



## Free Horizon Montessori

### How do I know if my child is ready for preschool?

One of the most frequently asked questions is how parents can know whether or not their children are ready for preschool. We hope to answer this question in relation to the context of our program at Free Horizon Montessori.

- **Your Readiness** – Believe it or not, one of the biggest indicators of a child's readiness for preschool is their parents' readiness to be away from them during school hours! Your child is emotionally attuned to you, and will pick up on your cues regarding school. If you are unsure and apprehensive, your child will be, too. If you are excited and believe they will have fun, your child will likewise sense that. The more confident you are in your child's readiness and the more you trust your decision in sending your child to preschool, the easier your child's transition will be. Know that it is normal for all children to experience a transition period that can last anywhere from a few days to a couple of months. Maintaining a predictable routine and providing consistent, positive messages about school goes a long way toward easing a child's transition.
- **Age** – Our Montessori Primary program is designed for children who are 3 to 6 years old. Because we are a Jeffco Public Charter School, we must follow their established requirements for children to be 5 by October 1<sup>st</sup> of their Kindergarten year and 6 by October 1<sup>st</sup> of their first grade year. Occasionally, we are able to accommodate a child who is at least 2½ years old, but who will not be 3 before October 1<sup>st</sup> when all of the other signs of readiness listed below are met. This is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and must be approved by the Head of School. Even if a child is admitted to the Primary program early, they still must be 5 by October 1<sup>st</sup> of their Kindergarten year, thus these students will be in the Primary classroom during four school years.
- **Independence** – Like all preschools, our program requires a degree of independence from students in order for them to have a positive experience. Even though each of our Primary classrooms is well staffed with a lead teacher and two assistants, students need to be able to manage many self-care tasks on their own.
  - **Toileting:** Our Primary program is licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services as a preschool. As such, we are not permitted to have diapers or pull-ups at school – including at naptime. We expect that a child entering our program will be independent in the toileting process, and that they have been accident-free for a minimum of one month before their first day at FHM. We ask that parents set their child up for toileting success while at school by providing clothes the child can manage easily.
  - **Dressing:** We expect that children are able to handle general dressing and undressing on their own. While we certainly work to help children learn how to do things such as button, snap, buckle, zip, and tie, we ask that parents provide clothing that their children are able to manage on their own with little assistance from an adult. Pants with elastic waistbands and shoes with Velcro closures work very well.
  - **Eating:** All children have the opportunity to eat a snack while at school, and those staying full days also have lunch at school. Children who are ready for preschool are able to feed themselves, drink from a cup, and do not require one-on-one supervision while eating.
- **Developmental Considerations** – In general, children starting preschool should be able to work and play independently for short periods, to focus on one task or project for several minutes, to follow simple instructions, and to sit still for a few minutes for lessons and circle time.

Ultimately, you know your child better than anyone. We rely on parents to assess their child's readiness for preschool, and work in partnership with you to assure the smoothest and most positive transition possible. Our teachers and administrators have many years of experience and can offer guidance for helping children who might experience anxiety about school. Please feel free to contact the administration to discuss any questions you might have regarding your child's readiness for preschool. We look forward to working together to create the best possible educational experience for your child.