

POLICY #303

Classroom Transition

Preamble: YMS is founded in Montessori philosophy. The AMI Montessori approach assists children in developing to their full potential, encouraging learning driven by creativity and curiosity. We foster independence in education and beyond, as students emerge into their futures as contributing citizens in their communities and the world. What we do within our individual programs and as an organization follows this approach.

Purpose: This policy outlines the decision making factors, founded in Montessori principles, that support educators in partnership with families to determine children's readiness for transitions between classrooms at Yukon Montessori School.

Scope: This policy is focused on the decision making criteria and process for transition between toddler, casa and elementary classrooms at YMS.

Policy:

There are various factors that determine the timing of the movement between the toddler and the casa class. Readiness for the casa classroom will be the primary determining factor but this will be combined with the availability of space and ratios determined by the Yukon Child Care Act.

Readiness will be the primary determining factor for timing of movement between classrooms following Montessori philosophy: "We do know that the child can only construct herself in an environment that meets her developmental needs." Readiness is determined through ongoing observation by both toddler and casa educators. There are physical, cognitive and social/emotional factors that combine to determine readiness.

In preparing children for transitions between classrooms there will be multiple and ongoing collaboration with families. Families will be invited to ask questions or share their observations related to readiness.

Approved by Board on: November 12, 2024

Date for next review: November 2026

Procedures:

Transition from Toddler to Casa Classrooms

Observation of Readiness

Some areas that educators are observing include:

- Concentrated cycles of activity in the child, especially in the longer practical life exercises or work with language materials.
- The child's ability to communicate has noticeably advanced and the child frequently engages socially with friends at meals or when in group activities.
- There is repetition in the use of nomenclature cards; for example, a child works with cards, giving the names to another child or repeating a lesson given to them.
- The child demonstrates a social awareness of other children.
- The child demonstrates a higher level of independence and lower level of mess during lunch and/or snack.
- The relationship to toileting may not be 100% independent but needs to be on its way. YMS understands that accidents may happen and we are happy to help children change if needed, however, we do not have the facilities for diapering and are therefore unable to accommodate children who are not fully toilet trained.

Procedure for Transitions:

Transitions will be individualized to the needs of the child. Children will have the opportunity to visit the new classroom over time to prepare for the full transition. Once a child has transitioned to the new classroom the classroom will fully support the transition and children would not be moved back to the other classroom.

Montessori philosophy recognizes that a child who stays in the toddler class once they are ready to move up may regress as the toddler class no longer meets their needs. Similar difficulties can emerge if a child remains in the casa once in the second plane of development. YMS will work to support transition decisions based on a child's needs, not by the calendar or adults' preference.

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Timing of Transitions:

Most often transitions will be prepared for and supported at times of the year when there is a major break in the school program. These will be September and January. In special circumstances transitions may be supported after March break or at another time of the year. YMS will focus decisions on observations from lead guides and what is right for the child.

Age and Ratio

The Yukon Child Care Act determines the age and related ratios for early years programs. For children ages 18 months to three years the ratio of educator to children is 1:6. From three years to 6 years the ratio is 1:8. If one child in a Casa classroom is under the age of three then the ratio of one group must change from 1:8 to 1:6. In situations where a child is ready before the age of three and the Casa class has the educator capacity to reduce the ratio the transition will be supported.

Availability of space

Spaces will not be held open in an older classroom until a toddler child reaches readiness. The school team will do their best to plan ahead within the school year to provide opportunities for movement of children between classrooms based on their readiness.

Transition between Casa and Elementary Classrooms

Transitions between Casa and Elementary will occur in September, at the beginning of each school year. Students in the kindergarten classroom will have opportunities to visit the elementary classroom between March break and the end of the school year prior to grade one beginning. Casa and Elementary teachers will be in regular contact to support readiness and preparation of children to transition from early years to expectations in the elementary classroom. Opportunities will be available for families to learn about the elementary classroom and the transition process.

YMS will make every effort to ensure spaces are available for all children currently enrolled in YMS kindergarten to move into the elementary classroom if that is the choice of their families.