

Learn. Grow. Become.™



**Woodinville Montessori School**  
a nonprofit organization

## WMS INDEPENDENCE GUIDE



**THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE IS NOT ALWAYS EASY. WE WANT YOU TO KNOW...**

For **Infant/Toddler Students**, it is OK:

- ◆ If your child is not independent at times.
- ◆ If your child needs to be carried sometimes.
- ◆ If your child complains a bit about doing what she has been asked to do; stand your ground!
- ◆ To be the parent, not a friend. "You have to love your child enough to let them hate you." -Carol Burnett
- ◆ If your child is crying or whining when he comes into class; just let him go and he will be fine. We will call if he does not settle down.
- ◆ If your child makes mistakes. It allows her to learn on her own.

For **Early Childhood Students**, it is OK:

- ◆ If your child complains about doing what she has been asked to do; stand your ground!
- ◆ If your child is crying or whining when he comes into class; just let him go and he will be fine. We will call if he does not settle down.
- ◆ If your child's clothing is not perfectly matched or hair perfectly groomed. It shows that she has been given the opportunity to make her choice independently.
- ◆ If your child makes mistakes. It allows him to learn on his own.
- ◆ If your child spills when pouring, drops when carrying, or does not clean up "perfectly".
- ◆ If your child misspells words and writes letters backwards.
- ◆ If your child forgets his backpack, lunch, folder, etc. on occasion. The natural consequences that occur may keep it from happening in the future.
- ◆ If your child temporarily misplaces an item.
- ◆ If you let your child try to solve her conflicts on her own before intervening.
- ◆ If your child is brought to school in their pajamas if you had a particularly difficult morning.
- ◆ If your child is not eager to do academic work when he gets home.
- ◆ If your child is assertive about her needs or feelings—this shows valuable self-awareness.
- ◆ If your child thrives under repetition; he relishes the ability to master a skill and use it.

For **Elementary Students**, it is OK:

- ◆ For your child to learn from mistakes.
- ◆ To eat whatever the teacher can find at school for lunch if your child forgets his.
- ◆ If the laundry is not folded perfectly or in the right place in the closet or drawer.
- ◆ If your child feels some frustration at having to figure something out on her own.
- ◆ To miss a favorite television show or screen activity to have time to wind down and read before bed.
- ◆ To go to bed early to keep from being too tired to get up on time in the morning.
- ◆ To make two trips to move all of his belongings from one place to the next.
- ◆ To spill. She can clean it up.
- ◆ For your child to feel disappointed because he was told "no".
- ◆ For your child to search for or do without something that has been lost.
- ◆ For your child to complain about doing homework and using the dictionary.
- ◆ If her projects or book reports look like she did it herself.
- ◆ To occasionally forget his homework.
- ◆ For your child to complain about taking care of her belongings.
- ◆ For your child to complain about having to dress appropriately for the weather.
- ◆ To not be able to explain all of the work done at school and why.
- ◆ If your child does not share details of his day with you
- ◆ To have a limit on screen time during the school week and on weekends.
- ◆ For your child to come to school in pajamas with a comb, toothbrush, and clothes in a bag.
- ◆ To be upset with a friend, and work to resolve the issue.
- ◆ For you to have different expectations of your child than other parents have of theirs.

## Cumulative Benchmarks of Independence

<b>CARE FOR SELF</b>	<p>In an organized environment, <b>Toddlers</b> can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Dress themselves.</li> <li>◆ Engage self for brief periods of time.</li> <li>◆ Walk to class without being carried.</li> <li>◆ Carry their belongings (bag or tote, lunch, and coat) to class and place them in the cubby without parental help.</li> <li>◆ Open and close their lunchboxes &amp; containers.</li> <li>◆ Feed themselves from an open cup.</li> <li>◆ Eat while sitting in a chair (no high-chairs).</li> <li>◆ Go to the bathroom independently as long as their clothes are not a hindrance.</li> <li>◆ Entertain themselves without the TV, computer, tablet or smartphone.</li> <li>◆ Help brush their teeth and hair.</li> <li>◆ Put on socks and shoes by themselves.</li> <li>◆ Eat with utensils.</li> </ul>	<p>In an organized environment, <b>Early Childhood</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Help make their lunch.</li> <li>◆ Brush their hair in the morning.</li> <li>◆ Brush their teeth.</li> <li>◆ Dress themselves and put on their own jacket/coat.</li> <li>◆ Put on their socks and shoes. Even if they need help with tying, etc., they can make the effort.</li> <li>◆ Remember their tote bag, jacket, lunch, work folder/binder, etc.</li> <li>◆ Carry their own belongings to class (tote bag, lunch, snack, etc.).</li> <li>◆ Walk into class from the morning car line by themselves.</li> <li>◆ Go to the bathroom independently as long as their clothes are not a hindrance.</li> <li>◆ Pour their beverages and serve themselves, clean up after themselves upon finishing eating.</li> <li>◆ Carry their plate to the kitchen after meals, help wash dishes.</li> </ul>	<p>In an organized environment, <b>Lower Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wake to an alarm clock or parent prompt, complete personal hygiene, and be ready for breakfast.</li> <li>◆ Make their breakfast.</li> <li>◆ Fill their water bottle.</li> <li>◆ Pack their lunch with nutritious foods.</li> <li>◆ Remember to bring lunch, coat, water bottle, and backpack to and from school.</li> <li>◆ Remember to bring swim bag on YMCA days</li> <li>◆ Walk in from car line alone.</li> <li>◆ Carry their belongings and put them in the proper place.</li> <li>◆ Serve themselves.</li> <li>◆ Clean up after themselves, including spills and accidents.</li> <li>◆ Complete homework by themselves and turn it in when due.</li> <li>◆ Get into and out of their car seat or booster seat by themselves.</li> </ul>	<p>In an organized environment, <b>Upper Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Dress and prepare their own breakfast each morning.</li> <li>◆ Plan and pack their own lunch and snack.</li> <li>◆ Be responsible for remembering water bottle, homework, take-home folder, and other papers that are due.</li> <li>◆ Wear weather appropriate clothing, including remember to wear/bring a jacket for outdoor recess.</li> <li>◆ Pick up after themselves.</li> <li>◆ Allot time, and manage until completion, literature reading, and other ongoing homework projects (Ex. Science Fair, Island).</li> <li>◆ Accurately complete most of their work plan most weeks.</li> <li>◆ Set an alarm and wake with enough time to prepare for the day.</li> </ul>	<p>In an organized environment, <b>Middle School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Plan and prepare a meal for others.</li> <li>◆ Dress in a manner that expresses identity.</li> <li>◆ Begin earning money and managing personal finances.</li> <li>◆ Begin to supervise others in completion of small jobs and task teams.</li> <li>◆ Track school assignments in their planner</li> <li>◆ Complete most work independently</li> <li>◆ Manage personal transportation independently (e.g. bus, bicycle).</li> </ul>	<p>At home and in the community, <b>High School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Manage their food choices utilizing knowledge of food nutrition.</li> <li>◆ Make appropriate decisions about personal hygiene.</li> <li>◆ Develop entrepreneurship.</li> <li>◆ Demonstrate independent leadership of student clubs and activities.</li> <li>◆ Mentor peers.</li> <li>◆ Get a driver's license.</li> </ul>	<b>CARE FOR SELF</b>
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<b>CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT</b>	<p>At home and school, <b>Toddlers</b> can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Clean up and put their toys/work away in an orderly environment where items have been placed.</li> <li>◆ Help prepare meals i.e. wash vegetables.</li> <li>◆ Water plants.</li> <li>◆ Help with gardening</li> <li>◆ Clean up spills</li> <li>◆ Help wash the car.</li> <li>◆ Help sweep the floor.</li> <li>◆ Put some laundry away.</li> <li>◆ Be respectful of other living creatures.</li> <li>◆ Help with chores at home such as putting away dirty dishes, help make a</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Early Childhood</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Help set the table.</li> <li>◆ Sort silverware after it has been washed.</li> <li>◆ Clean up spills; sweep the floor.</li> <li>◆ Put away their toys.</li> <li>◆ Straighten their room.</li> <li>◆ Sort clean socks, fold towels, etc.</li> <li>◆ Have responsibilities in keeping the environment clean and tidy.</li> <li>◆ Help prepare veggies/fruit for meals at home.</li> <li>◆ Help plant flowers, weed beds, water plants, etc.</li> <li>◆ Feed and care for pets.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Lower Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make their bed everyday.</li> <li>◆ Fold laundry and put it away.</li> <li>◆ Feed and care for pets.</li> <li>◆ Put away toys, games, and books.</li> <li>◆ Set the table for meals.</li> <li>◆ Clear the table after meals.</li> <li>◆ Help do the dishes.</li> <li>◆ Sort their trash, recycling, compost.</li> <li>◆ Sweep and vacuum floors.</li> <li>◆ Read a book to parents, siblings, and by themselves.</li> <li>◆ Complete a task or work cycle from beginning to end.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Upper Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pick up after themselves</li> <li>◆ Clean their rooms.</li> <li>◆ Help out daily around the house. And classroom</li> <li>◆ Take out the trash, recycling, compost.</li> <li>◆ Care for pets and plants.</li> <li>◆ Put away groceries.</li> <li>◆ Help wash the car.</li> <li>◆ Help with yard work.</li> <li>◆ Use tools with respect.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Middle School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Take leadership on environmental issues.</li> <li>◆ Independently complete chores.</li> <li>◆ Make decisions about decorating and organizing their own bedroom or living space.</li> <li>◆ Change a light bulb, vacuum cleaner bag, clean a bathroom.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and in the community, <b>High School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Independently handle meal planning, shopping, laundry, and house cleaning.</li> <li>◆ Spearhead a fundraising or civic engagement project.</li> </ul>	<b>CARE FOR ENVIRONMENT</b>
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<b>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</b>	<p>At home and at school, <b>Toddlers</b> can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Let others finish a sentence before interrupting to ask a question.</li> <li>◆ Follow social expectations of eating/drinking in designated areas &amp; times</li> <li>◆ Learn to deal with frustrations without having a parent anticipate &amp; solve problems for them.</li> <li>◆ Use words or signs rather than whine</li> <li>◆ Resolve conflict w/o physical action.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and at school, <b>Early Childhood</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Show respect for others.</li> <li>◆ Wait patiently without interrupting conversations.</li> <li>◆ Use appropriate table manners.</li> <li>◆ Understand not to take or use things that belong to others without asking.</li> <li>◆ Begin to solve problems with little or no interference from adults.</li> <li>◆ Feel empathy for others.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Lower Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Say please and thank you.</li> <li>◆ Help others with work.</li> <li>◆ Solve problems with friends and adults.</li> <li>◆ Practice conflict resolution when necessary.</li> <li>◆ Apologize and make amends.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Upper Elementary</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Write thank you notes for gifts received.</li> <li>◆ Exhibit grace and courtesy.</li> <li>◆ Use conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>◆ Help others problem solve.</li> <li>◆ Respect authority.</li> <li>◆ Understand and follow social norms for serious, quiet times and times for conversation.</li> </ul>	<p>At home and school, <b>Middle School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Care for younger siblings.</li> <li>◆ Participate in community service in and outside of school.</li> </ul>	<p>At home, school, and in the community, <b>High School</b> students can also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Act as a peer mentor.</li> <li>◆ Arrange their own community service activities.</li> <li>◆ Intentionally provide emotional support to others.</li> <li>◆ Interact with and question authority figures appropriately.</li> <li>◆ Register to vote.</li> </ul>	<b>INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</b>
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