



<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	
<b>Overview of Our Program</b>	Page 2
<i>Mission Statement &amp; Our Three Part Program</i>	Page 2
<i>Hours of Operation</i>	Page 3
<i>Late Arrivals &amp; Pick Ups</i>	Page 3
<i>Inclement Weather Closures</i>	Page 3
<i>Meals</i>	Page 3
<b>COVID-19 Considerations</b>	Page 4
<b>Parent &amp; School Communication</b>	Page 5
<b>2024-2025 Tuition Rates</b>	Page 6
<b>Enrollment Documents</b>	Page 6
<b>Daily Schedules</b>	Pages 7-9
<i>Comunidad Verde (ages 0-3)</i>	Page 7
<i>Comunidad Azul (ages 0-3)</i>	Page 8
<i>Casa Roja &amp; Casa Naranja (ages 3-6)</i>	Page 8-9
<b>List of Items for Daily Use &amp; Every Day Clothing</b>	Page 10
<b>All Weather Clothing Lists</b>	Page 11
<b>Outdoor Play Location &amp; Policies</b>	Page 12
<b>Sickness Policies &amp; Exclusion Criteria</b>	Page 13-14
<b>Toilet Learning</b>	Page 15-16
<b>Signature Page</b>	Page 17

# OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAM

## Mission Statement

At De Colores Spanish Immersion Montessori, our mission is to inspire love of self, love of others, and love of learning across our community of children, staff, and families.

We use Spanish Immersion Language Model, the Montessori Method, and Anti-bias Education to center children's autonomy and joy. Our books, lessons and materials purposefully uplift human diversity and create opportunities for continued learning and relearning.

De Colores Spanish Immersion Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, class, national and/or ethnic origin, sexual orientation or preference, or disability in the admission of students, the employment of staff, or in the administration of its policies.

## The Spanish Immersion Language Model

De Colores has used the Spanish Immersion Language Model since it opened its doors in 2007. This means that all our staff speaks Spanish 100% of the time with your child. All books, songs, lessons, and conversations are in Spanish. All of our team are also native Spanish speakers. Children that graduate from De Colores can hold conversations in Spanish and have a wide range of vocabulary.

## The Montessori Method

We believe that joy and independence are intertwined. The Montessori method is scientifically designed to surround children with exercises that prepare them to be independent, to refine the senses, and to interact with the natural world. Joy abounds when children can dress independently, compose a new song on the bells, and discover they know the tree's name outside their bedroom window. We've fully equipped our classrooms with the highest quality Montessori materials so our children can repeat these exercises as often as they wish.

## Anti-Bias Education

Anti-Bias Education (ABE) is crucial to developing a joyful, children-centered school. Our ABE goals as a school are to encourage this joy, foster empathy, promote identity building, and empower children to identify and work against injustice. This is no small task, and we are actively providing professional development to relearn how to best meet the needs of our community of children, families, and staff.

## Hours of Operation

Our school operates a year-round program from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.  
We are closed for all federal holidays, two weeks in December and one week in July.

## Late Arrivals

Please call the office at **202-291-2164** if your child will be arriving at school after 9:00 AM.  
An administrator will receive you and conduct the visual inspection  
, as our teachers will already be teaching lessons in the classroom.

## Late Pickups

Fees for pick-ups after 5:00 PM are as follows:  
\$5.00 for the first five minutes. \$2.00 for every additional minute.

Please call the office to inform us that you are arriving late so we can plan to have your child's teachers stay late. Then, please pay the fee directly to your child's teachers.

## Inclement Weather Closures

We follow the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) weather-related school closings.  
To find out if the schools are closed in the District, please check online at:  
<http://dcps.dc.gov/portal/site/DCPS/>

De Colores reserves the right to close even when DCPS remains open if the Director determines that the weather conditions are unsafe for travel for children and staff. Please note that De Colores cannot provide refunds for unpredictable weather-related or emergency closings.

## Meals

NiaCentral caters our food. Two snacks and a hot lunch are included in the tuition price. Their meals comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), as well as the District of Columbia's Healthy Schools Act (HSA), and the Healthy Tots Act (HTA). They can also accommodate the needs of children with food allergies and vegetarian diets. They use local produce whenever possible. Our whole school is also completely nut-free.

## COVID-19 Considerations

1. All Staff are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
2. Each classroom has its own HVAC system, meaning classrooms do not share air vents or heating systems.
3. We use HEPA-13 filters in our HVAC systems and COWAY Airmega 400 HEPA Air purifiers in each of our classrooms.
4. Each family completes a daily electronic screening before entry.
5. Weather permitting, all children spend about one hour outside a day in our gated park, a nearby green space, or the Takoma Playground.
6. While they play, our team disinfects all indoor surfaces thoroughly. Then, at the end of each day, all surfaces are again disinfected.
7. Our staff uses an electrostatic sprayer at the end of each day.

# PARENT & SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

## Direct Communication

Our office phone number is **202-291-2164**. Please call us anytime from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Please call us here to let us know when you are arriving late, are leaving early, or have any questions for our administrative team.

If you have any questions about enrollment or any school paperwork, please email Ms. Maritza at [martiza@decoloresdc.com](mailto:martiza@decoloresdc.com)

If you have any questions about your child's progress at school or want to inform us of upcoming vacations, new siblings, or other changes at home, please email Ms. Paulina at [paulina@decoloresdc.com](mailto:paulina@decoloresdc.com) and Florencia at [florencia@decoloresdc.com](mailto:florencia@decoloresdc.com).

The teachers are also happy to take your questions and concerns at pick-up in the afternoons. Please arrive closer to 4:30 to talk with the classroom teacher.

## Transparent Classroom

We upload photographs of your child working in the classroom and playing outside weekly. When you sign in and answer the daily screening questions using [our unique URL](#), you also have the option of leaving us notes. This tool is handy for letting us know things such as early dismissals, if your child didn't sleep well, or if you forgot something at home and will bring it later in the day.

Please maintain your account(s) complete and up to date so that our administrative team can communicate quickly with you.

## Weekly Newsletters

We send out a weekly newsletter with important reminders, school closures, policies, announcing new families, community news, and more.

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

We schedule two Parent Teacher Conferences during the school year. These are important meetings where you can ask specific questions and hear about how your child is doing in the various areas of the classroom.

*We welcome your questions all year round! We strive to keep communication channels open, so please let us know if you have any questions or concerns so we can schedule a conference with your child's teacher and administrator as a translator.*

## 2024-2025 Tuition Rates

All tuition rates below are for full-time students. We currently do not offer part-time care.

	Monthly	Annually
<b>Comunidad Verde (ages 0-3)</b>	\$2,475.00	\$29,700.00
<b>Comunidad Azul (ages 0-3)</b>	\$2,475.00	\$29,700.00
<b>Casa Roja &amp; Casa Naranja (ages 3-6)</b>	\$2,200.00	\$26,400.00

### Sibling Discount

10% Discount offered from sibling tuition. This deduction applies to the lower two tuitions if they are not in the same community.

## Enrollment Documents

You will need to submit the following documents to complete your child's enrollment.

You can find them on our website at [www.decoloresdc.com/forms](http://www.decoloresdc.com/forms):

1. Parent COVID-19 Acknowledgement and Waiver
2. 2024-25 Enrollment Agreement
3. 2024-25 Parent Handbook Signature Page (page 17 of this document)
4. Care Away from Home
5. DC Universal Health Certificate\*\*
6. Emergency Health Authorization Form
7. Medical Authorization Form
8. Oral Health Form (needed when your child turns 3)
9. Outdoor Activity Permission Slip Form
10. Emergency Contact Information Form
11. Authorization to Apply Lotion and Ointment Form

\*\* Your child needs a recent physical examination for this form to be complete. The form becomes invalid once 1 year has passed from the date of the last physical. That means that if your pediatrician fills the form out today using a physical that was 11 months ago, you will need to submit this form again in one month's time.

## DAILY SCHEDULES

### Comunidad Verde y Azul

Two of our classroom communities are for children ages 14 months to 36 months: Comunidad Azul and Comunidad Verde. These two communities are led by trained Montessori guides for children ages 0 to 3 years of age. These environments have been specially prepared for children in “Comunidad Infantil,” or a Montessori Toddler program for children who are walking but are not yet 3 years of age.

#### Comunidad Verde’s Daily Schedule Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
8:00 - 9:30 AM	<b>Warm Months:</b> Arrival at Marcelo’s Park (in the alleyway) <b>Cold Months:</b> Arrival at Front Door (6216 3rd St.)  Morning work cycle in the classroom or free play at Marcelo’s park
10:00 AM	Morning snack
10:15 - 11:30 AM	Walk in the neighborhood and then continue free play
11:30 AM	Transition to lunch
11:45 - 12:30 PM	Lunch in the classroom
12:30 PM	Transition to naptime
1:00 - 3:00 PM	Naptime in the classroom
3:00 - 3:15 PM	Children who are still sleeping are gently awakened, and diapers are changed.
3:30 PM	Afternoon snack
3:30 - 4:30 PM	<b>Cold Months:</b> Free play in the classroom <b>Warm Months:</b> Free play in Marcelo’s Park
4:30 to 5:00 PM	<b>Cold Months:</b> Dismissal from the classroom <b>Warm Months:</b> Dismissal from Marcelo’s Park Please arrive close to 4:30 if you wish to converse with your child’s teacher.

### Comunidad Azul's Daily Schedule

Time	Activity
<b>8:00 - 9:00 AM</b>	Arrival through front classroom door (6218 3rd St.)
<b>8:00 - 10:00 AM</b>	Montessori morning work cycle. Children freely choose materials, receive lessons, and eat snacks when hungry.
<b>10:00 AM</b>	Transition to going outside
<b>10:45 - 11:45 AM</b>	Outdoor play in Fort Slocum or nearby sports courts
<b>11:45 AM</b>	Transition to Lunch
<b>11:50 - 12:30 PM</b>	Lunch
<b>12:30 - 1:00 PM</b>	Transition from Lunch
<b>1:00 - 3:00 PM</b>	Naptime
<b>3:00 - 3:15 PM</b>	Children who are still sleeping are gently awakened to use the bathroom.
<b>3:30 PM</b>	Afternoon snack as a group
<b>3:45 - 5:00 PM</b>	Walk in the neighborhood and outdoor play in Marcelo's Park
<b>4:30 - 5:00 PM</b>	Dismissal from Marcelo's Park (unless it is heavily raining, at which point dismissal is from the front door of the classroom)

## Casa Roja y Casa Naranja

Casa Roja y Casa Naranja are for children approximately ages 3 to 6 years of age. These communities are led by at least one fully trained Primary Montessori Guide and a teacher's assistant. These environments are named after Montessori Children's House or "Casa de Niños."



### Daily Schedule

Time	Activity	
<b>8:00 - 9:00 AM</b>	Arrival through the front classroom door.	
<b>8:00 - 11:00 AM</b>	Morning Montessori work cycle in original classrooms. Children freely choose between various Montessori materials and receive individualized lessons.	
<b>11:00 AM - 12:00 PM</b>	Outdoor play time* (field or Takoma Park Playground)	
<b>12:00 - 12:40 PM</b>	Lunch in their original classroom	
<b>12:40 - 1:30 PM</b>	Transition to play time* Children clean up their tables, use the bathroom, and brush their teeth. All children can then exit to the exterior classroom for outdoor time to play together.	
<b>1:30 - 3:00 PM</b>	<b>Naptime (in Casa Roja) Children:</b> Three-year-olds	<b>Afternoon Montessori work cycle (in Casa Naranja)</b> Children: Four and five-year-olds
<b>3:00 - 4:00 PM</b>	Nappers wake up and eat their afternoon snack together. Then they meet up with their peers at Marcelo's Park*.	Children wrap up their work and play at Marcelo's Park*.
<b>4:00 - 5:00 PM</b>	<p><b>Free play in the classroom or outdoors*</b></p> <p>Children return to their original group. They will be able to continue playing outdoors either on the field or in front of the classroom.</p> <p>They also have the option to come indoors to their original classroom and use a rotating selection of non-Montessori materials reserved for the afternoon (legos, magnatiles, blocks, floor puzzles).</p> <p><b>Dismissal through the front classroom door</b></p>	

\*In the event of thunderstorms, children will remain indoors and will be able to use our rotating selection of non-Montessori didactic materials, dance parties, and other movement activities.

## List of Items for Daily Use

Please ensure that your child's name is written clearly on all their belongings.

### Items to leave at De Colores for daily use

- A pair of classroom shoes
- Change of clothes (at least 2 shirts, 2 bottoms, 2 pairs of socks)
- A pack of diapers (Comunidad Verde)
- 6 or more pairs of [training underwear](#) (Comunidad Azul)
- 2 pairs of underwear (Casa Roja and Casa Naranja)
- 2 packs of wet wipes
- Toothbrush, toothpaste and [toothbrush cover](#)
- Sun hat
- [Sunscreen](#) & [Insect repellent](#)
- Sleep mat. We recommend [this one](#) that fits our cots well and rolls easily.

### Items to take home every day to wash

1. [Wet bags for clothes and diapers.](#)
2. Water bottle & [carrier.](#)

### Items to leave at home (please don't bring these items)

1. Outside toys
2. Outside food / breakfast
3. Umbrellas

## Everyday Day Clothing

Our goal is that all children learn to be independent in changing their clothes. To allow this, please ensure your child is wearing clothing they can practice putting on and taking off themselves. Avoid onesies, overalls, long dresses, and shoes with laces which can either restrict movement or limit independence.

 <p>Tops with large enough head openings that your child can remove it themselves</p>	 <p>Bottoms with elastic or adjustable drawstring</p>	 <p>Velcro or slip on shoes <b>and</b> socks</p>
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## All Weather Clothing

We play outside rain, snow or shine!  
Please send the following weather appropriate outfits when necessary and **labeled**

### Rainy Day Gear

 <p data-bbox="347 884 470 915">Rain coat</p>	 <p data-bbox="769 835 906 867">Rain Boots</p>	 <p data-bbox="1130 869 1406 900">Rain suit / Rain pants</p>
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### Winter Gear

 <p data-bbox="282 1436 461 1467">Winter Jacket</p>	 <p data-bbox="613 1360 786 1392">Winter Boots</p>	 <p data-bbox="915 1407 1088 1438">Winter Pants</p>	 <p data-bbox="1208 1381 1435 1457">Winter hat and mittens with clips</p>
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### Summer Water Day Gear

 <p data-bbox="370 1856 418 1887">Hat</p>	 <p data-bbox="548 1927 808 1959">Secure Water Shoes</p>	 <p data-bbox="932 1940 1062 1971">Swim Suit</p>	 <p data-bbox="1230 1948 1425 1980">Hooded Towel</p>
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## Outside Play Locations

The children in the Comunidad Verde and Comunidad Azul communities use our gated park in the alleyway called “Parque de Marcelo” which means Marcelo’s Park. Comunidad Azul also ventures out to nearby Fort Slocum for nature walks and to the Takoma Playground.

The children in the Casa Roja and Casa Naranja alternate use of the outdoor classroom, which features a wooden pyramid structure, wooden blocks, and plant beds. They also venture out to nearby green spaces such as the Takoma Park Recreation Field across the street from the classroom and to the Takoma Playground.

## Outside Play Policy

The temperature markers below follow the guidance of [Child Care Weather Watch](#) . Please ensure that your child is well equipped to play outside by sending them with weather appropriate clothing items as listed on the previous page. We do stay inside if there is unsafe or unpredictable weather forecasted, such as: lightning storms, hailstorm, tornado warnings etc.

<b><u>Temperature</u></b> <i>(taking into account the wind chill or humidity)</i>	<b><u>Length of Outdoor Play</u></b>
Above 100 degrees Fahrenheit	None. children will remain inside
90 to 99 degrees Fahrenheit	20 minutes
30 to 89 Fahrenheit	45 to 60 minutes
20 degrees - 30 degrees Fahrenheit	20 minutes
Below 20 degrees Fahrenheit	None. Children will remain inside.

## Sickness Policies & Exclusion Criteria

1. Any child with a fever over 100.0F is not eligible for school. Children need to be fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.
2. Children that have diarrhea or are vomiting also need to go 24 hours without displaying this symptom.

Your child is ineligible for school if your child has any **combination** of the following COVID-19 symptoms:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chills</li> <li>- Coughing</li> <li>- Runny nose</li> <li>- Congestion</li> <li>- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</li> <li>- Fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loss of appetite</li> <li>- Loss of hearing or taste</li> <li>- Muscle or body aches</li> <li>- Sore throat</li> <li>- Nausea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fever (100.0 F or higher) *</li> <li>- Vomiting*</li> <li>- Diarrhea*</li> </ul>
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If your child develops a combination of these symptoms while at school\*, they will be separated from their classmates and will stay with an administrator until they are picked up. The exceptions are vomiting, diarrhea and fever, which are still stand alone symptoms as listed above.

**Chronic (long lasting) symptoms:** In addition to providing the school with a negative rapid test result, children displaying any *combination* of these symptoms that lasts longer than 7 days need to be cleared by a physician before returning to school as it can be due to another transmittable illness.

**Allergy exemption:** Children that have a combination of these symptoms due to allergies are exempt provided we have received a doctor's note that specifically states:

1. What they are allergic to
2. When during the year to expect this allergic reaction
3. List of specific symptoms are tied to this allergy

*For example: Student sufferers from allergies to grass and pollen. Please excuse a clear runny nose and congestion during the Spring and Fall months.*

### Sample COVID-19 scenarios

Scenario	
Your child is an asymptomatic close contact to someone that tests positive for COVID-19	Do not need to isolate or quarantine. They can join their classmates, provided they are asymptomatic and provide a negative rapid test.
Your child tests positive for COVID-19	Child needs to isolate for 5 days. Rapid test on Day 5. If the result is negative, child can return to school on Day 6.  If positive on Day 5, the child needs to quarantine for 10 days.
Your child tests negative a day after testing positive <b>AND</b> has been symptom free for 24 hrs without the use of fever reducers.	Needs a second Negative Test taken 48 Hours after the first one to return to the classroom <b>OR</b> present a doctor's note certifying the child is ready to rejoin the class.

### Exclusion due to other ailments

In addition to the above COVID-19 symptoms, your child is ineligible for care if they have a contagious ailment, such as: pink eye / conjunctivitis, chicken pox, lice, Hand Foot and Mouth, and RSV.

Children displaying pink eye are able to return once they have received their eye drops and are no longer contagious. Children with lice are able to return once they are lice and nit/egg free. Children displaying chicken pox or hand foot and mouth bumps are able to return once all lesions have crusted over and they are cleared by a physician. Children with RSV need to be asymptomatic before returning to school.

## Toilet Learning

Toileting is a process linked to a child's self-esteem and confidence. We encourage you to use a positive mindset and specific language to support them. For example, we avoid using the term "toilet training" as this language doesn't reflect the necessary participation and maturation of the child. We hope to work together so that your child can be independent when using the bathroom. We encourage you to consider our approach detailed below to avoid regressions or conflicts.

### When to begin?

Most children are ready to begin toileting between 18 months and 3 years of age. Preparation for this process, however, can begin at birth. Examples of this include: narrating the diapering process, using cloth diapers, and changing the child in a vertical position once they can stand independently.

### Signs that your child is ready for toileting

- They can indicate either through signs or words that they have a wet or soiled diaper. It is normal for all urination and defecation to be called "pee" or "pipi" as the child begins learning the difference.
- Begin showing discomfort at having a soiled or wet diaper, often asking for a diaper change.
- They wake with a dry diaper. Allow them to wake with a dry diaper for several weeks before removing it completely.

**Notes:** Although children tend to control their anal muscles before their urinary ones, they still to prefer defecation in a diaper as they view the process as giving away a part of themselves. Also, there are some children that will need more support. They may have developmental differences which would require a different approach to toileting.

### Supplies for Home

- 6 or 7 pairs of thick cloth underwear. They have a little bit of padding to hold some liquid but still allow the child to feel wet. Large enough to pull on and off.
- 1 small potty with an easily removable bin so they can independently empty it
- Shorts or pants with adjustable waistbands that are easy to remove
- Shoes that are easy to wash and put on and off (such as water shoes)
- Bucket or hamper to place wet underwear and clothes
- Basket with dry underwear and pants
- Low chair/ clean bath mat for sitting to change clothes
- Rubber sheets / mattress cover

## How to help your child begin the toileting process?

- Ensure that all caregivers change your child's diaper standing up so they are active participants in this process.
- Begin observing the signs that your child needs to urinate or defecate (dancing, tugging on their diaper, moving to a quiet place)
- Once you've identified the signs for urination/defecation, say, "Let's go to the bathroom" rather than asking "Would you like to go to the bathroom?" as children will often automatically say no.
- Read books together about the toileting process.
- Educate yourself by reading [Toilet Awareness by Sarah Moudry](#) and watching [Montessori Guide's 12 minute video on Toilet Learning](#).



## The Three Stages of Toileting

A child needs about a month to complete the toileting process, though, we recognize that every child is different.

1. **Stage One:** Begin using the cloth underwear and commit to no longer using diapers. To begin associating their clothes as needing to be dry, they need to change immediately after wetting their underwear. Show your child the process of using their potty. Check it with them every 40 minutes.
2. **Stage Two:** Your child should now feel discomfort when they are wet. They will begin to tell you *after* they have urinated/defecated and will express a desire to want to be changed. By the end of this stage they begin to let you know *before* they urinate/defecate, (e.g. "Pipi, popo, pee, poo").
3. **Stage Three:** Your child will now go towards the bathroom when they need to urinate or defecate. Once they feel secure and have mastered the steps to independently lower their garments they will be successful in independently using the bathroom. Cultivate autonomy by using positive language that describes what they did: "You did it by yourself" "You pulled your underwear down yourself." Avoid giving physical rewards for using the bathroom (no stickers, extra snacks, etc.)

**Note:** It is normal for a recently toileted child to forget to go when they are playing, when they feel cold, while sleeping, or have ingested too many liquids. Our job as the adult(s) is to remain positive and refrain from using language such as "oh no, you peed the bed again? Only babies wet the bed!" and instead say, "I see you're wet. Let's change."

If you're interested in sample language for each step of the process, please reach out to Florencia at [florencia@decoloresdc.com](mailto:florencia@decoloresdc.com) for a sample language guide.





**Parent Handbook Signature Page**  
**School Year 2024-2025**

Please sign and return this page to the office

**Parent Agreement**

I / We \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

certify that I / we have read and understood the contents in the De Colores Spanish Immersion Montessori Parent Handbook and agree to follow and uphold the school policies while my / our child is a student.

I / We understand that De Colores Spanish Immersion Montessori reserves the right to amend policies and procedures when necessary and that I / we will abide by any changes. Any changes made to the Parent Handbook will be clearly communicated by the school.

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_