or emergency contacts to update them on where we are located. Children will be grouped according to age and staff will stay with the children until the Director releases them.

SECURITY PROCEDURES: To ensure the security of the students in our care, the door to the corridor leading to the classrooms is a controlled-access door and is locked at all times. We ask that all parents ensure that the door is fully closed after entering the secured area to prevent unauthorized people from gaining access. Please do not hold open the door for others. The playground is surrounded by fencing and is only accessible by entering the building. Security cameras are located in the classrooms, hallways, reception area, on the playground, and in the parking lot. Security cameras are used for internal monitoring and are not accessible by parents. MAYS has a monitored fire alarm system and panic buttons/silent alarms are installed in various hidden locations around the school. All children and staff practice fire, severe weather, and other emergency drills each month.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS: At MAYS, we feel that it is extremely important for us to help train and support the next generation of educators. Students, teachers, pediatric residents, and researchers all spend time at MAYS. Observers are never left alone with children and are always supervised by MAYS personnel. Before observers take photos or videos of the students, parents must sign a release waiver.

SCREEN/ELECTRONIC TOYS/ITEMS: We believe strongly in active children in our classrooms, so we purposefully purchase passive toys and materials to promote engagement and imaginative play. Our classrooms do not have any installed screens or battery-operated toys for the children's use.

Students should not use phones, tablets, computers, smart watches, smart glasses, or any communication or recording devices at any time during the school day. Students should also not bring or use headphones or earbuds unless directed to by the classroom teacher.

If a student must use a device after school hours, then the device must be kept in the front office and will be returned upon dismissal. If a device is found with a child or in a backpack, then it will be stored in the front office for a parent or guardian to pick up. Please do not bring any screens or communication devices into our classrooms. Occasionally in Pre-K 4 through elementary classrooms, screens may be used for brief instruction by classroom teachers in our specialty rooms for a particular learning objective or special activity. Parents will be informed in writing before any screen is used in the classroom, along with the learning objective.

LOST & FOUND: We strive to keep personal belongings safe and organized. If your child misplaces an item, we encourage you to check the lost and found bin located in the front office. Items are regularly sorted and unclaimed items are donated at the end of each month. To prevent as many lost items as possible, please label your child's belongings with their first and last name.

ANIMALS: Animals occasionally visit the school to assist teachers in exploring units of study. If an animal is visiting the school, a notice will be posted in advance of the visit. We currently have school pets including, but not limited to: guinea pigs, chickens, fancy rats, rabbits, hamsters, mice, gerbils, lizards, hedgehogs, cats, frogs, turtles, tortoises, and a fish aquarium. We do not allow personal pets on campus, but service animals are permitted.

LABEL, LABEL, LABEL! It is very important that your child's first name and last initial are clearly labelled on their shoes, socks, clothing, sheets, snacks, backpack, and everything else brought from home. It is required by Texas Childcare Licensing that all personal items are clearly labeled. If an item is sent to school without a label on it, the teachers will write on it with a permanent marker.

Bottles, clothes, sippy cups, water bottles, food, shoes, backpacks, jackets, rain boots, diaper cream, school supplies, lotion, wipes, pacifiers, blankets, and other items must be labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

ITEMS FROM HOME: Please do not send toys, jewelry, or valuables from home with your child, as they often are difficult to share or may get lost or broken. We provide toys, equipment, and activities specifically designed to engage your child in learning and play activities during the day. If a teacher requests a special item be brought in for curricular purposes, then the parent must give the item directly to the classroom teacher. Toys, books, or items that show violence or weapons are strictly prohibited. We are not responsible for any lost, stolen, or broken items brought from home.

SUPPLIES: Please take home extra clothing or bedding that needs washing and return a new set the next day. A supply list will be given at the beginning of each year. Please plan on bringing all items listed by the classroom teacher. Check your child's cubby for artwork, homework, notes, progress reports, incident reports, and other memos daily.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR SHOES: Shoes worn outdoors are not allowed inside our classrooms. Please be prepared to remove or cover your shoes for tours, visits, pick-ups and drop-offs in the classrooms. You are welcome to visit our hallways and outdoor spaces without removing or covering your shoes.

PROGRESS REPORTS/DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING (All Ages): Teachers and MAYS administration will send home progress reports and/or developmental screenings two or more times per year, depending on the child's age and development. We use a mixture of knowledge-based assessments, traditional report cards, *Ages and Stages Developmental Screening* tools, dyslexia screeners, developmental screeners, and game-based evaluators to evaluate and track your child's progress.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES: Birthdays are wonderful celebrations at MAYS! We encourage parents to plan a small party to take place in the classroom on or near the child's birthday. This is a great time for parents to get to know the teachers and classmates. Parties may take place during afternoon snack time. In the past, parents have provided a special snack, created a special art project with the students, or read a story to the students. Other ideas include making "goodie bags," creating a simple cooking project, or donating a special book to the child's classroom in honor of the birthday. We are open to new ideas, but please check with the front office before booking anything. Parents are encouraged to pick up their child following the party.

All food or drinks brought for parties or celebrations must be pre-approved by all parents with a child in the classroom and MAYS administration. MAYS does not allow treats with icing. We suggest a fruit tray, Rice Crispy Treats, muffins, cheese and crackers, cookies, 100% fruit popsicles, applesauce, or yogurt cups. Balloons are not allowed in our classrooms. All party food from home must be store-purchased.

If you would like to have a special party for your child's class, please let the front office know, in writing, at least one week in advance. If you would like to have a party outside of school and invite classroom friends, all children in the classroom must be invited to the party—please do not exclude any classmates. If you would like to send a digital invitation, please email a PDF of the invitation and a cover letter to info@mays.school. We will email out the invite within a week of receiving it. We will only email it once to the class.

CLASSROOM PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS: We love to party at MAYS! Each year we try to celebrate lots of holidays and events from around the world. Before each party or celebration, we will post a sign and send an email with information about the special event and what food will be served. Parents will have an opportunity to sign up to bring food, drinks, decorations, and volunteer during the party. Please let us know if you would like to plan a classroom celebration for an event that you and your family celebrate. We encourage families to become involved in their child's education and care by joining the classroom to read books, share family recipes and culture, expand on the class's current interests, and join us for playdates and school events!

PHOTOS: We use photographs of the children in our classrooms, hallways, newsletters, flyers, website, social media pages, and in teacher training. All MAYS families waive their right to compensation (money paid) for the use of photographs that we take.

DIRECTORY/PARENT GROUPS: Our school encourages active parent involvement and community building through parent groups. These groups provide a space for parents to collaborate, share ideas, and support school activities. To help facilitate communication, we maintain a school directory that includes contact information for all families who choose to participate. Participation in the directory is voluntary, and families may opt in or out when completing their registration. The directory is intended to promote positive connections and cooperation among families, but it is important that all contact information is used respectfully and for school-related purposes only.

GARDENS: MAYS has a large variety of plants on-site that the students have access to and often taste or eat from. We fully encourage our students to help plant, water, care for, and explore the plants on our campus. All plants that children can access are non-toxic.

ESSENTIAL OILS: We use Young Living, Now, and Eden's Garden brands of essential oils in our classrooms to provide a cleaner environment for our students. It is important for you to let us know if your child has any allergies so that we can take the proper precautions in the classroom and around the school.

SENSORY PLAY: Our students participate in sensory exploration every day, exploring edible and non-edible materials. Sensory exploration takes place in the classroom, on the playground, and in the outdoor sensory center. We maintain proper teacher-to-child ratios during all sensory activities, indoor or outdoor. If you ever have a question about any material your child is experiencing, please see the front office for a full ingredient list.

COMPOSTING/RECYCLING: At MAYS we strongly believe in keeping our environment as safe and clean as possible for future generations. We've partnered with a local composting company to help us compost our food scraps each week. We also reuse food scraps to feed our pets when possible. Each classroom has a recycling bin which is picked up and recycled each week or reused for art projects to give our "trash" a second life. One of our core goals is to live and teach by using environmentally sustainable methods.

TEXAS WEEK: Our students participate in Texas Week during the first week in March. During this week the students are expected to work harder than they normally would and to show excellent citizenship. This is a required practice for all private schools located in Texas, according to [Texas Civil Statute Article 6144a](#).

Attendance, Absenteeism, and Tardiness

HOURS OF OPERATION: The Mays School is open from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

DAILY SCHEDULE: The daily schedule gives a general timeline of events of the day. The schedule may be adjusted to meet the needs of the students and is often changed to accommodate long-term learning projects. Each day students have opportunities for social-emotional development, language and communication, reading, writing, math, science (including sensory exploration), social studies, physical development (gross and fine motor), fine arts, and engineering/problem solving. Each classroom has an example of a typical day's schedule posted on the classroom wall. The daily schedule alternates between teacher- and student-directed activities and is aimed at creating enough flexibility to accommodate changing needs of the students and unexpected events.

NURSERY SCHOOL & PRESCHOOL: There are no requirements regarding attendance, but please notify us before 9:00 AM the day your child is going to be absent. You may mark your child absent on the communication app and the notification will be sent directly to the front office and your child's teacher. You are welcome to drop-off before 9:30 AM and pick up any time. Dropping off during lunch, nap time, or prime learning times causes a disruption to the classroom.

Our nursery school & preschool school year contains:

- 224 school days (August through August)
- 36 holidays and training days

PRE-K4, KINDERGARTEN, LOWER ELEMENTARY & UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Regular attendance is essential for a student's academic success and personal development. Students are expected to attend school every day that it is in session. If a student is unable to attend, parents or guardians must notify the school before 8:30 AM on the day of the absence. Absences may be excused for reasons such as illness, medical appointments, family emergencies, or religious observances. Unexcused absences are those that do not fall under the excused categories or when no prior notification is given. Unexcused absences cannot exceed 18 days or 10% of the school year. If this limit is reached, the school will schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss the situation. Continued unexcused absences may lead to further action, including a review of the student's enrollment, reporting to the state, the need to repeat a grade, or a delay in report card status. For all absences, students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work at home. Students are expected to arrive on time each day. Excessive tardiness or leaving early (more than five times a month) may also be addressed in a similar manner to unexcused absences. Students arriving after 8:45 AM are considered tardy. We understand that circumstances sometimes arise that make it difficult to attend school regularly. If your child is experiencing challenges that affect attendance, we encourage you to reach out to the school. We are here to support you and your child in overcoming obstacles and maintaining consistent attendance.

Our Pre-K4, Kindergarten, Lower Elementary & Upper Elementary school year contains:

- 194 school days (August through mid-June), including 14 flex days throughout the year
- 36 holidays and training days
- 30 days of Summer @ MAYS (mid-June through July)

LONG-TERM ABSENCES AND VACATIONS: If your family is going on an extended vacation (12+ consecutive weeks), then you may hold your infant through preschool child's enrollment at MAYS by paying 50% of your normal tuition for the time your child is absent. A written notice is required at least eight (8) weeks prior to your child's vacation period for consideration of reduced payment.

Tuition

Infant Community (0-11 months by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$19,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Toddler Community (1 year by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$18,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Early Preschool Community (2 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$16,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Preschool Community (3 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$15,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Pre-K4 (4 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$13,000/year 8:00-3:30 (10-month school year)
\$14,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Kindergarten (5 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$13,000/year 8:00-3:30 (10-month school year)
\$14,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Lower Elementary (6 through 8 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$12,000/year 8:00-3:30 (10-month school year)
\$13,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Upper Elementary (9 through 11 years by Sept. 1, 2026)
\$12,000/year 8:00-3:30 (10-month school year)
\$13,500/year 8:00-3:30 (12-month school year)

Our 12-month school year contains 224 school days and 36 holidays/teacher training days.

10-month and 12-month school years are available for children in these communities.

The 10-month school year contains 194 school days and 31 holidays.

The 12-month school year contains 224 school days and 36 holidays/teacher training days.

SUMMER @ MAYS tuition is for 30 days and 5 holidays.

Summer @ MAYS (Pre-K4 through 5th Grade) – for those not already enrolled at MAYS for the 12-month school year
\$2,000 for full summer enrollment (8:00 AM – 3:30 PM; six weeks of camp)

\$1,100 per three-week session (8:00 AM – 3:30 PM, three weeks of camp)

Before-Care and After-Care available for an additional \$200 and \$300 per three-week session.

After School Care (daily pick-up at local elementary schools) – for those not already enrolled at MAYS
\$550/month 2:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Fees & Discounts

- Application Fee: \$50 (all applications)
- New Student Registration: \$500
- Annual Supply Fee: \$300
- Lunch Plan: \$150 per/month
- Extracurriculars: Fees vary per activity chosen
- Before-Care (6:30-8:00 AM): \$200/month or \$20/day
- After-Care (3:30-5:30 PM): \$300/month or \$30/day
- Educator Discount: 10% discount for K-12 teachers
- Sibling Discount: 5% off all siblings enrolled
- Prepayment: 5% discount for paying a full year's tuition

For lunch, you may either purchase from one of our vendors or pack your child a lunch from home.

INCLUDED MEALS: Before-Care tuition includes breakfast each morning (the student must arrive before 8AM). Two snacks are included in School Day tuition (served around 9 AM and 2 PM each day). One snack is included in After-Care tuition (served around 4 PM each day).

PAID MEALS (LUNCH): Daily age-appropriate lunches (six months to 12 years) are available for \$150 per month. You are also always welcome to bring a lunch from home. We have access to refrigerators and microwaves (within reason).

TUITION PAYMENTS: We accept check, credit card, and ACH (bank) draft payments for tuition. Pre-K4, Kinder, and Elementary school families must choose a 10- or 12-month tuition plan before the start of the school year. For these families, Summer Camp tuition can be added after the start of the school year, but at a non-discounted rate. Tuition is billed and charged monthly. A 3.05% convenience fee is applied to your account for each credit card transaction. We do not charge for any other payment type. \$30 will be charged to your account for each returned payment. Tuition is not refunded or decreased due to illness, vacation, absences, emergency closures, pandemics, or any other reason. We continue to provide our teachers their full pay even when your child is not in attendance. Families that pay tuition annually are eligible for a 5% tuition discount. All tuition, fees, and costs are subject to change.

DISCOUNTS:

- We offer a 5% sibling tuition discount for all siblings enrolled at MAYS at the same time.
- We offer a 10% discount to educators working within a public or private preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school.
- We offer a 5% discount for paying a full school year's tuition in advance, from the start date until the end date of our school year as outlined in our current calendar. Tuition paid in advance is not refundable for any reason, including withdrawal from the school.

CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES (CCS): We accept childcare subsidies based on availability and need; please visit <https://www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid/financial-aid-for-child-care> to apply. Please note that childcare subsidies are only accepted for a set number of spaces, and a separate waiting list application is required. Email info@mays.school for a link to the CCS waiting list application. Please note, the CCS waiting list application is only for families that already have an approved account with CCS, as their waiting list can also be long.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS: We accept Texas Education Freedom Accounts. All school policies remain in place for students paying tuition with TEFA. TEFA may only be used for tuition, and cannot be used for any other purchase (uniforms, lunches, field trips, etc.). Families using TEFA to pay tuition must inform us before the start of the school year, per TEFA reporting requirements.

FINANCIAL AID: A limited (20%) school-funded tuition assistance is available for families in need. In order to be considered for financial aid, a financial aid application is required to be executed and returned to the school along with our waiting list application. Please note that this cannot be combined with any other discount or subsidy.

WITHDRAWAL AND RE-ENROLLMENT: In the instance that you need to withdraw your child for any reason, a written notice is required at least three months prior to your child's withdrawal. Parents remain responsible for 12 weeks of tuition after a child's departure if proper written notice is not given. If a child is not re-enrolling for the new school year, notice must be given prior to **June 1, 2026**, in which case the financial obligation for the 2026-2027 tuition and fees will be limited to the non-refundable supply fee. If withdrawal notice for the new school year is given between June 1, 2026 and August 31, 2026, parents are responsible for an additional fee covering the first six weeks of the base tuition for each student previously enrolled for the 2026-2027 school year.

If you wish to re-enroll your child, please contact the MAYS office. You will be placed on our waiting list and contacted when a new space is available. A \$500 fee is required for reinstatement of enrollment.

FEES: A \$50 application fee is due when the enrollment application is submitted. The \$500 registration fee is due when the student is offered a space at MAYS. An \$300 annual supply fee is due each March when continuing enrollment paperwork is completed or upon acceptance of enrollment for any mid-year or late enrollments. Proration is not available for any fees. All fees are non-refundable.

LATE PICK-UP FEE: If you anticipate arriving late (3:30 or 5:30), please contact the office. For each child, parents are charged \$1 for each minute after our closing time (5:30 PM). If your child is not enrolled in aftercare and is not picked up before 3:30 PM, then you will be charged the daily aftercare rate (\$40), regardless of the reason.

If a parent is more than one hour late (arriving after 6:30 PM), a fee of \$200 will be charged, regardless of the number of siblings. We charge late fees based on the clock located in the office. Please feel free to adjust your clock to match ours. If a parent is more than one hour late picking up their child three or more times during the school year, then they will be unenrolled from MAYS regardless of the reason.

TUITION PAYMENT DEADLINES: Tuition is due on the first day of each month or the first day of the school year for annual payments.

A daily late fee of \$20 will be charged to your account on the third through the eighth day of the month. If payment is not received by the sixth day of the month, your child's enrollment may be canceled. If payment is received late more than once, then an ACH or credit card automatic payment is required to be set up for all future payments; at this point, check payments will no longer be accepted.

TEACHER-TO-CHILD RATIOS: Our low teacher-to-child ratios allow teachers to focus on the individual learning styles and needs of each student in our program. We are dedicated to creating a safe, caring, and stimulating environment for children. Ratios are based on the total enrollment in the classroom, not minute-by-minute attendance.

Teacher-to-Child Ratios

Infant Community	1 teacher to 3 children
Toddler Community	1 teacher to 4 children
Early Preschool Community	1 teacher to 5 children
Preschool Community	1 teacher to 8 children
Pre-K 4 & Kinder Community	1 teacher to 10 children
Lower Elementary	1 teacher to 12 children
Upper Elementary	1 teacher to 12 children

Arrival and Departure

DROP-OFF TIMES: Before-Care students are welcome to be dropped off at their designated location as early as 6:30 AM. Students NOT enrolled in Before-Care may be dropped off starting at 8:00 AM.

AM DROP-OFF ZONE: We offer a drop-off zone each morning between 7:30 AM and 8:30 AM for Pre-K4 and older students. Students arriving later than 8:30 AM or before 7:30 AM must be walked into the building by their parent or guardian. For safety reasons, students must exit the car on the passenger's side and cannot walk around the front or back of your car.

We can unbuckle and help children out of their cars in the mornings. We do not carry in car seats. Please understand that if your child refuses or causes delays, you will be asked to park and walk them inside in order to ensure the smooth operation of the drop-off zone.

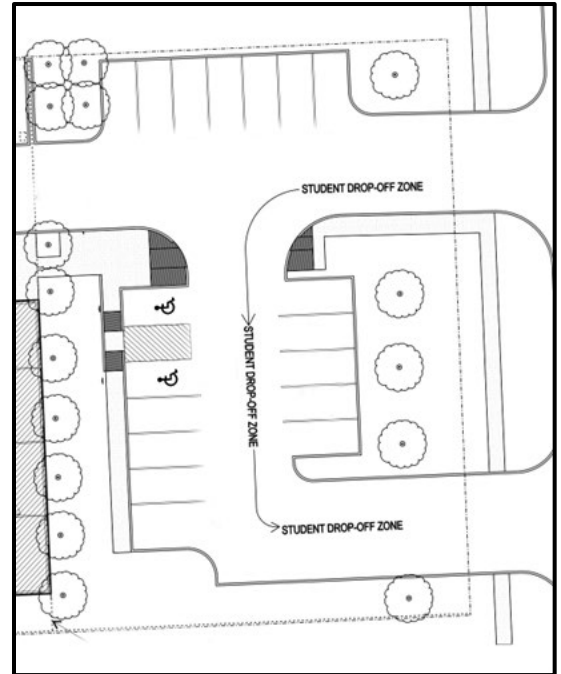
PICK-UP TIMES: After-Care students are welcome to be picked up in their designated location as late as 5:30 PM. Students not enrolled in After-Care must be picked up before 3:30 PM.

We do not offer a PM pick-up zone. A parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person must sign each child out of his or her classroom each day using the electronic keypad located next to the front office. This ensures that the child is safely released to their parent or authorized pick-up person and that the teacher knows the number of children in her/his care at any given moment.

SUPERVISION: A parent must supervise and is responsible for their child any time that the parent is on campus or attending an off-campus school-sponsored event or class. Do not leave your child unattended for any amount of time for any reason. Parents and nannies/caretakers are expected to be free from distractions (including cell phones) when picking up or dropping off children. It is important that we are able to share information with you and have an open line of communication.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN: MAYS releases children only to individuals authorized by you. Authorized individuals must be identified on your registration form and agreed upon by all parents or guardians prior to enrollment. Upon arrival, the authorized person must allow MAYS to copy their photo ID for the child's file. The child will not be released without a photo ID from the person approved for pick-up. If your child is to be released to any other person, you must authorize that person in writing prior to any such release.

Please notify the office in writing immediately if an authorized individual is to be removed from your child's registration forms or if you need to add a new authorized person. You can email, call, or text us with any updates. You can also update your information on the communication app if a staff member is not available to help. If an unauthorized person should attempt to pick up your child, we will notify you immediately and the child will not be released.



Enrollment Procedures

1. Tour our campus by scheduling a tour on our website or by contacting our office.
2. Complete an enrollment application and submit the \$50 application fee.
3. You will be contacted by email and text regarding your child's acceptance status.
4. Once an acceptance offer is made, you must accept or decline before the given deadline. To officially secure enrollment, families must pay the non-refundable registration fee and supply fee within this time frame.

Additional Requirements for Transferring Pre-K4 through 5th Grade Students

Please submit the following along with your application:

- A letter of recommendation from the child's current teacher
- A copy of the child's most recent progress report and/or full transcript
- Any special education referral letters, IEP, or accommodations

ENROLLMENT AVAILABILITY: We accept enrollment applications **year-round**. All applicants will automatically be placed on a waiting list until a space becomes available.

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR ENROLLMENT TIMELINE

Currently enrolled students and their siblings have priority enrollment.

Current Families

February 2, 2026: Re-registration forms are emailed to current families along with our 2026-2027 Parent Handbook.

February 20, 2026: All required paperwork, along with the annual \$300 supply fee, is due for every student or sibling returning for the 2026-2027 school year.

New Families

March 2, 2026: Round one acceptance letters are emailed to families with current enrollment applications.

March 27, 2026: Acceptance is due for round one. Paperwork, the registration fee, and the annual supply fee are due upon acceptance.

STARTING SCHOOL: Helping children and parents transition and feel comfortable at MAYS is very important to us. During the first week of school, to help ease the process, parents are allowed to stay 30 minutes each day with their child in the classroom and/or pick up early to help their child settle into the new environment and routine.

During this time, teachers will ask parents questions to better understand their child before a full separation occurs. For some students, this separation is the first big transition in their lives, so we want to make it as smooth as possible.

NEW FAMILY ORIENTATION NIGHT: MAYS hosts a New Family Orientation each year before the start of the school year. We ask parents and guardians to attend to learn more about the school, become familiar with our policies, review the parent handbook, and meet their classroom teachers. This is a child-free event, so please make babysitting arrangements. All families, new and returning, are encouraged to attend.

MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT: MAYS hosts a Meet the Teacher night before the start of each school year. We encourage all parents, new and returning, to attend with their child. This event allows your child to have an opportunity to see the classroom, drop off their classroom supplies, and meet their new teachers.

To help with the initial transition to school, we encourage parents to:

- Show your child around the school and classroom
- Introduce your child to the teachers and staff members
- Explore the classroom materials with your child
- Bring family pictures to share with the class
- Bring all of your child's supplies labeled and ready to use
- Allow additional time during pick-up to spend with your child in the classroom

MAYS discourages parents from sneaking out of the classroom, as this can prolong and intensify separation anxiety. We encourage parents and teachers to work together to create a daily "goodbye" routine. You may want to help your child settle into the classroom by reading them a book or doing a quick activity before you give them a hug or kiss and say goodbye. We want to instill a daily routine to give them confidence that you trust their teacher and will be back soon. This helps children prepare for your departure and have a good start to their day. The classroom teacher will comfort the child and will assist in morning activities. Feel free to call and check on your child after drop-off.

CLASSROOM AND YEARLY TRANSITIONS: Transition plans vary according to the students' individual needs. Teachers inform the parents of the differences in the new learning environment and discuss the upcoming changes for the growing child. Classroom assignments are based on the student's age, grade completed, and at the sole discretion of the Director. Napping and feeding schedules continue to be flexible for children 18 months and younger.

Grading Policy (1st through 5th grade)

At MAYS, we believe that grading should reflect a student's individual growth, effort, and understanding, rather than just present a final number or letter. Our grading approach is designed to be flexible, supportive, and focused on the whole child, fostering a love of learning while also providing feedback to help students reach their full potential.

FOCUS ON GROWTH AND PROGRESS: We emphasize continuous growth and development. Grades reflect how well a student is progressing in key areas, including knowledge, skills, and behaviors. We understand that every child learns at their own pace, so we consider improvement over time rather than just comparing students to one another.

HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT: We recognize that there are many factors that influence a student's performance, including personal challenges, learning styles, and emotional development. Our assessments include a variety of methods, such as class participation, projects, observations, and formative assessments. We aim to assess not only academic understanding but also creativity, critical thinking, social skills, and effort. This comprehensive approach helps provide a clearer picture of each student's overall growth. In some situations, the occasional re-assessment is offered to support and ensure every student has a fair chance to demonstrate their understanding.

MASTERY-BASED GRADING: At MAYS, we use a mastery-based approach to ensure that every student fully grasps the necessary skills for their grade level before moving on. In this system, students are not given failing grades. Instead, if a student struggles with a concept, they will continue to practice and review it until they have mastered it. Once they show proficiency in a skill, they move on to the next level. The goal is for all students to have acquired the required skills by the end of the school year, allowing them to progress to the next grade level. This system gives students the flexibility to learn at their own pace. Fast learners can move ahead and challenge themselves, while students who need more time are supported as well. The focus is on mastery, ensuring that all students have a solid foundation for future learning.

REGULAR FEEDBACK: We believe in the power of regular, constructive feedback. Students will receive ongoing input from teachers to help them understand their progress, celebrate their successes, and identify areas where they can improve. Parents will also be kept informed through progress reports and conferences. We value the partnership between home and school. Teachers and families are encouraged to communicate regularly to support a student's academic and emotional well-being. If a student is struggling, we work together to develop a plan that ensures they receive the support they need to succeed.

NO PENALTY FOR MISTAKES: Mistakes are an important part of the learning process. We encourage students to view mistakes as opportunities to learn, grow, and improve. Re-assessments and revision opportunities are always available, allowing students to show their progress and understanding over time. Our goal is that every child continues to put forth true effort and pride in their work.

Our grading policy at MAYS is designed to celebrate the unique journey of each student, offering a flexible, supportive environment where they can thrive academically and emotionally. We are committed to providing feedback that guides growth, fosters resilience, and nurtures a lifelong love of learning.

HOMEWORK: MAYS focuses on maximizing learning during the school day, so there is typically no need for additional work at home. We do not assign traditional homework at any grade level. Instead, we encourage families to spend 20 minutes or more each evening reading together. For older students, there may be long-term projects that they work on at home over time, but these are the exception rather than the rule. Our goal is to ensure that learning remains enjoyable and balanced for students without overloading them outside of school.

The Mays School Staff

Our teachers are passionate about providing nurturing care and learning for each student in their classrooms. They understand that providing students with safe and developmentally appropriate learning environments is the key to success for children.

Our teachers are highly trained in child development, early childhood education, and elementary education, and most have several years of experience working with children. All staff members are thoroughly screened with a criminal background check before employment and every two years thereafter.

Education & Training

Our teaching staff have combinations of several years of teaching experience, master's or bachelor's degrees in education, and a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or are in the process of receiving one. We understand that well-trained teachers are the cornerstone of a high-quality program and education for children. Our teaching staff also receive 48 hours of annual training on topics including:

- 1 hour in preventing and responding to abuse and neglect
- 1 hour in SIDS, shaken baby, and safe sleep practices
- 6 hours in cultural diversity, fostering self-esteem, and enrichment classes
- 10 hours in CPR, first aid, safety, child health, and nutrition
- 10 hours in child development and brain development
- 10 hours in guidance, discipline, and teacher-child interaction
- 10 hours in curriculum (the Reggio Emilia Approach and the Montessori Method)

We employ teachers without regard to race, gender, gender identity, religion, or any other characteristic. We foster an inclusive environment for all.

PARENT MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES: When parent meetings or conferences are scheduled, attendance is expected by at least one parent. Conferences may be scheduled with the Director and/or teacher to discuss the child's developmental progress, questions, concerns, and policy changes. The parents, teachers, or directors may initiate a conference at any time during the year. If a conference or meeting is scheduled after school hours, please arrange for a babysitter. Parent-teacher conferences typically take place two to three times each year. We encourage parents to give us feedback throughout the school year, and we also email annual parent surveys to all enrolled families each February.

Lower and upper elementary school students may be asked to join in during meetings or conferences to encourage ownership of their education.

LESSON PLANS: Each classroom teacher works collaboratively to create monthly lesson plans with notes about daily learning objectives. We use our lesson plans as a guide for learning but also build in opportunities for students to explore their own interests. Students and teachers are encouraged to expand on the monthly lesson plans and follow the child's creative interests. Monthly lesson plans are posted in each classroom and copies are available for parents.

Outdoor Play

We strongly believe that outdoor play is crucial to a child's development. At MAYS, we understand that the natural environment provides rich, hands-on learning opportunities that foster creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking, and curiosity. Physically, outdoor activities help children develop strength, coordination, and motor skills as they run, climb, balance, and interact with natural materials. Emotionally, time spent outdoors allows children to connect with nature, reduce stress, and improve their overall well-being.

We prioritize outdoor time as an essential part of our daily routine. In addition to our thoughtfully planned indoor activities, we spend approximately three hours outdoors every day—whether it's under the warmth of the sun, in the gentle rain, or even in the quiet stillness of snowfall. This commitment to outdoor play reflects our belief in its importance for children's holistic development and well-being, helping them grow into well-rounded, confident individuals. Please understand that if your child is too sick to play outdoors, then they are too sick to come to school.

We will shorten outdoor play to 20 to 40 minutes at a time if the temperature is over 36C (98F) or under 2C (35F). During days with extreme weather, we will provide additional indoor gross motor activities to ensure each child receives an adequate amount of physical activity in their day.

RISKY PLAY: As a Reggio Emilia Approach-inspired school, we believe that *risky play* is an essential part of a child's learning and development. We expect our children to climb, jump, run, hop, and most likely fall down a few times while on the playground. This kind of physical play, though seemingly simple, offers profound opportunities for growth, both in terms of physical skills and emotional resilience. By allowing children to engage in activities that push their limits, whether it's climbing a tree, jumping from a height, or balancing on an uneven surface, we are fostering a sense of confidence and independence. We will allow children to climb as high as their body will naturally allow them to. We will not boost or help a child climb a structure or tree, but we believe that if they are strong enough to climb on their own, then they are strong enough to keep their body safe and get down.

When children take risks in a supportive environment, they learn to assess their own abilities, make decisions, and develop the courage to try again after setbacks. This also teaches them to recognize their own limits and understand the importance of caution and self-care. In a Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, the teacher's role is not to shield children from risk but to observe, guide, and ensure an environment where children can safely explore and challenge themselves. Rather than immediately intervening when a child is about to take a tumble, the teacher might simply offer a reassuring presence, empowering the child to explore their own capabilities. This approach cultivates a growth mindset, helping children understand that mistakes and falls are part of the learning process. Through these experiences, they develop perseverance, resilience, and a sense of accomplishment when they succeed. We give them the space to grow stronger, more confident, and more capable—ready to face not only the physical challenges of the playground but the emotional and cognitive challenges that will come throughout their lives. This learning experience is an expected part of childhood, and we believe the benefits outweigh the risk.

RAINY DAY PLAY/SPLASH DAYS: In Houston, we experience rain very often and our children love to explore the water, fill buckets, and splash in puddles. We often enjoy rainy-day play time. Please bring rain boots or water shoes and a rain jacket to keep in the classroom. We often turn on the sprinklers for splash play! Your child's teacher may request additional supplies for water/rain play. We do not go outside if lightning has been spotted in the last 30 minutes or if it is raining too hard to clearly monitor the children. If your child is too sick to participate, then they are too sick to come to school.

We closely supervise children during all water activities. We assume that all our enrolled children do not know how to swim and are not capable of self-preservation. Unless your child is signed up for swimming lessons, they will not enter any bodies of water that require swimming skills.

Student Dress Code

All students are required to have two or more extra sets of clothing each day. For your convenience, you may leave these clothes in your child's cubby. Children participate in a variety of activities during the day including painting, drawing, sensory play, gardening, outdoor play, cutting, and gluing. Not all of the products we use for projects are washable. Children should be dressed in clothing that can be soiled or damaged without causing great concern.

All clothing must be seasonally appropriate and allow for freedom of movement. Do not send your child to school in overalls or clothes with difficult closures. Clothing should be easy to manage when using the bathroom and during diaper changes. **All clothing items must be clearly labeled with your child's first name and last initial.** MAYS is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items brought to school. If students arrive out of dress code, they will be asked to change. Parents may be asked to pick up early if a student refuses to follow our guidelines.

SHOES: Sneakers or soft-soled shoes with enclosed toes are required each day for outdoor play. This helps prevent injuries. Your child must have appropriate and well-fitting shoes available every day. This will allow your child to safely participate in physical activities. Crocs, open-toed sandals, flip-flops, loose-fitting shoes, high heels, dress-up shoes, and backless shoes are not allowed. We require all children to have three pairs of footwear each day: indoor shoes/grip socks, outdoor shoes, and rain boots.

WEATHER-APPROPRIATE ATTIRE: Rain boots and a rain jacket are required for your child to wear outside when needed. Students should also bring a sweater each day, even if it does not feel cold in the morning, as the classroom could become cool. Students should bring a sun hat to wear while playing outside in the summer and a winter hat for playing outside in the cold. Coats, jackets, sweaters, and hats may be left in your child's cubby for the entire year. While we encourage students to wear their jackets in the winter, hats in the summer, and rain boots when it's wet, we believe that children over the age of two are capable of self-regulation and are not forced to wear these items. The teachers will bring the weather-appropriate items outside with the student and help the student put them on. It's expected that students will remove hats, caps, sunglasses, mittens, warm jackets, hoods, etc. while inside.

JEWELRY & EARRINGS: Students are not permitted to wear jewelry (bracelet, necklaces, broaches, rings, etc.). Jewelry is a safety hazard for your child and the other students enrolled in the school. If your child's ears are pierced and they must wear earrings, then only small studs are allowed with locking backs. Removable earrings are not allowed.

HAIR ACCESSORIES: Hairbands, clips, and other hair accessories are permitted as long as they do not pose any safety hazards (choking, heavy, sharp, breakable) and they do not cause a distraction in the classroom. If a staff member sees a potential hazard or distraction, they will remove the accessory and place it in your child's backpack.

LOGOS: Students should not wear clothing with any offensive logos, offensive symbols, or depictions of weapons of any kind. Items with other schools' logos on them should also not be worn to school.

BAGS/BACKPACKS: Please bring a backpack with your child each day. Backpacks must be between 14-18 inches long. Rolling bags or backpacks, extra-large, or extra-small backpacks are not allowed.

HYGIENE: Hair and skin must be clean and well kept. Hair dye or artificial hair color **is** allowed, as long as no color transfer happens during the school day. Nail polish is allowed, but artificial nails are not allowed. Nails must be kept at a short length. Temporary tattoos or henna are allowed as long as they do not depict offensive logos, offensive symbols, or weapons of any kind. Make-up is not allowed.

COSTUMES/PAJAMAS: Costumes, costume accessories, and pajamas are not allowed, unless worn for a special day planned by the school.

TOPS/BOTTOMS: Pants, shorts, capris, skirts, skorts, and dresses are allowed. The hem must be fingertip length (when standing) or longer, including any rips/holes. Students may wear any color bottoms. Tops should be loose enough to allow freedom of movement and encourage modesty. Midriff may not show when raising arms above head.

UNDERGARMENTS: Undergarments should not be visible. Shorts must be worn under dresses and skirts. Clothing should cover all undergarments. Socks should be properly fitted and have grips to prevent falls.

ADDITIONAL DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN PRE-K 4 THROUGH 5TH GRADE

Each day students in our Pre-K 4, Kindergarten, or Elementary classrooms must wear a MAYS branded top (t-shirt, polo, dress, vest, or sweater) in any color. The student must remain in a MAYS branded top for the duration of the day. Tops cannot be covered while in the classroom, but jackets on the playground are acceptable.

MAYS-branded items may be purchased online or at the front office. Please note that items may take up to four weeks to produce. The annual supply fee includes three MAYS t-shirts. Students and parents are not permitted to alter or change the appearance of any MAYS apparel.

Children attending field trips must wear a MAYS polo shirt and navy blue or khaki shorts, pants, or skirts. Due to state licensing requirements, the MAYS logo must be visible at all times while students are off campus. The logo should not be occluded by a hoodie or jacket unless that item is also MAYS-branded.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND DRESS: Our community is committed to creating a supportive, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. We strive to ensure that every student feels safe, valued, and empowered to express themselves authentically.

PUBERTY: We provide an annual puberty class for students in 3rd through 5th grade. Parents are also offered a class the week prior to be better informed on the information given. Books and materials will be given to each student during the school day regardless of their attendance to the class. If you would like a copy of the materials beforehand, please ask the front office. Note that the puberty class is focused on biological gender, as gender identity is a separate topic and a separate discussion. Our class will provide age-appropriate education about physical, emotional, and social changes. Our teachers use inclusive language and respect.

Sensitive topics such as menstruation, body changes, and body odor will be discussed with care and clarity. The student's privacy will be respected, and questions will be answered in a safe, confidential manner. Around 3rd grade, or when appropriate, students will be encouraged to wear deodorant. Please, no strong-smelling body spray, perfume, or cologne.

Illness Policy

Our school is designed for well children. We are not able to provide sick care or education. If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified to come and pick up your child immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contacts. Your child will be isolated from other students until you or one of your emergency contacts arrives. Please make arrangements to be able to pick up your child within 90 minutes of a “sick child” phone call. If your child becomes ill while at home or at school, please follow this guidance:

For most illnesses, children are welcome to return to school when they are symptom-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications). Guidelines for specific illnesses are below.

Students unable to attend school due to illness (including leaving school early) are not allowed to participate in or otherwise attend after-school functions. For example, a student leaving at noon with a fever is not allowed to attend a school-organized sporting event or after-school event that day.

ILLNESS NOTIFICATIONS: Parents are required to notify The Mays School via email (info@mays.school) if their child is diagnosed with any contagious illness or communicable disease (including, but not limited to, everything listed in this handbook) within 24 hours of the diagnosis. We will notify parents with children in the same classroom the same or the following day by sending an email with information about the communicable disease.

GUIDANCE FOR ILLNESSES AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS:

Fever

We consider a fever as anything over 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit. Children must remain home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Strep

Children are welcome to return after they are fever- and symptom-free for 24 hours and have been on an antibiotic treatment for 24 hours.

Pink Eye

Children are welcome to return 24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops, when their eyes are free from discharge, and when overall symptoms are improving.

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Children are welcome to return five days after the start of symptoms, as long as their rash is healing and dry and they have been fever-free for 24 hours and their rash is not causing them pain.

Ear Infection

Children are welcome to return with a doctor’s note stating a diagnosis of ear infection after they are fever and symptom-free for 24 hours and have started antibiotic treatment.

Gastroenteritis, Diarrhea, Vomiting

Children are welcome to return when they are symptom-free for 24 hours, when they are eating and drinking normally, and when they are able to fully participate in classroom activities.

RSV/Bronchiolitis/Croup

Children are welcome to return five days after the start of symptoms, as long as symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours.

Lice

Children are welcome to return after being treated or cleared of head lice by a lice removal clinic. A note from the clinic is required for return.

Impetigo

Children are welcome to return once their rash is healing and dry, they have been on oral or topical antibiotics for 24 hours, and they have been fever-free for 24 hours. Any visible rash must remain covered with a waterproof bandage for the full duration of healing.

Flu/COVID

Children are welcome to return five days after the start of symptoms or positive test and after they are fever- and symptom-free for 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Ringworm

Children are welcome to return once they have started treatment with antifungal medication and the affected area is covered with a bandage until it is fully healed. Students with ringworm located on the scalp or face must receive a doctor's clearance before returning to school.

Unidentified Rash

Children with an unidentified rash should be kept home until a healthcare provider can determine the cause and provide written clearance to return to school.

Asthma

Children with asthma may attend school as long as their symptoms are managed and they are able to fully participate in classroom and outdoor activities. If they require medication during school hours, please ensure the necessary medication forms are completed before returning to school.

Seasonal Allergies

Children with allergies may attend school as long as their symptoms are managed. If they require medication during school hours, please ensure the necessary medication forms are completed before returning to school.

Mononucleosis

Children are welcome to return once they have been fever-free for 24 hours and feel well enough to participate in normal activities.

Fifth Disease

Children with Fifth Disease (also known as "slapped cheek" syndrome) can return once they feel better and are no longer contagious, which typically occurs once the rash appears. Please check with your healthcare provider if you are unsure.

HEALTH CHECKS/SCREENINGS: Each morning, our staff look for signs of illness in each child and also note any rashes, scratches, or bruises, as required by Texas Childcare Licensing. Vision and hearing screenings are performed in Pre-K 4, Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd, and 5th grade classrooms. The cost of these tests is included in tuition. If you would prefer for these tests to be completed by your child's pediatrician, audiologist, or optometrist, please bring the results to the MAYS front office and sign the "opt out" form before October each school year.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: When a child in our care has been medically diagnosed with a communicable disease (including lice), we will notify the appropriate health authorities and follow their recommendations for providing information to parents of all exposed children. We will notify parents of exposed children within 24 hours by sending an email with information about the communicable disease to parents. We ask that all parents notify us when their child has been diagnosed with any illness.

IMMUNIZATIONS: Parents are required to maintain up-to-date immunization (shot) records for their child while enrolled at MAYS. If a student’s immunization record is out of date, a MAYS staff member will contact you for an updated record. Parents who fail to maintain proper immunization records will be unenrolled from MAYS. In accordance with Texas Administrative Code §97.62, Texas law allows for an exemption from immunizations for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. To claim an exemption due to reasons of conscience, a student’s parent or legal guardian must request, sign, and submit an official DSHS affidavit form to our school. The affidavit is valid for two years. **Note:** Students who haven’t received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience may be excluded from school based on our enrollment policies, or in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the Texas Commissioner of Health.

MEDICINE: The following procedures are required regarding the application of ointments or administering medications (except for diaper creams):

- A parent must sign in the medicine every day or leave permission for “as needed”.
- The medication form must be signed by a doctor, including prescription and OTC medications. We do not administer medication without a signed doctor’s note. Prescription labels do not qualify.
- The first dose of a newly prescribed medication should not be administered at school.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any medication given to the child before school each day.
- Daily and emergency medications must be left at the school for the duration of the school year or until no longer needed.
- All ointments and lip balms must be signed in in the front office.
- All medications and creams must be in the original container with the child’s full name and the date that the medication was dropped off at the school.
- The medication label dosages will be followed unless a signed doctor’s note states otherwise.
- All medication is kept in the front office—do not leave any medication or ointments in your child’s bag.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: In the event of a medical emergency, we will contact the child’s parents. If we cannot contact the parents, we will call those persons listed as emergency contacts. If the emergency requires immediate medical attention, emergency medical services will be called to transport the child to the hospital. If an employee believes that a child is undergoing an anaphylactic reaction, then a MAYS staff member will administer an epinephrine auto-injector (Epipen). If the family has not provided the needed emergency medication, then MAYS will administer an auto-injector prescribed in the name of The Mays School.

Epinephrine auto-injectors prescribed in the name of The Mays School are stored and disposed of according to the requirements in the Texas Health and Safety Code. MAYS staff are trained annually in the administration of epinephrine auto-injectors. Emergency medications are administered under implied consent from the parent or guardian that provided it. If time allows, we will contact the parents or guardians before administering emergency medication. MAYS teachers are provided annual training to handle and administer emergency medications.

SUNSCREEN, INSECT REPELLANT, AND CREAMS: MAYS provides sunscreen, insect repellent, lotion, rash cream, and healing ointment for students six months and older to use during the day. MAYS staff members will help children apply these products on an “as needed” basis. All of our products are Honest Company, Babyganics, Burt’s Bees, California Baby, ThinkSport/Baby, Hello Bello, Cloud Island, Blue Lizard, Neutrogena Kids/Baby, Supergoop, Aveeno, or Whole Foods 365 brand products. Please see the front office for full ingredient lists. Parents may opt out of the use of any or all of these products by sending an email to info@mays.school. Parents are welcome to bring alternative products for their child to use. Before we administer any of these items, parents must fill out and sign the form located in the front office.

WATER: Each student over six months of age is required to bring a reusable water bottle each day. All students have access to water throughout the day. Their water bottles can be refilled using our filtered water bottle filling stations. Metal, glass, silicone, and plastic water bottles are allowed. All water cups must be able to close with a sanitary cover. We are not responsible for any losses or breakage.

PROVIDED MEDICATIONS: MAYS provides infant & children's Motrin/Advil (Ibuprofen), children's Tylenol (Acetaminophen), children's Zyrtec (Cetirizine HCl), children's Benadryl (Diphenhydramine), antibiotic ointment (Neosporin), children's allergy medication (Loratadine), and anti-itch cream (Hydrocortisone). Before we administer any school-provided medication, parents and their pediatrician must fill out and sign the medication form located in our registration form or the front office. Please note that administering medication does not allow a sick child to remain at school. It is only offered as a convenience to parents.

WET WIPES: MAYS provides wet wipes for use during diaper changes, in the classroom, and on the playground. All of our products are Honest Company, Babyganics, Huggies Natural Care, Huggies Hypoallergenic, Pampers Pure, Pampers Sensitive, Water Wipes, or Seventh Generation brand products. You may opt out of the use of any of these products by sending an email to info@mays.school.

HAND WASHING PROCEDURES: Staff are required to wash their own hands, as well as the hands of a child upon arrival for the day, before and after meals and snacks, after outdoor play, after using the bathroom, when a child's hands are soiled, when assisting with toileting, diapering, or after coming into contact with bodily fluids, including those from wiping noses or coughing.

CLEANLINESS: We take the well-being of every child very seriously and work hard to provide a clean and sanitary environment. Toys are disinfected after use and all play areas are sanitized throughout the day. Each evening, the facility is cleaned and sanitized by a professional cleaning crew. We only use non-toxic, natural cleaning products and soaps in the school, with an exception made in times of an illness breakout or pandemic, when we may need to use stronger products to ensure proper sanitation.

Meals and Nutrition

We give children the opportunity to establish healthy eating habits as well as an understanding of the relationship between food, health, and growth. Second helpings are always available. We provide breakfast and snacks daily. We also have several lunch options to support your family.

BREAKFAST: We serve a balanced breakfast every day for students enrolled in before care and who arrive before 8:00 AM each morning. Children can choose from organic fruit, whole grain breakfast items, organic yogurt or smoothies, and/or protein-rich foods.

SNACK: We offer nutritious snacks twice a day. Our snacks include a variety of healthy options, such as fresh fruits, organic vegetables, whole grain crackers, organic dairy, and more. Snacks are available for all students 12 months of age and older that are ready for table food.

MILK: We understand that not every child drinks milk each day and that not every family believes in giving their child milk daily. The state requires us to serve eight to 12 ounces of milk to each student each day through breakfast and lunch. To opt out of this daily milk requirement, parents must sign a form located in the front office. Parents that have not opted out of this requirement must bring two cups from home to be used for milk every day and washed at home daily.

LUNCH:

Lunch from Home

Students are welcome to bring their lunch from home each day. Parents are responsible for labeling and placing food and drinks brought from home in the classroom refrigerator. Please provide a minimum of one fruit, one vegetable, one grain, one dairy, and one source of protein each day. We are happy to warm (microwave) your child's food from home as long as the warming time is less than two minutes due to time constraints. If you would like us to microwave your child's lunch, please make sure it is prepared with a microwave-safe container.

Oops Lunch

If you forget to bring your child's lunch, MAYS will provide them a school lunch consisting of crackers, cheese, and sliced turkey, along with a fresh fruit, veggie pouch, and milk. A \$10.00 charge is automatically added to your account if your child does not have a lunch by 10:00 AM.

School-Provided Lunch

We have partnered with local companies to provide healthy daily age-appropriate lunches for our students. Families can sign up for lunches for a monthly fee of \$150.

Our lunch subscription service can accommodate students six months to 12 years of age. Menus for all age groups are available in the front office. Lunch orders are due on the 15th of the prior month.

AGE REQUIREMENT FOR STARTING TABLE FOOD: Lunch plans are available for students as young as six months of age. Before starting school food, the child must be able to safely eat all items on the menu for their age group.

MENU: All food served to the children is listed on our menu, which is posted on our bulletin board for easy reference. If there are any changes to the menu, parents will be promptly notified. Our kitchen facilities are regularly inspected by local health officials to ensure safety and cleanliness standard are met. Similarly, any catered food or food for special events is prepared in a kitchen that is also inspected by local health authorities. Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110°F are kept out of the children's reach to ensure safety.

FOOD DELIVERY: We discourage daily food deliveries from services such as DoorDash, UberEats, or other third-party delivery platforms for children's lunches. If you are in a crunch or need an accommodation, please call the office and we can make a one-time plan.

FOOD ALLERGIES: If your child has a food allergy, please let us know immediately. Parents are required to complete the MAYS provided "Food Allergy Plan" form with their child's pediatrician and submit it to the front office before the child begins school. Parents are required to supply emergency medication, such as an EpiPen, for their child. Emergency medication must be in the original container and must not be expired or damaged. All staff are educated on food allergies and take precautions to ensure children are protected.

It is the parent's responsibility to provide alternative foods for children with allergies. The food must be as similar as possible to the food that we serve. For example, if we are serving fruit, the food from home must also be fruit.

Please note, we are **NOT a NUT-FREE** campus. However, if a child has a severe contact allergy, MAYS administration may designate their classroom as an allergen-free area for their specific allergen.

FOOD INTOLERANCES: If your child has a food intolerance, please let us know immediately. Parents are required to turn in a signed note from their child's pediatrician with detailed instructions on foods that should be avoided and possible side effects before their child begins care. It is the parent's responsibility to provide alternative foods for children with intolerances.

FOOD PREFERENCES: We do not allow menu changes for food preferences. If your child does not like an item on the menu, you are welcome to bring a substitution from home, but the child will still be served each menu item.

VEGETARIAN: We have the option for a meat-free breakfast, snack, and lunch to accommodate students who are vegetarian.

NUTRITION: All of our school-provided snacks and meals meet and exceed the state's nutritional requirements and are approved by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Additionally, we meet annually with pediatricians and nutritionists to review our menu and ensure it provides proper nutrition for our students.

FOOD FROM HOME: Food is allowed from home if it meets MAYS and the state's nutritional requirements. Our goal is to maintain a positive, healthy atmosphere for all children, and we encourage families to send only wholesome, balanced meals and snacks that align with our nutritional guidelines. For a parent who chooses to provide a child's food and snacks from home, please understand that we are not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs. For more information on healthy eating, please visit <https://squaremeals.org>.

PROHIBITED FOOD ITEMS: To support the health and well-being of all children in our program, we have a strict policy regarding the types of food and beverages allowed at school. **Candy, coffee, Starbucks drinks, energy drinks, artificially sweetened drinks, icing, soda, and gum are not permitted.** These items are not appropriate for the learning and play environment and can have a negative impact on children's health and behavior. If any of these items are sent to school for a child's lunch or snack, they will be immediately discarded.

REWARDS AND TRYING NEW FOODS: We do not give food, candy, or treats as rewards for good behavior, nor do we allow any punishments involving food. We also do not reward a child for eating everything on his or her plate. We encourage children to taste new foods, but we never force a child to taste or eat food.

Enrichment Classes

MAYS provides wonderful enrichment classes for all our students every day of the week. Our enrichment classes focus on growing and developing the “whole child”. The provider for these classes may change occasionally, as we cannot guarantee availability of external organizations. All enrichment classes are included in tuition.



Physical Education (PE): We partner with [Yoga Stars & Stretch-n-Grow](#) to provide weekly physical education programs that are thoughtfully designed to promote overall fitness and well-being. The curriculum focuses on developing essential physical and mental skills, including coordination, balance, teamwork, focus, and mindfulness. Through a variety of activities, students engage in exercises that improve their motor skills, agility, and flexibility, while also learning how to collaborate effectively with peers in group activities. By integrating both fun and challenging elements, we create an environment that not only enhances fitness but also nurtures important life skills such as perseverance, discipline, and self-confidence.



Music Lessons: We partner with [Music Together](#) for our music classes, an internationally recognized music program. Music Together believes that young children learn best from powerful role models who are actively making music. For our older students, we have an amazing music teacher that expands on the core beliefs of Music Together and helps the students develop a greater love and appreciation for music and song. Our students will participate in weekly classes that teach basic music concepts like rhythm, beat, tone, pitch and instrumental skills, all while having fun!



Dramatic Expression: [Arts Alive!](#) offers a dynamic, research-based arts curriculum designed to engage and inspire all of our students through a creative and integrated approach. Each workshop blends a variety of artistic disciplines—drama, theater, dance, music, visual arts, imagination, and literacy—into a cohesive learning experience. Students explore these art forms through hands-on activities that encourage self-expression, creative thinking, and problem-solving. Drama and theater exploration helps students develop confidence and communication skills, while dance promotes physical coordination and emotional expression.



Library: The MAYS library offers a wide selection of books suitable for all age groups, from infants to 5th grade. Each week, classrooms visit the library to read and explore. We’ve partnered with The Houston Public Library (HPL) to provide a structured story time led by certified librarians. These librarians help teach students in Pre-K 4 through 5th grade important research skills and library techniques. HPL visits our school multiple times per month to engage with students, while classroom teachers also utilize the library on other days for learning activities. Parents are welcome to visit the library at any time to check out books.



Art Classes: We offer process-based and therapeutic art lessons for all children, focusing on their individual needs and developmental stages. For younger children, we prioritize sensory exploration, fine motor skills, and movement, fostering a love for art and creative expression. More structured art lessons begin in kindergarten, introducing more technical skills while still emphasizing creativity and emotional expression. Throughout all stages, our approach nurtures self-confidence, problem-solving, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Extracurricular Classes

MAYS offers extracurricular activities for our preschool through 5th grade students. Extracurricular classes are subject to change. Please see the front office for a complete list of extracurricular classes and pamphlets for tuition information. Enrichment classes are billed separately from tuition. Extracurricular tuition information is sent out each summer for the upcoming school year.



WOLFIES SWIM SCHOOL: Wolfies' number one priority is to teach children to be safe in and around the water, and they tailor every lesson to each student's needs and goals. Students will have a 30-minute semi-private lesson each week. Swim classes will take place at Wolfies Swim School in Bellaire. Children preschool through kindergarten age participate in a skill-based weekly lesson. Children in 1st through 5th grades are offered a more competitive-style swim team class in collaboration with Wolfies.



DANCE STARS BY STRETCH-N-GROW: When children are inspired by their imagination to move, Dance Stars instructors match their high energy and enthusiasm through dance. With Dance Stars, boys and girls learn the fundamentals of ballet and jazz while developing grace, coordination, balance and poise. By inspiring a passion for dance, our imaginative and engaging classes will create twirling, self expressive machines!



TUTORING: MAYS offers private tutoring services for students in Pre-K 4 through 5th grade to provide additional academic support and enrichment. Our tutoring is personalized to meet each child's specific needs, whether they require extra help in a particular subject, or would benefit from advanced learning opportunities. Please note that, in order to ensure impartiality and fairness, teachers are not permitted to offer paid tutoring to students currently enrolled in their class. Additionally, students do not need to be enrolled full-time at our school to sign up for tutoring services.



MUSIC LESSONS: MAYS offers additional small group (six students) music instruction, allowing students to choose between learning string instruments (such as violin or guitar) and percussion instruments (such as drums or xylophone). Our music lessons are designed to help students develop and master their budding musical skills. Students do not need to be enrolled full-time at the school to participate in music lessons. Private lessons are also available; please see front office for details.

Field Trips/Transportation



FIELD TRIPS: Parents are notified of the date, time, and destination. Written parental permission is required for child participation. We also encourage parents and grandparents to attend the classroom field trips as volunteers. Volunteers are limited by space requirements and teacher recommendations. Field trips are for age-specific groups only; unfortunately, siblings who are not enrolled in this group will not be able to attend. Please stop by the front office if you would like to sign up to be a volunteer. Volunteers will be required to wear a MAYS-branded shirt (available for purchase).



TRANSPORTATION: We transport children three years of age and older on scheduled field trips, to events, and to extracurricular classes. All children transported in MAYS vehicles are securely buckled into proper fitting booster seats or car seats. **Safety is always our number one priority.** If a child is unable to safely be transported and supervised during an off-campus event, class, or field trip, they will immediately return to the school or a parent will be asked to attend the trip with them to ensure their safety.

PARKING LOT SAFETY: The safety of our students, staff, and families is our top priority. Our parking lot is a shared space that requires careful attention and respect. We ask all parents, guardians, staff, and visitors to follow these guidelines to ensure a safe, kind, and orderly environment for everyone.

- **Speed Limit:** Always adhere to the posted speed limit of 5 mph within the parking lot.
- **Cautious Driving:** Always drive cautiously, especially when passing through areas where children may be walking. Be prepared to stop at any moment.
- **Pedestrian Areas:** Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and never drive through areas marked for walking.
- **No Double Parking:** Do not double-park or block others from exiting their parking spaces.
- **Be Patient and Courteous:** Everyone is in a hurry sometimes, but patience and kindness go a long way. Be courteous to fellow drivers and pedestrians. If you see someone in need of assistance, offer a helping hand.
- **Limit Idling:** To reduce emissions and be considerate of others, please turn off your engine if you are parked and not actively waiting.
- **Lock Vehicles:** For safety reasons, always lock your vehicle and avoid leaving valuables visible.

Student Behavior & Discipline Policy

Be kind

Be polite

Be gentle

Be respectful

Be collaborative

Be inclusive

At MAYS, we focus on age-appropriate and positive discipline strategies that support each child's development. Our primary method is redirection, helping children understand what they *can* do instead of focusing on what they can't. We encourage children to make choices and take responsibility for their actions, providing clear guidelines and consistent support to foster self-control.

When needed, we may temporarily remove privileges, offer "calm down" time, or guide the child away from a situation to help them refocus. Our classrooms are designed to be positive, supportive environments where children feel heard and are encouraged to resolve conflicts through conversation with teachers and peers.

We do not tolerate any form of harsh or abusive discipline. This includes physical punishment (hitting, spanking, shaking, or grabbing), using harsh tones, humiliating, neglecting, scaring, or placing a child in a dark room. We also prohibit withholding active play, forcing a child to remain inactive for extended periods, or withholding or rewarding with food. **These practices are strictly forbidden.**

MAYS strives to support and guide all children through the journey of learning how to manage their own behaviors, emotions, and to resolve conflicts that arise. Students attending MAYS are learning new skills and setting goals every day, and social and emotional development is a huge part of that journey. If a child's behavior is disrupting the class or causing emotional or physical harm to others, the Director will observe the child and recommend a plan of action for the teacher. If the child does not respond to the guidance plan, a meeting with the parent and the Director will be arranged. At this meeting the parent and Director will review the plan implemented by the teacher. The Director will also create a recommended plan of action for the parent that is appropriate for the behavioral situation, including any recommendations for help from a shadow, specialist, therapist, or doctor. If a child does not respond to guidance or the parents do not seek outside help and the child continues to exhibit aggressive or inappropriate behavior, his or her enrollment may be canceled at the sole discretion of the Director. The safety of our students and teachers is of paramount importance.

MAYS is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students. This policy ensures that any actions regarding dismissal or safety are taken in the best interest of the child, staff, and school community.

MINOR DISRUPTION (COMMON CHEEKY BEHAVIORS): While children are developing their self-regulation, problem solving and communication skills, we expect exploration of boundaries, small injuries (scrapes, scratches, bites, bruises), and tantrums/dysregulation behaviors. This is considered common and developmentally appropriate for young children while they are learning how to control themselves. We communicate these moments with parents, but typically no further actions are needed.

PERSISTENT DISRUPTION (REPETITIVE OR INCREASING BEHAVIORS): As children grow and develop, they can move from exploring boundaries to pushing back on boundaries. This can be as simple as refusal to complete a task, or it can evolve into more repetitive and possibly injury-inducing behaviors. Examples include consistently refusing to complete tasks, causing minor harm to students or teachers, teasing (not bullying), using inappropriate language or signs, and breaking small classroom items. At this point a mandatory meeting will be scheduled with the parent, classroom teacher, and administration to create a plan of action to support the student and classroom.

EXTREME DISRUPTION: Extreme behavior is not common and not developmentally appropriate. We classify extreme behavior as student actions that pose a significant risk to themselves, other students, teachers, or property. The safety of our students and staff is our highest priority. If a child exhibits extreme behaviors that pose a significant risk, parents will be called immediately and asked to pick up their child within one hour. The child must remain in the care of the parents for the remainder of the day. If a child is required to be picked up for safety concerns more than three times in one month, their enrollment may be canceled at the discretion of the Director.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT: Bullying and harassment of any kind—whether verbal, written, physical, social, or online—will not be tolerated. This includes harassment based on race, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or disability. We view bullying as a repeated, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone. While occasional unkind behavior is addressed, our focus is on teaching students to resolve conflicts respectfully and supportively. We aim to understand the root cause of issues and help students make better choices. With our small community, we can closely monitor interactions and guide students toward healthier relationships. Repeated bullying or actions that harm another student's well-being may lead to unenrollment.

HONESTY, PLAGIARISM, CHEATING, AND COLLUSION: Academic integrity and honesty are central to a successful life at MAYS. Students must demonstrate integrity and honesty in their work and in their behavior. MAYS does not tolerate cheating or plagiarism, including the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. If a student is uncertain about plagiarism, they should speak with a teacher before work is submitted. Dishonestly, collusion, plagiarism, or cheating can lead to various degrees of disciplinary action according to the severity of the situation.

SCHOOL PROPERTY AND RESPECT: Students are expected to treat all school property with respect, including indoor/outdoor space and equipment. They are expected to maintain a clean and functional environment for everyone. Both students and parents are responsible for using school resources carefully and responsibly. We ask that all members of the school community help keep our spaces clean by disposing of trash properly and contributing to a tidy environment. If a student damages or defaces school property, they will be required to repair or replace it.

BITING: We recognize that biting is a common and developmentally appropriate behavior in children from birth to three years of age. Biting can occur in very young children as they explore their environment, express frustration, or seek attention. By understanding biting as a common behavior in young children and addressing it with care, consistency, and support, we aim to create a safe and nurturing environment where all children can thrive and develop positive social skills.

- We build strong, nurturing relationships with children to help them feel secure and supported.
- Our classrooms are designed to be safe, calm, and engaging, minimizing triggers for biting.
- Consistent routines help children feel comfortable and understand expectations, reducing the likelihood of biting out of confusion or stress. Staff members closely observe children who may be prone to biting and take proactive steps to redirect their behavior before biting occurs.
- We regularly remind children of the importance of using gentle hands and other positive behaviors. When a biting incident occurs, staff will calmly reinforce these expectations.
- To prevent biting, we provide safe and appropriate objects for children to chew on, such as teething rings or toys.

- We ensure that transitions between activities are as smooth and predictable as possible to minimize frustration that could lead to biting.
- If biting occurs, we will inform parents or guardians of the incident, the circumstances, and the steps taken to address it. We encourage open communication and collaboration between staff and families to support the child's emotional and social development.

DISMISSAL: This policy outlines the conditions under which MAYS may dismiss a child from the program, the process for refunds and balances, and the safety protocols for managing extreme student behaviors.

- **Right to Dismiss:** MAYS reserves the right to dismiss any child from the program at any time, with or without cause, at the sole discretion of the Director.
- **Notification:** Parents will be notified in writing and via email if their child is dismissed from the program.
- **Refunds:** If a child is dismissed, a refund for any unused tuition will be issued within 30 days.
- **Outstanding Balances:** Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of dismissal. If any balance remains unpaid, it will be referred to legal counsel for collection.
- **Visit Requests:** If a dismissed child or parent wishes to return to MAYS property for any reason, they must email and request an appointment with the Director.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: We encourage parents to be engaged in their child's school experience. It truly takes a village to raise so many wonderful children! We have lots of fun activities throughout the school year that parents and students are invited to attend. Please see our school calendar for more details about upcoming events.

Parent Volunteers

There are several ways in which parents can volunteer, such as being a field trip chaperone, reading stories to the children, assisting the classroom teacher, helping with maintenance or building projects, coordinating special events, helping in the office, planting flowers in the gardens, and much more!

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. MAYS is your school, and we encourage parents to contribute to by assisting with special projects and sharing time and talents. Parents are invited to share holidays and other cultural traditions with the children. If you are interested in cooking or baking, reading stories, or helping children write their stories, we encourage you to volunteer your time and energy. Any contributions of time, talent, energy, class snacks, or new or gently used learning toys or books are always gratefully received.

Non-custodial parents, grandparents, and others are invited and encouraged to volunteer at MAYS. If you would like to become a volunteer at MAYS, please visit the front office to fill out a background check form. Custodial parents do not need an additional background check. Anyone with a criminal history is prohibited from volunteering at the school.

Parent Communication

While our staff welcome and value the opportunity to meet and talk with parents, it is difficult for the staff to speak extensively during arrival and dismissal times, as well as when class is in session, as they must devote their full attention to the students. Therefore, please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, a written note or email is preferred. If you wish to talk to the teacher at length, please arrange a time to meet in person or over the phone. Please do not discuss problems or concerns in the presence of your child or other parents.

Notification

Parents are notified of any changes to our policies via email. If a policy changes, parents will be given one month's notice before the change is mandatory. We review all policies as needed, as well as on an annual basis.

Special Needs, Special Rights, and Developmental Delays

At MAYS, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive environment for children and adults with disabilities and special needs. We believe every child has the right to a supportive space where they can learn and grow alongside their peers. We recognize that students—both with and without disabilities—benefit from being in an inclusive setting, and we are dedicated to helping all children succeed.

We are open to working with families to determine the best ways to support your child's needs. In some cases, we can adjust our classroom environment, teaching methods, and procedures to provide a developmentally appropriate and inclusive experience. However, there may be instances where we are unable to fully adapt the classroom setting to meet specific needs. In those cases, we offer alternative solutions.

ONE-ON-ONE CARE AND EDUCATION PLANS: For students requiring more individualized support, MAYS can provide a classroom shadow teacher with a tailored education plan. The cost for this service is \$4,000 per month (eight hours per day) regardless of the student's age.

ACCOMMODATION: We value strong partnerships with parents, healthcare providers, local school district professionals, therapists, and other experts to help meet each child's unique needs. We will make every effort to implement recommended accommodation in our classrooms and school facilities to support your child's development. We understand that some children may need additional support, and we are dedicated to providing the resources necessary for them to thrive. If a recommendation exceeds our ability to reasonably accommodate, we will collaborate with the support team to explore alternative solutions and ensure your child receives the appropriate care and assistance they need to succeed.

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT: We will utilize any adaptive equipment that has been provided to us (wheelchairs, walkers, braces, specialized seating, AAC devices, hearing aids, etc.). We will adapt our environment when needed to better support children and adults with adaptive equipment and ensure that the child is in a supportive environment.

REFERRAL TO A SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENCES: If we are unable to provide a suitable environment for your child to safely learn and play, MAYS will research and help start the enrollment process into a school that has the training and equipment to better meet the needs of your child.

IN-SCHOOL THERAPY AND EVALUATIONS: PT (physical therapy), OT (occupational therapy), speech-language therapy, and behavioral therapy are all very common in education. Students are welcome and encouraged to receive intervention services and/or therapy during their school day. With parent request and approval, qualified service providers are welcome on our campus to provide services to students.

If we see any minor or major developmental delays, we will schedule a parent-director meeting and create a plan of action. If we refer you to a specialist, doctor, or evaluator, you are expected to follow through on our recommendation within a reasonable timeframe (usually three months).

Research shows that early intervention is key to the future success of the child. Even if the delay is minor, it is important to address it and work as a team to find the best solution for the child. Once an evaluation is complete, we can offer referrals to specialists, doctors, therapists, and other education professionals. Many of their services can be completed while your child attends school.

BILINGUAL/ELL STUDENTS: We offer support and encouragement to students who are currently learning English. Our teachers use picture cards, visual schedules, and a translator when needed to help support the student and their family. When requested, we will attempt to provide a translated version of any document.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: For more information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and family resources, please visit <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us> or <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services>.

ABA (APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS): Students transitioning from an ABA clinic are required to share all evaluation and observation paperwork upon application. Families are also required to schedule an in-clinic observation by a MAYS admin, an in-school observation by MAYS teachers, and a family interview. While we are an inclusive school to children with special rights, we are also a small school and need to ensure that the student is ready for a less restrictive environment before enrollment. Failure to disclose relevant information may impact your child's acceptance into our school.

In some circumstances we will allow ABA companies to join our classrooms, with the understanding that they are here to support the classroom teachers and are able to adapt their practices to align with our core values, curriculum, and student goals.

GIFTED STUDENTS/SKIPPING GRADES: Many parents believe their child is advanced or gifted, and while we recognize that every child has unique strengths, we believe all children are gifted in their own way. It's a beautiful part of child development to watch a child reach milestones like crawling, walking, or reading—some may achieve these things earlier than others, as each child develops at their own pace.

While we understand the desire to accelerate a child's learning, skipping grades is not always the best approach. Our differentiated teaching environment is designed to challenge all students while allowing them to develop socially alongside their peers. However, in some cases, it may be clear that a child could benefit from acceleration. This decision is only made after carefully considering all aspects of the child's development—academic, social, and emotional—to ensure that it's truly the best choice for them.

Early advancement is never about competition or parental pride; it is only pursued when it will genuinely support the child's long-term growth and well-being.

TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS: We understand that families occasionally transfer from school to school due to graduation, moving, or simply finding a school that better fits the family's needs. With proper notice (six weeks), we will complete teacher recommendation forms, write recommendation letters, advise on schools that we feel may be a good fit, allow teacher observations, provide minor flexibility in attendance for required testing, and mail all requested report cards and progress reports.

Parent Code of Conduct

MAYS requires parents and visiting adults to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of our goals is to provide an appropriate environment in which young children can learn, grow, and develop. Achieving this environment is not only the responsibility of the staff, but also every parent or adult that enters the building. Parents are required to help foster this environment.

Parents or visiting adults should at no time use harsh language or profanity while on campus or during a school-sponsored event. Confrontational interactions with employees, other parents, children, or other adults associated with MAYS are strictly prohibited. If you have a disagreement or concern with anyone at MAYS, please call or email the front office to set up a time that we can try to resolve the problem in an appropriate manner. Threats of any kind will not be tolerated at MAYS. Parents must be responsible for and in control of their behavior at all times.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. If a parent witnesses another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about a behavior that was reported to them by their child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher or Director. Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for a parent to seek out another parent to discuss any child's behavior.

Parents are required to always follow all safety procedures. These procedures are designed to protect the children, families, and employees of MAYS. Please be particularly mindful of the entrance procedures. MAYS takes the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality of all persons associated with the school very seriously. The confidentiality policy applies to all children, parents, employees, and visitors of MAYS. Any parent who shares information considered confidential will be considered in violation of the confidentiality policy. Do not post any personal or confidential information on social media sites, such as MAYS student or staff names, addresses, phone numbers, or pictures of staff or other children. Posting any negative or libelous statements about MAYS, MAYS staff, or MAYS students on the internet may result in disenrollment.

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at MAYS or while volunteering at any school-sponsored event. See-through clothing, short-shorts, clothing with rips/tears in inappropriate places, or anything suggestive or vulgar in nature are prohibited. While volunteering in classrooms with students two years of age and younger, please remove all jewelry and items that could cause a hazard.

Parents are asked not to start any social media groups involving MAYS without prior school approval, as these groups tend to exclude other parents and impinge on our families' and teachers' privacy. The Mays School has a private Facebook group that parents are welcome to join. This group post local events, parenting resources, fun photos, and gives parents an opportunity to connect to our community.

CUSTODY: If you are experiencing custody difficulties, please keep us fully advised of all circumstances which may affect your child. Parents have the right to immediate access to their children. In the absence of a court order, both parents have equal rights. If your child is the subject of a court order (custody order, restraining order, or protection order) for any reason, then you must give the front office the most recent official copy of the court order at the time of enrollment and ensure that we receive every amendment thereto. All court orders will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent requests a more liberal variation of a custody order in writing, which must be signed by both parents and notarized. Restraining and protection orders will be strictly followed at all times, and only the issuing judge can amend it. Any changes to your custody arrangement or your child's home life should immediately be provided to the MAYS office in writing. If we are notified or find out at a later time that the child is the subject of a court order, then the family will be immediately unenrolled from the school. At the time of enrollment, both parents and legal guardians must be on the registration form. Only the guardian with primary custody will be able to change or access school records. If both parents have equal rights, then it is assumed that both parents agree on any changes to school records. Birth or adoption certificates may be required in some situations.

TEXAS CHILDCARE LICENSING: MAYS is licensed by the State of Texas and adheres to a rigid enforcement of regulations that meet or exceed the licensed childcare standards. MAYS undergoes regular inspections by city, state, fire, and childcare licensing. Parents are welcome to borrow a copy of the Texas Licensing Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers from our front office. All inspection reports are posted on the bulletin board located in the main hallway.

TOBACCO, DRUGS, FIREARMS AND WEAPONS: The use and possession of tobacco, illegal drugs, E-cigarettes, and vapors of any kind are not allowed on the premises. The use or possession of illegal substances or sexually explicit materials is prohibited. Firearms are **strictly prohibited** on the premises with the exception of peace officers who are trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty. Hunting knives, bows and arrows, and all other weapons are **strictly prohibited** on the premises. Toys, books, or other items that show violence or weapons are strictly prohibited.

ALCOHOL: According to Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code §101.75, it is a criminal offense to possess/consume alcoholic beverages within 1,000 feet of a facility that the person knows is a private school offering K-12 instruction.

GANG-FREE ZONE: Gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1,000 feet of a childcare center or school is a violation and subject to penalty under Texas state law.

INSURANCE: MAYS maintains liability, auto, property, workers compensation, and accident insurance policies through Hibbs-Hallmark & Company.

UNSAFE CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS: Notices of unsafe consumer product recalls, including children's products, are available. It is easy and free to find this information. Access the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission web site at www.cpsc.gov or recall information at the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services web site at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

KEEPING CHILDREN HEALTHY: Protect children from illness and disease: Wash your hands and children's hands often, immunize children, keep ill children at home, learn CPR and First Aid, make sure that children drink plenty of water, discuss special-care needs with caregivers, learn more about childhood diabetes, which impairs a body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels, and other medical conditions from your child's healthcare provider.

PROTECTING CHILDREN: Shaken Baby Syndrome is the result of violently shaking young children. Injuries can include brain swelling and damage, subdural hemorrhaging, mental retardation and death. NEVER SHAKE A BABY! Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, is the unexplained death of a sleeping baby. Always place infants to sleep on their backs on a firm surface, free from soft items such as quilts, pillows or toys.

REPORTS: You are entitled to see the following information. You may ask the director to show you the most recent copy of the Minimum Standards for this Licensed Center (also available on the web at <https://hhs.texas.gov/> or at your local Licensing office).

- The most recent Department of Family and Protective Services Inspection/Investigation Report (compliance information is also available on the web at <https://hhs.texas.gov/> or from your local Licensing office)
- Documentation of liability insurance that complies with Human Resources Code, Section 42.049
- The most recent Fire Marshal's Inspection Report
- The most recent Health Department's Sanitation Inspection Report
- The Licensed Center's operational policies

MANDATORY REPORTING/ABUSE & NEGLECT: We contact and coordinate action with Child Protective Services if we suspect child abuse or neglect. Texas state law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report it. Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report it. All employees at MAYS are mandatory reporters to Child Protective Services. Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters the staff of MAYS cannot be held liable for the reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded as long as the report was made in "good faith." Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to: unusual marks or cuts on the child's body, severe verbal reprimands, improper clothing (size, season, or cleanliness), transporting a child without the proper child restraints (seat belt or car seat), dropping off or picking up under the influence of drugs or alcohol, not providing meals or drinks to your child or threatening to remove them, leaving your child unattended in a car, leaving your child unattended for any length of time, or sending a child to school sick or covering up symptoms with medication. If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or to a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected. Texas Childcare Licensing (713) 940-3009, the Local Childcare Licensing office (713) 940-5200, the Child Abuse (CPS) Hotline (800) 252-5400, visit texasabusehotline.org, or <https://hhs.texas.gov/>.

What is Abuse and Neglect? Abuse is mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child. Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

Warning signs of Abuse and Neglect: Unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes; fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence from school; seems frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home; shrinks at the approach of adults; reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver; abuses animals or pets. Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses; is consistently dirty and has severe body odor; lacks sufficient clothing for the weather; parent appears to be indifferent to the child; parent seems apathetic or depressed; parent behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner; parent is abusing alcohol or other drugs. For more information on warning signs of abuse or neglect and prevention techniques, please visit the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services website](#), the [Texas Health and Human Services website](#), the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), or visit the MAYS front office. To contact a national child abuse prevention and treatment organization, call 1-800-4-A-CHILD or visit ChildHelp.org.

A PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RIGHTS:

- Enter and examine the childcare facility during its hours of operation without advanced notice;
- Review the childcare facility's publicly accessible records;
- Receive inspection reports for the childcare facility and information about how to access its online compliance history;
- Obtain a copy of the childcare facility's policies and procedures;
- Review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's: Staff training records; and In-house staff training;
- Review the childcare facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child;
- View any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that: Video recordings of the alleged incident are available; The parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video recording depicting a child that is not their own; and The child care facility notifies the parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video before allowing a parent to view the video recording;
- Have the childcare facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child;
- Be provided the contact information for the childcare facility's local Childcare Regulation office;
- File a complaint against the childcare facility; and
- Be free from any retaliatory action by the childcare facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

Infant Community (2-11 months by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- Four to six clean bottles for milk
- One to two clean cups for water (6M+)
- Two pacifiers (if needed)
- Three extra sets of clean clothes
- Baby food/snacks (if needed)
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)
- Formula and/or breast milk (enough to satisfy the child's hunger cues)
- Cloth bibs, if frequently drooling or spitting up
- Diapers (refill as needed)
- Diaper cream (refill as needed)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A sweater or jacket
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Two pairs of shoes (for walking infants)
- A warm bunting suit for cold months
- A rain jacket and rain boots for rainy day play
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- Two sleep sacks (swaddles are not allowed)
- Outdoor shoes (once walking)
- Indoor grippy socks

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

BREASTFEEDING/BREASTMILK: An area with an adult-sized rocking chair is located in the infant classroom and is available for breastfeeding mothers. Upon request, a private room is also available. Breastmilk can remain in the freezer located in the infant classroom for up to one week. Please bring home any leftover milk each Friday evening. We are not responsible for any lost or spoiled milk due to loss of power or unforeseeable disasters. We follow these safety rules when preparing and storing breastmilk: fresh milk (never cooled) is good for six hours, refrigerated milk is good for six days, frozen milk is good for six months. Once warmed, all milk (fresh, cooled, or frozen) is good for 60 minutes. Upon request, MAYS will provide breastfeeding resources, education, and support to nursing mothers.

BOTTLES/SIPPY CUPS: We use a bottle warmer to warm all bottles and baby food brought from home. We do not use a microwave. We cannot reuse breastmilk or formula past one hour following warming. We do not refill or sanitize bottles, sippy cups, or food containers. Empty bottles, sippy cups, and food containers are rinsed and put back into the child's bag for washing and sanitizing at home.

BABY FOOD/FORMULA: Formula, baby food, and snacks can remain in the student's cubby. Parents should check the student's cubby each evening to see if more supplies are necessary. Food which needs to be pureed must be pureed at home and brought to school ready to eat. All infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified. We are not allowed to serve any FDA-exempt infant formulas. Formula must be in the original container.

SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES: Infants (children from birth to 12 months of age) nap at different times throughout the day. Some infants take several "cat naps" during the day, while others take long naps two or more times per day. We allow babies to sleep whenever they are sleepy. Bumper pads, blankets, pillows, sleep positioning devices, or stuffed animals are not allowed in our cribs. Please bring a sleep sack or warm pajamas for your infant to sleep in. Swaddles or clothes with restraints are not permitted. Infants must be placed on their backs to sleep until they are capable of rolling from tummy to back and from back to tummy without assistance. Infants may use a pacifier to sleep, but it must not have a stuffed animal attached. Infants may not sleep in a swing or bouncy chair. If they fall asleep in a swing or bouncy chair, we will move them to a crib. MAYS will provide all sheets for the cribs to ensure they are tight-fitting and clean. According to Texas Childcare Licensing, any exceptions must be accompanied by a note from a physician.

CLOTH DIAPERS: We are happy to support families who choose to use cloth diapers for their children. Parents are asked to provide enough clean cloth diapers for the entire day, along with any necessary covers, liners, or accessories. Cloth diapers will be changed as frequently as disposable diapers. Soiled diapers will be stored in a parent-provided, well-sealed and labeled wet bag, which will be sent home each day for laundering. Parents are responsible for washing cloth diapers at home. If cloth diapers are unavailable or in poor condition, you may be asked to bring disposable diapers for the day. We do not empty/rinse cloth diapers.

CAR SEAT/STORAGE: Hallway storage is available for parents to store infant car seats during the day. However, we are unable to store car seats that are being used for the AM carpool lane.

INFANT DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your baby's day. The report will cover key details such as feeding times and amounts, nap times and duration, diaper changes, photos, and activities. We also include any observations about your infant's mood or behavior. This report helps keep you informed about your child's routine and well-being while at school.

INFANT CURRICULUM: Our Reggio Emilia Approach curriculum in an infant classroom focuses on creating a rich, nurturing, and safe environment where infants are seen as curious, capable learners from birth and can work on developing their cognitive, emotional, and physical skills. The approach emphasizes the importance of fostering a strong sense of independence, communication, and exploration through hands-on, sensory-rich experiences.

In a Reggio Emilia Approach-inspired infant classroom, the environment is carefully designed to be an "educator" itself. It is filled with open-ended materials that encourage exploration, such as soft textures, natural objects, mirrors, and safe, stimulating toys. The classroom is structured to invite curiosity and self-directed learning, allowing infants to explore and interact with the world at their own pace and develop a strong sense of self-esteem.

Teachers act as **observers** and **guides**, attuned to the individual needs and interests of each child. Rather than directing activities, they support infants' natural curiosity and follow their lead. In the Reggio Emilia Approach, **relationships** are at the heart of learning. Infants are encouraged to form strong connections with their caregivers and peers, promoting social and emotional development. Teachers engage in open, respectful communication, talking to infants in a way that encourages language development and emotional expression, even if the child is not yet speaking.

Collaboration is another key element. In the infant classroom, this can look like infants engaging in joint activities like group play, where they learn to share space and interact with others. Although infants may not yet communicate with words, they begin to understand social cues and form early friendships through shared experiences. Ultimately, the Reggio Emilia approach in an infant classroom emphasizes that learning is a **social, emotional, and sensory experience**. Infants are not just passive recipients of information; they are active participants in their learning, discovering the world around them through their senses and interactions with the people and materials in their environment.

Each day we spend time indoors and outdoors (weather permitting). Our students enjoy spending time on our playground, going on stroller rides, and exploring nature. Infants are all very unique and have their own patterns for play, feeding, and sleeping. We use an infant's unique patterns as our guide to introduce daily activities that help prepare the infant for life.

Toddler Community (1 year by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- Two clean cups for milk
- One-two clean cups for water
- Two pacifiers (if needed)
- Three extra sets of clean clothes (refill as needed)
- An extra snack
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)
- Nap Roll (washed at home each week)
- Diapers (refill as needed)
- Diaper cream (refill as needed)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and a winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket
- Rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket

WATER BOTTLES/SIPPY CUPS: At around 12 months of age, children should transition from baby bottles to water and milk cups, preferably with a straw (not a spout). This helps support their developing motor skills and promotes healthier oral habits. Using a cup encourages them to drink more independently, prepares them for future milestones, and helps with early speech/language development. It's an important step in their growth and development.

EXTRA SNACK FROM HOME: Parents are encouraged to bring a small extra snack for their toddlers, as children at this age often become more selective about what they eat. Their appetites can be unpredictable, and they may refuse meals or snacks provided at school. Having a backup snack ensures that toddlers have something familiar and appealing to keep them satisfied, helping to avoid hunger-induced upset and ensuring a smoother school day.

TOILET TRAINING: There is no perfect age to start toilet training, but most children are ready between 24 and 36 months of age. At MAYS, we want toilet training to be a collaboration between the parent, teacher, and child. The first step to successfully toilet training your child is to relax and look for the signs of readiness. Your child must show most of the signs of readiness before toilet training will be successful at school and at home. Around age two, MAYS will provide additional information on toilet training through your child's classroom.

NAPTIME PROCEDURES: Naptime remains flexible for toddlers. Our goal is that each child naps from 11:00 AM or 12:00 PM through 2:00 or 3:00 PM each day. We also understand that some children may need two shorter naps each day at the beginning of the school year. We help the students learn self-soothing techniques by introducing a sleep routine in the classroom and by helping students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom.

Toddlers are expected to rest quietly during naptime. After 45 minutes, children who do not sleep will be given quiet activities for the remainder of naptime.

CAR SEAT/STORAGE: Hallway storage is available for parents to store car seats during the day. However, we are unable to store car seats that are being used for the AM carpool lane.

INDEPENDENT FEEDING: Around 12 months of age, children in our school transition from highchairs to sitting at low tables and chairs. This shift promotes greater independence, encourages social interaction, and improves motor skills.

TODDLER DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your toddler's day. The report will cover key details such as feeding times and amounts, nap times and duration, diaper changes, photos, and activities. We also include any observations about your toddler's mood or behavior. This report helps keep you informed about your child's routine and well-being while at school.

TODDLER CURRICULUM: The Reggio Emilia Approach curriculum in a toddler classroom is centered around the belief that toddlers are active and capable learners who construct their own understanding of the world through exploration, communication, and relationships. We value the child's natural curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, encouraging them to take an active role in their learning journey.

In our Reggio Emilia Approach-inspired toddler classrooms, the **environment** plays a central role. It is carefully designed to be a "third teacher," meaning that we offer a variety of materials that promotes learning and development. The environment is organized to encourage curiosity, independence, and hands-on exploration. For toddlers, this may include open-ended materials such as blocks, art supplies, sensory objects, natural elements, and real-world objects that invite experimentation and imaginative play.

Teachers in our toddler classrooms are seen as co-learners and facilitators. Rather than directing activities, teachers observe and listen to the toddlers closely, understanding their interests, questions, and ideas. They offer gentle guidance and support, setting up learning experiences that build on the child's natural interests. For example, if a toddler shows an interest in stacking objects, the teacher might introduce more complex materials or suggest activities that encourage problem-solving, such as puzzles or simple building projects. Teachers also encourage communication and collaboration, helping toddlers express their thoughts and feelings through words, gestures, and actions.

Documentation is an important aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach. We regularly observe and document the children's activities, conversations, and interactions. This documentation not only helps us reflect on the child's development but also gives parents insight into their child's day and growth. Documentation may also be used to highlight patterns of learning or emerging interests, which can inform the planning of future activities.

Language development is a key focus in the toddler years. Our teachers place great emphasis on rich, responsive communication. We engage toddlers in conversation, ask open-ended questions, and respond to their verbal and nonverbal cues. Language is seen not only as a way to communicate but also as a tool for thinking and problem-solving. In addition to spoken language, toddlers are encouraged to express themselves through other ways, such as drawing, music, dance, or movement.

Our curriculum is emergent, meaning that it evolves based on the interests and ideas of the children. Teachers plan activities based on what the toddlers are curious about or learning in the moment, which makes learning more meaningful and engaging. For example, if several toddlers express interest in animals, the teacher might create activities related to animal sounds, books about animals, or nature walks to observe animals in their environment.

Please understand that one of our toddlers' favorite activities is to get messy and explore with their whole bodies. Sensory development is a key component for little growing bodies—it helps with emotional regulation, fine and gross motor skills, coordination, problem solving, sorting, and also builds nerve connections that allow for complex thinking skills. Our early preschoolers participate in one to two hours of sensory play per day. **Please make sure your early toddler is dressed and ready for a messy day everyday.**

Early Preschool Community (2 years by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- Two clean cups for milk
- One to two clean cups for water
- Three extra sets of clean clothes (refill as needed)
- An extra snack
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)
- Nap roll (washed at home each week)
- Pull-ups if needed (refill as needed)
- Diaper cream if needed (refill as needed)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket and rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

TOILET TRAINING: There is no perfect age to start toilet training, but most children are ready between 24 and 36 months of age. At MAYS, we want toilet training to be a collaboration between the parent, teacher, and child. The first step to successfully toilet training your child is to relax and look for the signs of readiness. Your child must show most of the signs of readiness before toilet training will be successful at school and at home. Around age two, MAYS will provide additional information on toilet training through your child's classroom.

EXTRA SNACK FROM HOME: Parents are advised to pack an additional small snack for their early preschooler. Due to their age and developmental stage, hunger can be unpredictable and cause a lot of upset for small humans. We want to make sure they have everything they need to have a successful day.

NAPTIME PROCEDURES: Naptime for early preschoolers is 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM daily. Students are expected to rest quietly during naptime. After 45 minutes, children who do not sleep will be given quiet activities for the remainder of naptime. We help the students learn self-soothing techniques by introducing a sleep routine in the classroom and by helping students feel safe and comfortable in the classroom.

EARLY PRESCHOOL DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your early preschooler's day. The report will cover key details including:

- Meals
- Nap times
- Diaper changes and/or toilet training progress
- Photos
- Activities

EARLY PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM: Our early preschool classroom is grounded in the idea that young children are active, competent learners who thrive through exploration, play, and social interaction. At this stage, children begin to develop independence, greater communication skills, and an understanding of the world around them. We spend our days nurturing these abilities in an environment that fosters creativity, self-expression, and problem-solving.

Our classroom is carefully designed to support exploration and learning. For two-year-olds, this means creating an environment filled with materials and experiences that are open-ended and sensory-rich. The space is organized in a way that encourages children to explore independently, while also providing areas for group interactions. For example, there may be spaces for quiet activities (such as reading or drawing), areas for sensory play (like sand or water), and open spaces where children can engage in group play or movement activities.

Play is central to learning, as it allows children to develop social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Teachers act as guides, observing and supporting children's natural curiosity and interests, while promoting communication and problem-solving. Teachers in a Reggio Emilia Approach classroom do not direct play, but instead create opportunities for play that encourage curiosity and creativity. Whether it's building with blocks, exploring sensory materials, or engaging in pretend play, toddlers learn through these experiences, developing important cognitive, motor, and social skills.

We document a lot! Documentation is an important tool for both teachers and parents. Teachers observe and record children's actions, conversations, and milestones through photographs, notes, and artwork. This documentation helps teachers reflect on the children's learning process and plan future activities. For parents, it provides insight into their child's day-to-day experiences and developmental progress. All our thoughtful documentation allows us to provide individualized support and design learning experiences that build on the child's natural curiosity. Our curriculum is **emergent**, meaning that it is constantly evolving based on the children's interests.

At two years old, children are starting to develop social skills and an understanding of emotions. In a Reggio Emilia Approach-inspired classroom, teachers help children navigate these early social experiences by promoting play, taking turns, and resolving conflict. Teachers also model and encourage emotional expression, helping children identify and name their feelings. For example, if a child is upset, the teacher might acknowledge their emotion by saying, "I see you're feeling sad because you wanted to play with that toy," and guide the child toward a solution or alternative activity. Through these interactions, toddlers learn about empathy, self-regulation, and how to relate to others. Our approach provides a safe and stimulating environment where children are empowered to explore, ask questions, and build a foundation for lifelong learning.

Two-year-olds are still developing their language skills, and in a Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, teachers actively support this process through rich, respectful communication. Teachers engage in conversations with children, asking open-ended questions, modeling new vocabulary, and encouraging them to express themselves in words, gestures, or other forms of communication.

The emphasis is on **creating a safe, stimulating environment** where children are encouraged to explore, question, and communicate. By respecting children's natural curiosity, supporting their emotional and social development, and providing opportunities for creative and hands-on learning, the Reggio Emilia Approach helps toddlers build a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Teachers act as observers and co-learners, carefully planning experiences that reflect the children's interests and developmental needs, while also fostering a sense of independence, creativity, and community.

One of our early preschoolers' favorite activities is to get messy and explore with their whole bodies. Sensory development is a key component for little growing bodies—it helps with emotional regulation, fine and gross motor skills, coordination, problem solving, sorting, and also builds nerve connections that allow for complex thinking skills. Our early preschoolers participate in one to two hours of sensory play per day. Please make sure your early preschooler is dressed and ready for a messy day everyday.

Preschool Community (3 years by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- Two clean cups for milk
- One to two clean cups for water
- Three extra sets of clean clothes (refill as needed)
- An extra snack
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)
- Nap roll (washed at home each week)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket and rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

NAPTIME PROCEDURES: Naptime for preschoolers is from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM daily. Students are expected to rest quietly during naptime. After 45 minutes, children who do not sleep will be given quiet activities for the remainder of naptime.

PRESCHOOL DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your preschooler's day. The report will cover key details including:

- Nap times
- Photos
- Activities

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM: In a preschool-aged Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, the curriculum is child-centered, flexible, and **emergent**, meaning it evolves based on the interests, ideas, and experiences of the children. Our approach emphasizes the belief that children are competent learners who build knowledge through exploration, play, and relationships with others. Our curriculum is designed to foster curiosity and creativity, providing children with opportunities to ask questions, explore ideas, and express themselves. When a child shows a particular interest in an area of study, we encourage and assist them to learn more. By asking "Why is a giraffe's neck so long?" a child and teacher can organically expand on the subject, which can lead to all kinds of exploration.

A key feature of the Reggio Emilia Approach is the **environment**, which is considered the "third teacher," meaning that a thoughtfully-designed classroom helps the child learn and grow. The classroom is organized with open-ended materials designed for children to investigate. Our space is designed to encourage both independent exploration and group collaboration, promoting a sense of ownership in students' learning.

We promote a **project-based learning** approach, where children dive deeply into topics over time. These long-term projects allow children to investigate, problem-solve, and collaborate with peers, providing opportunities for critical thinking and creativity.

Social learning is a central aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach curriculum at age three. Children are encouraged to work together, share ideas, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Teachers facilitate these interactions, guiding children in learning to communicate, cooperate, and resolve conflicts. This process helps children develop important social and emotional skills, such as empathy, respect, and self-regulation.

Documentation is a key practice, where teachers observe and record children's learning through photographs, videos, and notes. This documentation helps both teachers and children reflect on their progress, identify new interests, and inform future learning. It also allows parents to see the development of their child's learning journey, fostering a strong connection between home and school.

Teachers in a Reggio Emilia classroom serve as co-learners and guides rather than traditional instructors. They carefully observe children's needs and interests, providing resources, posing open-ended questions, and facilitating experiences that support exploration. The goal is to empower children to take ownership of their learning, while teachers offer gentle guidance and provide opportunities for growth. Creative expression plays a vital role in this approach, with children encouraged to communicate through various "languages," including art, music, dance, and dramatic play. This fosters creativity, fine motor development, and language skills while allowing children to express their ideas and emotions in diverse ways.

At the heart of the Reggio Emilia Approach is a deep **respect for the child** as a competent, active learner. Teachers honor children's thoughts, ideas, and contributions, seeing them as partners in the learning process. This respect is also reflected in the classroom, where children's work is displayed and celebrated, reinforcing their sense of value and autonomy. Through this approach, preschool-aged children develop critical thinking, social skills, and emotional intelligence, building a foundation for lifelong learning and growth.

Pre-K 4 & Kinder Community (4 or 5 years by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- Two clean cups for milk
- One clean cup for water
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)
- Nap roll (washed at home each week)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket and rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket
- Two extra sets of clean clothes

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

PRE-K 4 & KINDER DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your child's day. The report will cover key details including photos of activities and lesson plans.

NAP/REST PERIOD: Our Pre-K 4 and Kindergarten-age students are offered a rest period each day for 30 to 60 minutes (depending on the needs of the classroom). Students are not required to sleep, but are expected to read books, draw, or complete puzzles quietly.

PRE-K 4 & KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM: In a **Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten-aged Reggio Emilia Approach classroom**, the curriculum is designed to build on the natural curiosity and emerging competencies of young children, emphasizing exploration, collaboration, and self-expression. This child-centered approach sees children as active participants in their learning process, with teachers acting as co-learners and facilitators. Rather than following a rigid curriculum, the learning experiences are driven by the children's interests, ideas, and questions, which evolve over time through observation and interaction. Our goal in our classrooms is to meet each child where they are and work as a team (teachers, parents, and environment) to expand each child's knowledge and understanding.

Our school strongly believes in **project-based and emergent learning**, where children engage in long-term investigations or projects. These projects often evolve over several weeks and may involve research, hands-on building, group discussions, and creative expression. For example, a group of kindergarteners might design and build a model of a town, drawing on their knowledge of buildings, community roles, and social structures. Throughout the project, children engage in collaborative problem-solving, refining their ideas, asking questions, and finding solutions as a group. This hands-on, collaborative approach helps children develop social skills, communication abilities, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

In addition to academic learning, **social and emotional development** is a major focus of the Reggio Emilia Approach. Teachers encourage cooperative learning, helping children work together, share ideas, and resolve conflicts. By creating opportunities for children to collaborate on projects and group activities, the curriculum promotes social interaction, empathy, and emotional regulation. Teachers support children in articulating their thoughts and feelings, fostering self-awareness and respect for others. Conflict resolution, negotiation, and teamwork are integral parts of the learning experience.

At this point in the child's development, we carefully begin to introduce core subjects with a more concentrated curriculum. We utilize Learning Without Tears for phonics, pre-reading, reading, handwriting, and creative writing skills. We continue to teach all subjects through child-led and project-based learning.

Documentation plays a vital role in both tracking and reflecting on our students' learning journey. Teachers observe and document children's work, conversations, and actions through photographs, videos, and written notes. This documentation is not only a record of progress but also serves as a tool for reflection and discussion. It helps children understand their own learning process and allows them to revisit ideas, refining them over time. Teachers use documentation to identify patterns in children's thinking and to plan future experiences that build on their interests and questions. Additionally, documentation is shared with families, fostering a strong connection between home and school and giving parents insight into their child's learning journey. The teacher is seen as an active participant in the learning process, working alongside the children as they engage in discovery and problem-solving.

Our curriculum meets and exceeds all Texas standards and expectations.

Lower Elementary (6, 7, or 8 years by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- A clean cup for milk
- A clean cup for water
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket and rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket
- Two extra sets of clean clothes

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

LOWER ELEMENTARY DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your child's day. The report will cover key details including photos of activities and lesson plans.

LOWER ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM: The majority of our day is spent focused on project-based learning, which provides opportunities to explore all learning domains. We typically spend about two hours of our day focused on a more structured learning curriculum, including the use of **Singapore Math, UFLI Reading & Phonics, and Learning Without Tears for handwriting and creative writing skills**. Our small class sizes and low teacher-to-student ratio allow for much more attention given to students than a traditional classroom. This allows us to accomplish a great deal in a shorter time frame than traditional schooling. Also, being a year-round program, we can pace ourselves and focus on creating a love for learning.

In lower elementary classrooms (grades 1-3), our curriculum and philosophy continue to emphasize the belief that children are active, competent learners who build knowledge through exploration, collaboration, and hands-on experiences. Our approach nurtures curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, while allowing students to take more ownership of their learning as they grow and develop. At this stage, the Reggio Emilia Approach curriculum deepens the child's ability to engage with complex ideas, refine problem-solving skills, and collaborate with peers.

We think of our environment as the "third teacher"; the classroom environment plays a central role in facilitating learning. For lower elementary students, the classroom is designed to be a stimulating and dynamic space that encourages exploration, inquiry, and creative expression. It is filled with materials and tools that are open-ended and encourage hands-on engagement. The environment is also designed to promote collaboration, with areas for group work, individual study, and projects. The layout of the classroom often changes as the needs and interests of the children evolve, supporting their learning through the flexibility of space.

Cursive becomes part of our art curriculum in second grade, once print writing has been well understood by the students.

The curriculum in a lower elementary Reggio Emilia classroom is **emergent**, meaning it is based on the interests, questions, and observations of the children. Teachers listen to children's ideas, observe their interactions, and build the curriculum around their curiosities. This often leads to **project-based learning**, where students work on long-term projects that involve deep inquiry, research, and collaboration. For example, if a group of children is fascinated by space, they might work together on a project to explore the solar system, conducting research, creating models, and presenting their findings. The project evolves as children ask new questions, solve problems, and explore the topic in greater depth. These projects foster critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork, allowing children to explore real-world topics in meaningful ways.

Collaboration is a key aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach, especially for older children. In lower elementary grades, children engage in group activities and projects where they are encouraged to share ideas, negotiate solutions, and learn from one another. Teachers facilitate group discussions, guiding students in their social interactions and helping them develop communication, cooperation, and conflict-resolution skills. Students are encouraged to express their ideas verbally, through written work, and through various forms of creative expression such as art or performance. These interactions help students build social-emotional skills and learn to work as part of a team.

In our classrooms, teachers are viewed as co-learners and facilitators of learning, rather than traditional instructors. They observe students closely, listen to their questions, and guide them in their exploration without imposing predetermined outcomes. Teachers ask thought-provoking questions, provide resources, and create opportunities for children to engage with materials and ideas. They support children in reflecting on their learning, making connections between ideas, and working collaboratively with others. This approach fosters a partnership between the teacher and the child, where both are engaged in the process of learning together.

In a lower elementary Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, children are encouraged to think critically and solve problems independently and collaboratively. Teachers pose open-ended questions and provide opportunities for exploration that challenge students to think deeply about the world around them.

We place a strong emphasis on **social-emotional development**, and in a lower elementary classroom, this becomes even more important as children learn to navigate more complex relationships. Teachers help students develop self-awareness, empathy, and resilience by creating a supportive environment where children feel safe to express their emotions, voice their opinions, and work through challenges. Conflict resolution is modeled and taught, and children are encouraged to communicate their feelings respectfully. By fostering positive relationships and emotional intelligence, the curriculum supports children in becoming more self-regulated and socially responsible individuals.

In a Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, **documentation** plays a crucial role in supporting and reflecting the learning process. Teachers document students' work through photographs, written observations, and videos, capturing key moments of learning and interaction. This documentation is used not only for reflection and assessment but also as a way for students to revisit their ideas and progress. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own work and thought processes, which helps them understand their learning journey. Teachers also use documentation to plan future lessons and activities that build on children's interests and emerging questions. This documentation is often shared with parents, helping to create a strong connection between the school and home and providing insight into the child's development.

Upper Elementary (9, 10, or 11 years by September 1st)

WHAT TO BRING FOR YOUR CHILD

- A backpack
- A clean cup for milk
- A clean cup for water
- Healthy lunch (if not signed up for a meal plan)

WHAT TO KEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

- A warm winter coat during the colder months
- A sun hat and winter hat
- Outdoor/playground shoes
- Indoor shoes/thick grippy socks
- Rain jacket and rain boots
- Several family photos to hang in the classroom
- A sweater or jacket
- Two extra sets of clean clothes

Ensure that all items are labeled with your child's first name and last initial.

UPPER ELEMENTARY DAILY REPORTS: Each day after pick-up, we provide parents with a daily report that includes important information about your child's day. The report will cover key details including photos of activities and lesson plans.

UPPER ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM: The majority of our day is spent focused on project-based learning, which provides opportunities to explore all learning domains. We typically spend about two hours of our day focused on a more structured learning curriculum, including the use of **Singapore Math, UFLI Reading & Phonics, and Learning Without Tears for handwriting and creative writing skills**. Our small class sizes and low teacher-to-student ratio allow for much more attention given to students than a traditional classroom. This allows us to accomplish a great deal in a shorter time frame than traditional schooling. Also, being a year-round program, we can pace ourselves and focus on creating a love for learning.

In an **upper elementary-aged Reggio Emilia Approach classroom** (grades 4-5), the curriculum continues to emphasize active, inquiry-based learning, with a strong focus on collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. At this stage, children are becoming more independent and are ready to explore more complex concepts while still engaging in hands-on, project-based learning. The Reggio Emilia Approach values the child's voice, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning, pursue their interests, and ask meaningful questions. Teachers act as co-learners and guides, fostering a classroom environment that supports exploration, self-expression, and deep reflection.

The curriculum in an upper elementary Reggio Emilia Approach classroom remains **emergent**, meaning it is shaped by the students' interests, questions, and ideas. Teachers observe and listen carefully to what excites students, using these observations to develop meaningful projects that are both academically rigorous and personally relevant. These long-term **projects** often involve in-depth investigation of a topic and provide students with the opportunity to engage in research, hands-on activities, problem-solving, and critical thinking. For example, a project on environmental conservation might involve studying ecosystems, conducting field research, building models, and presenting solutions for reducing waste. Projects are designed to be interdisciplinary, integrating subjects like science, math, language arts, and social studies, and they often culminate in a collaborative presentation or product.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of the Reggio Emilia Approach, and in upper elementary classrooms, students are encouraged to work together in pairs or small groups to explore ideas and solve problems. This collaborative learning fosters communication skills, teamwork, and respect for others' viewpoints. Group work allows students to share knowledge, challenge one another's thinking, and collectively generate creative solutions. Teachers guide these interactions by helping students develop strong collaboration and problem-solving skills, as well as by fostering an environment where every child's voice is valued. Peer feedback, group discussions, and cooperative projects are common, allowing students to refine their ideas through interaction and constructive dialogue.

In our classrooms, **documentation** continues to play a vital role in capturing the learning process. Teachers document students' work, thoughts, and progress through photographs, written observations, videos, and student-created materials. This documentation is used not only to assess learning but also to support reflection. Students are encouraged to review their own work, revisit ideas, and make connections between different parts of their learning. They may reflect on the process of a project, the questions they've asked, or how their thinking has evolved. This reflective practice helps students gain a deeper understanding of their own learning journey and reinforces critical thinking. Documentation is also shared with parents, helping to keep families informed and involved in the child's development.

In an upper elementary Reggio Emilia Approach classroom, **creative expression** is encouraged across all subject areas. Children are given opportunities to express their learning through multiple "languages," such as visual arts, music, drama, and writing. Whether they are drawing a diagram to represent a scientific process, composing a song to explain a historical event, or performing a skit to demonstrate a math concept, students are encouraged to use various mediums to communicate their ideas. This approach nurtures creativity, fine motor skills, and communication abilities, and provides students with different ways to process and represent what they are learning. Creative projects are also deeply tied to the themes or projects that emerge from the children's interests, allowing them to connect emotionally and intellectually to the work.

We focus our day on **critical thinking** and **problem-solving** work. Students are given complex, real-world problems to explore, often within the context of their project work. For instance, a class project on sustainability may involve researching environmental issues, analyzing data, and proposing solutions to real-world challenges. Teachers guide students in asking probing questions, investigating multiple perspectives, and testing hypotheses. The goal is to help students think analytically, make connections between different ideas, and develop solutions to challenges they face. This fosters not just academic growth but also the development of skills necessary for lifelong learning and citizenship.

As students become more independent thinkers, the Reggio Emilia Approach continues to prioritize **social-emotional development**. Teachers support students in learning how to manage their emotions, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts. Through group projects and peer interactions, students practice empathy, collaboration, and self-regulation. The classroom environment fosters a sense of community where every student's voice is respected and where students learn to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. By working together, students learn the value of teamwork, collective problem-solving, and respect for diverse perspectives.

In the Reggio Emilia Approach model, teachers are seen not as traditional instructors, but as **facilitators** and **co-learners**. They engage with students as partners in the learning process, guiding them with open-ended questions, providing resources, and helping them reflect on their ideas. Teachers closely observe and document children's learning, using these insights to adapt and extend the curriculum to better meet the needs of each student. The teacher's role is to support inquiry, scaffold learning, and provide challenges that stimulate intellectual and personal growth.

Before- and After-School Programs

AFTER-CARE STUDENTS ENROLLED FULL-TIME (INFANT THROUGH 5th GRADE): After-Care is offered to students enrolled at MAYS starting at 3:30 PM each day, Monday through Friday. Please note that we do not offer After-Care on MAYS early dismissal days. Parents can pick up anytime between 3:30 and 5:30 PM each day. Our After-Care program focuses on play, nature exploration, and fun!

During After-Care we will provide fresh fruit and a simple whole grain-based snack.

We'll spend the afternoon working on process-based art projects, sensory exploration, playing with toys, dancing to music, reading books, and playing outside! We offer several extracurricular activities each week, including dance lessons, small group music lessons, one-on-one tutoring, and small group swim lessons (students three years+).

Our After-Care program has a mixed age group set-up. We believe that offering a mixed age group in the afternoon teaches students flexibility, social skills, and deepens play. Students are supervised by the same After-Care teacher each day, but divided into multi-age play groups.

BEFORE-CARE STUDENTS ENROLLED FULL-TIME (INFANT THROUGH 5th GRADE): Before-Care is offered to students enrolled at The Mays School. Before-Care starts at 6:30 AM and continues until 8:30 AM when our school day starts. Students are grouped by age and are supervised by the same Before-Care teacher each day. Depending on their age and the weather, they may start the day in their classroom, on the playground, in the library, or in one of our studio spaces. Children are served breakfast at 7:30 AM and settle into their classroom between 8:00-8:45 AM.

AFTER-SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS (PRE-K 4 THROUGH 5th GRADE): We provide daily transportation from local Elementary schools. We must have five or more students enrolled from a school to provide transportation from that school. After-School tuition includes care on HISD early release days and days in which MAYS is open, but HISD is closed.

All children transported in MAYS vans are securely buckled into booster seats or car seats, depending on the weight, height, and age of the child. Parents must contact the office if the child is NOT to be picked up after school. Failure to notify the office may result in the cancelation of enrollment.

During After-School we provide fresh fruit and a simple whole grain-based snack. We will spend the afternoon working on process-based art projects, sensory exploration, playing with toys, dancing to music, reading books, and playing outside!

We do not require children to complete homework during After-School care regardless of parent request. After-School care is designed for children to explore, play, relax, and get outside!

Regardless of the school that they attend during the school day, all students must follow the MAYS illness policy, which differs from the HISD illness policy.

SUMMER @ MAYS (Pre-K4 through 5th Grade)

The Mays School offers SUMMER @ MAYS for children aged 4 to 12 years (rising Kindergarteners through rising 6th graders). Our SUMMER @ MAYS program is thoughtfully designed to extend the joy of learning beyond the academic year while remaining deeply rooted in the same values, philosophy, and expectations that guide our private school program. Children experience the consistency of familiar routines, respectful community norms, and intentional teaching practices, enhanced with the freedom, playfulness, and excitement that make summer special.

Students spend their days creating, exploring, and imagining in a Reggio Emilia Approach–inspired environment where curiosity, creativity, and relationships lead the way. Learning is child-centered and emerges from children’s questions, interests, and ideas. Through inquiry, collaboration, and hands-on discovery, children engage in meaningful projects, build connections with peers, and deepen their understanding of the world around them in joyful and authentic ways.

Each three-week session is packed with exciting experiences, including art classes, dramatic expression, special visitors, field trips, outdoor play, PE & games, and daily nature exploration, making every day feel like a new adventure.

SUMMER @ MAYS runs from mid-June through July and consists of two, three-week sessions. Families may enroll their child in either or both sessions, depending on availability. Each session is different, so you don’t have to worry about repeated activities or lessons.

SUMMER @ MAYS enrollment is open to both current MAYS school students and students enrolled at other schools.

Full Camp payment is due upon enrollment.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY: We offer tiered refunds based on when you cancel your child’s camp enrollment.

- A full refund will be given if you withdraw before the early notice deadline of April 1, 2027.
- A 50% refund will be given if you withdraw before the next deadline of June 1, 2027. Registration can also be moved to another camp session at MAYS for no additional fee.
- No refund is given if you withdraw later than June 1, 2027.

Please note that we do not prorate camp enrollment; three weeks is the shortest enrollment period offered.

Camp students and families must follow all policies listed in The Mays School Parent Handbook.