

# Moving Up: Transitioning at The Springs

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# Goals

- Make the transition as smooth as possible
- Have a positive transition experience

# How do we achieve these goals?

- Have the children start the year in the classroom that they will be in for the whole school year to reduce the number of transitions a child must experience
  - We determine placement for all levels by the child's age prior to September 30 (in keeping with Virginia's Kindergarten entrance requirements).
  - One of the many beauties of the Montessori Method is its fluidity and focus on the environment (a.k.a the classroom).

# “But my child is ready!!”

- Montessori teachers change the classrooms by adding and removing materials to meet the needs of the children present. This means that a child is always challenged and never unnecessarily hurried.
- By allowing a child to complete the entire year, he or she enjoys consistency and stability, while the teacher alters the environment to meet the needs of the child’s development.
- Children transition more successfully when they enter the class at the start of the year with other new children as teachers establish and review classroom procedures and boundaries more frequently. Joining an established class, where all of the children are older, later in the year, usually leads to more substantial regression and anxiety for child.

# Minimum Requirements

## Readiness Indicators

Infant House to Toddler House	Toddler House to Children's House
Age: 20 months	Age: 3 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child can walk, run, and climb confidently</li><li>• Child can self feed</li><li>• Child can complete entire 1.5 hour work cycle</li><li>• Child has control of body</li><li>• Child is able to participate appropriately in a 15 minute group time</li><li>• Child can verbalize needs (e.g. help, snack, water, etc.)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child is fully potty trained, meaning he or she can use the bathroom with complete independence and no longer requires reminders</li><li>• Child can complete an entire 3 hour work cycle</li><li>• Child can independently select, complete, and return work</li><li>• Child can self serve snack</li><li>• Child is able to participate appropriately in a 30 minute group time</li><li>• Child successfully separates from parents</li><li>• Child knows how to wait and take turns</li><li>• Child can independently use permanent playground equipment</li><li>• Child can successfully “walk in the line” and has mastered the balance beam</li></ul>

# Minimum Requirements (continued)

Readiness Indicators	
Pre-School to Kindergarten	Kindergarten to Elementary
Age: 5 years	Age: 6 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Napping is no longer required</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mandatory Age Requirement</li><li>Complete Kindergarten at a certified School (Montessori or other)</li></ul>

# Expectations

- At each new level, the expectations become higher.
- A skill that was “Mastered” in the Toddler House may now be designated as “Presented” or “Working” in the Children’s House.
- This is not a sign of regression. This is due to the fact that the expectations for the skills have changed and/or the material is now different.
- Example: Sitting in a chair is a skill at each level. However, the size of the chairs increases. While a child may have mastered sitting in a chair in the Toddler House, he or she will still be working on this skill in the Children’s House as the chairs are larger and the skill expects that a child sit with feet on the floor, hands on their lap, etc.

# Regression with Transitioning

- We expect regression with transitions, even at the start of the school year. While a child is not new to the school and will have visited in his or her new classroom, the child experiences an interruption to routine.
- Naturally, a child may show signs of regression. Toileting accidents may resume or separation anxiety may reappear.
- We expect this and encourage the parent to expect it as well while the teachers strive to be sensitive to the child's emotions and feelings to help them over the proverbial hump.

# Conclusion

- Ultimately, transition must be about the child. A child's transition is a big step and one that should be positive and exciting. Successful transitions make for positive school experiences and, as such, teachers, parents, and administrators must all be active participants in supporting the child through this time.

# FAQs

- **Can I choose my child's teacher/class?**
  - We absolutely invite you to indicate your preference at the time of re-registration and we will do our best consider your wishes. However, we are unable to honor all requests. Our ultimate goal is to maintain well-balanced classrooms with consideration to ages and gender.
- **My child just turned 18 months (or 3 years old). Will you move him up next month so I can pay the lower tuition rate?**
  - No. Transitioning is about the child's needs at school and as such, our tuition policies reflect this commitment. Therefore, tuition is a fee for the entire school year and the tuition rate for the school year is determined by your child's age prior to September 30 regardless of which class your child joins. This way financial concerns are not the motivation for parent's or the school's decision to transition or not transition a child.

# FAQs

- **Will you ever force a child to transition?**
  - In as far as we are able, we will not force a transition if a child is truly not ready. However, state licensing requirements do place certain limitations on what ages can be placed together. Generally, once a child reaches the age of 2 he or she must enter the Toddler House and when a child reaches the age of 4, he or she must join a Children's House class.
- **How do you determine which class a child enters when they transition?**
  - In keeping with Montessori best practices we aim to establish classes that are balanced in gender and age. Children are placed with that goal in mind. Additionally, the child's current teacher makes recommendations about which class she feels is the best match for the child.

# FAQs

- **My child is advanced and before the Toddler House opened, you placed 2.5 year olds in the Children's House all the time. Why won't you move my child up?**
  - This is true. For many years when The Springs only offered Children's House classrooms, we were able to include a limited number of 2.5 year olds in the class. This is a common practice at schools that do not have Toddler programs. While it is workable, it is not ideal for the children. That includes the 2.5 year old as well as the older children in the Primary Class. While these children were in a Children's House classroom, the work they did was work from the Toddler level curriculum. Their developmental needs are significantly different from the 3-6 year old. For example, they are learning socialization and are a distraction from the older children's established and existing socialization. Now that we do have toddler classes, it has become even more apparent how much children in this age range need and benefit from a class of their own. Developmentally, these children are still better suited for a smaller class size, with more teacher involvement than the Children's House can provide while staying true to the Montessori philosophy.

# FAQs

- **My child is already blending words, why is he still in the Toddler class?**
  - It is important to keep in mind that while a child may excel in one area, academics are not the only determining factor for transition readiness. In fact, research shows that children who show extraordinary advancement in academics, are more likely to be delayed in other areas such as motor skills, social emotional learning, etc. Therefore, we consider the child's whole development for transitioning. In fact, this is the backbone of the Montessori philosophy, which advocates developing the child's needs through manipulation of the environment within his or her appropriate social age group, rather than forcing children who are advanced or delayed to remain or move into with a non-socially appropriate age group simply to meet academic needs.