



Guidepost Care at OCON, July 1 – 7

Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel

FAQ

What is Guidepost Care?

Guidepost Care is a Montessori-inspired childcare service offered at conferences and short-term events. Guidepost Care ensures that children traveling with parents receive meaningful, pedagogically informed care, providing them with engaging experiences so that parents can focus on their experience with peace of mind.

Does my child have to attend a Montessori school to participate?

While Guidepost Care draws on Montessori principles, it does not assume any background in Montessori. The program is intended to provide all participating children with safe and stimulating activities.

What are the ages of children who can participate?

Guidepost Care is available for children ages 2 – 12 years.

For children under 2 years, Guidepost Care can help with private (or shared) nanny placements available for children under 2 years. While we'll make every effort to secure one of our local trained staff, we cannot guarantee such candidates. We will put families directly in contact with whomever we source so that you can directly interview and make arrangements.

A special no-cost Guidepost Care internship programs available for children 12 and up. Your child will shadow a staff member, receive professional coaching on a range of skills, and leave with a certificate showing their completion of the Guidepost Care internship program. This program is great for adolescents seeking to learn babysitting skills! See below for more information.

- If your child is between 2 – 12 years, please register through the application link.
- If you child is under 2 years old, please contact us directly at guidepostcare@guidepostmontessori.com to discuss nanny placement options.
- If your child is 12 or older, and you believe he or she would benefit from an adolescent internship program assisting with Guidepost Care, please email us directly at guidepostcare@guidepostmontessori.com to begin the interview process. We have a limited number of internships available.

What are the days and times care will be available?

Dates and times Guidepost Care is Available	8:00 am – 5:00 pm	6:00 pm – 11:00 pm
July 2, 2022	✓	✓
July 3, 2022	✓	✓

July 4, 2022		X		X
July 5, 2022		✓		✓
July 6, 2022		✓		✓
July 7, 2022		✓		X

The 4th of July will have limited scheduled OCON events. Care will not be offered to allow time for families to enjoy being in Washington, DC for the holiday.

What are the rates for Guidepost Care?

Currently, we are offering a discounted all-inclusive price of \$800. This includes flexible drop-in care for the full Guidepost Care scheduled hours. Families that register their children by the end of March will lock in this price. On April 15th rates will increase to \$1100 per child for the same all-inclusive hours of care. There are only 30 spaces available so lock in your registration as soon as possible.

For children under 2 years old, please contact us at Guidepostcare@Guidepostmontessori.com to determine rates for your family.

For internships for older children, there is no cost for the program, but only a limited number of students will be accepted.

What if we want care for only 1 day or timeframe?

Beginning on April 16th, we will offer additional options to schedule limited, more flexible care *if* there are spaces available. We will offer two time slots each day: 8a – 12:30p (which includes lunch) and 12:30p – 5p (which includes a substantial afternoon snack) for \$125 per session. We will also offer evening time slots from 6p-11p (which includes a snack) for \$175 per session.

What if our plans change?

If your plans should change and you are no longer able to attend the conference, or your children are no longer able to attend, we will provide a full refund less a \$25 administrative fee if we are notified no later than June 15, 2022.

Where will the children be?

We have reserved two conveniently located rooms, one each for our two mixed-aged childcare groupings. These spaces are proximate to where you will be having your OCON conference events for easy drop off and pick up. Bathrooms will be outside of the room, off the main hallway. Each child will be walked to and from the bathroom.

As a reminder, all children participating in care must be toilet trained. Please ask us about private nanny placement options if your child requires one-on-one care.

What is Guidepost Care’s pedagogical approach to children?

Guidepost Care is inspired by the pedagogy of Maria Montessori. The space will be set up to provide freedom of movement and choice for each child.

In general, each child will have the freedom to choose activities from among a range of available options.

Children may choose to work independently, or with a new friend or group of friends. Our trained staff will help to guide children in making choices that fit their developmental stage by inspiring inquiry into one or

more activities. (Some of our activities will be presented to the whole group, but even in such cases your child will have not he option to do an alternate activity after the presentation.)

Guides will use discretion to provide some direction to support engagement. For each material or activity that is chosen, our staff will guide the child through the process until such a time as they are ready to work independently with joy and engagement. Before choosing the next activity, the guides will support helping the child put their work away in such a way that it is ready for another child to select it.

Very quickly the guides will get to know each child and show them options that will engage them fully based on their individual interests and stage of development.

What is Guidepost Care’s pedagogical approach to discipline?

Positive discipline is used to guide children to making the right choices. For example, if a child were running in the space we would say, *“Inside we use walking feet. Let me show you.”* We might then take a child’s hand and walk them around the room slowly looking at all the options and other children. We could follow it up by sharing, *“We will exercise our legs by running later today.”*

Our goal is for each child to feel engaged and interested in what we have prepared. An engaged child is a happy child.

If there is a behavioral challenge that requires a more significant intervention, parents will be called to have a quick conference to discuss next steps. In rare cases of major behavior issues that could represent a danger to any children or guides, parents may be asked to pick up a child.

What types of activities will the children have available?

For children ages 2 – 6 (approximately)

The room will be set up so that the materials and activities are displayed beautifully and are accessible for each child to choose repeatedly once they have been given an initial introduction to a particular item that draws their interest. Children of this age love repetition and having items placed in the same location allows a child to confidently make their own selection and then to independently put the material back in the same space for the next child or the next time they choose to select it.

Activities will include natural elements such as wooden puzzles and blocks, manipulatives, games and a specially curated selection of materials and manipulatives that are commonly found in a Montessori Toddler and Children’s House classroom. Art and other creative materials will be presented throughout the day as options for the children to create their own work. Music and stories will also be woven throughout the day. Children will have furniture that is just right sized for them to sit comfortably at tables, or they may choose to work on the floor. Cots and clean bedding will be provided for those students who nap or those who are joining Guidepost Care for the evening hours.

For children ages 7 – 12 (approximately)

Children of this age are socially oriented, and often appreciate the opportunity to work in groups. We will provide opportunities for independent work, but also facilitate collaborative exploration.

Heavily featured and emphasized will be themes relating to the city of Washington DC. The group will explore the stories behind various landmarks; art, history, geography, and architecture will come alive through stories about Washington DC, and children will complete a variety of projects based on their interest. (Families are encouraged to visit monuments and other landmarks during their free day.)

In addition to thematic materials, we will have a variety of creative options to engage in artistic expression, building work, and other enticing activities.

As with the younger students, each child will have the ability to choose from among many eye-catching options curated to appeal to a wide variety of interests and the developmental capabilities of elementary students. Some items will engage them intellectually, and others will allow for games and other shared experiences with a new friend. A few computers will be available for supervised research if a child seeks such work.

For Prospective Interns 13 – 18 (approximately)

Adolescents interested in gaining guided professional experience will be invited to fill out an application explaining their interest in a Guidepost Care internship.

Upon receiving an application, our team will reach out to set up a Zoom call to conduct a quick, friendly interview and to talk about the next steps. Once accepted as an intern, a student will receive an invitation to join a virtual training in the weeks leading up to the conference. At that time, the intern will be presented with a schedule, allowing for modifications insofar as the intern is also attending some conference events, as well as for time with family.

At the end of the conference, those completing the internship will be emailed a certificate that details the training they have received and the work they have completed.

What will a typical Guidepost Care day look like?

When dropping off your child the staff on site will have a brief conversation with you to ensure there are no updates to your contact information, or if there is anything new to share that will help your child with their day.

A quick confident goodbye will help to show your child that you have confidence in their ability to thrive in this new setting, and ensure we can supportively address any separation anxiety and focus on creating a safe and fun environment. Our team will work to inspire your child's engagement in some activity of choice, as well as help them to orient them to the space, the other children and other staff that are present.

The staff will continue circulating, periodically showing children new materials, modeling and scaffolding ways to engage with other children throughout the day, and offering targeted individual and group lessons. There will be circle times for stories and songs and some project-based lessons that children can choose to pursue if it captures their interest.

Will you communicate with me regularly throughout the day?

During the day, particularly for full-day drop-offs, our team may send you an occasional text update, along with a photo of your child. In a case where your child showed some anxiety at drop-off, we will be especially sure to send you an update.

At the end of each day, we will be sharing a short daily email to parents from each of our groups. This will include highlights from stories read, lessons that were given to the group, some key happenings, and what to expect the next day. This will give you the opportunity to get a view into your child's day, hopefully to use as a conversation starter.

Will you remain in the room and on-site all day?

Depending on the maturity and comfort of the children, our team may take groups of children outside for part of the day. As part of the process of sharing your child's information, we will ask you to complete a form

granting us the option of taking your child on a walk. Weather and age allowing, we will explore the neighborhood with casual strolls and small adventures.

Will you feed my child?

Snack will be available in the morning and will include healthy options. Lunch will also be served. Water and fruit will be available all day for children to select as needed. Dinner will not be served as there is a break in care between 5:00 – 6:00 pm daily.

For children returning in the evening for care we will provide snacks and may watch an age-appropriate movie. For those attending in the evening we will also have the option of having a quiet space to rest and sleep as each child's body rhythm necessitates.

What do I need to bring?

Comfortable clothes will help your child to work on the floor, do some Yoga or take a rest. A sweater or sweatshirt is always advisable indoors in the summer.

If your child has a special comfort item such as a stuffed animal that provides comfort while they are adapting to a new place or falling to sleep, feel free to bring that as well.

Toys from home can be challenging to share and can often become something that can get lost or damaged during the day. Items like that are best left in your room to enjoy when your child is with you.

What to expect once I have registered my child for Guidepost Care?

Once you have registered your child for Guidepost Care you will receive confirmation of your registration. (The same applies for adolescents applying for an internship.)

About a month before the conference, you will be sent a form to fill out that will share valuable details about your child and family. It will include allergy information, contact information, what your child likes and does not like to do, any concerns you may have, and an opportunity to share how your child adjusts to a new situation. All this will help us to get to know your child through you and help us be an effective partner to you.

Once we have received some of your returned paperwork, someone from our team will set up a quick Zoom meeting in the couple of weeks leading up to the conference to answer any questions you have and to partner on anything else that will help facilitate a smooth experience for you and your child.

If you have any questions, please email us at Guidepostcare@Guidepostmontessori.com and we would be happy to help.



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