

Early Childhood Where Joy Lives!



Family Handbook 2018 - 2019



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From the Early Childhood Principal's Desk

Welcome to Early Childhood ~ Where Joy Lives! This is an exciting time in the life of your young child; it is a time for growth, exploration, discovery, and learning about the world around us. The Early Childhood Program at CDS is for children ages two years, four months through six years. Our program encompasses three levels: The Pre-Kinder program for children ages two years and four months through four years and three months, followed by Kindergarten, and Preparatory.

Our program focuses on educating the whole child. We know that academic progress is interlinked with social, emotional, and physical development; and we believe that children learn most efficiently and gain more knowledge through play-based activities such as dramatic play, art, hands on experiences, and social games. As we understand that children learn through active involvement, we are dedicated to providing a stimulating, hands-on learning environment that follows a developmentally appropriate curriculum with well-planned, engaging activities. These activities encourage the children to socialize while developing their inherent natural abilities. Early Childhood staff focuses on the whole child and his or her overall growth and development. The early childhood years are when children develop their self-esteem, gain acceptance from their peers, and are allowed to learn new skills through play, discovery, experimentation, and exploration in a caring and loving environment.

The curriculum for our Early Childhood program is developmental and age appropriate at each level. Language arts, reading readiness, mathematics, social studies and science are developed through thematic units of study included in all the academic areas. We consider that young children learn best in an environment rich in sensory experiences, and we emphasize our learning in small groups with materials designed to develop the full range of motor, social, emotional, and academic skills.

Our curriculum is supplemented by special classes such as: computer education, music, Spanish, PE, Library, yoga and swimming. All these educational activities stimulate creativity, self-expression, fine and gross motor skills, and social interaction. While our rich student diversity helps the children become more aware of different cultures as they see themselves as members of a wider world community.

Our [Mission](#) states that we provide children with the skills, values, and courage to become responsible leaders. Our [Profile of the Graduate](#) describes in detail the qualities that we expect our CDS graduates (at every level) to embody.

Using these documents as starting points, our CDS Director and Principals continually focus on not only whole-child development, but also continued growth of our faculty. Members of our community have numerous opportunities throughout the year to learn, teach, and talk about how to use our skills, talents, and courage to work together to grow, both as individuals and as a community, to help enhance our social and physical community lives both in and out of school.

In many ways, a school handbook helps to clarify what is important to a school. It helps parents and students understand the school culture as well as establish behavioral expectations. Hopefully, it also helps to ease the transition to a formal school setting.

Please read through this handbook and be aware of the information it contains. You will find policies and directions about how to handle situations that may arise during the year.

I wish you a joyful school year full of learning fun!

Keitsa Brisson
Early Childhood Principal
Country Day School

Official 2018-2019 School Year Calendar

2018 - 2019 Dates of Big Events in Early Childhood

August 13 - First day for teachers
August 15 - Mother's Day - School Closed
August 17 - New Family Orientation
August 20 - First day of school
August 28 - Early Childhood Open House ~ 6:00-8:00 pm
September 3 - Early Childhood & Elementary After School Activities Start
September 6 - Concert: The National Symphony Orchestra of Costa Rica
September 14 - Early Childhood Independence Day Celebrations ~ 8:15-9:15 am
September 22 - CDS Family Picnic ~ 10 am - 1 pm
October 12 - Dia de las Culturas - School Closed
October 19 - End First Quarter
October 22 - December 13 - Second Quarter - PE Swimming Classes
October 24 - Early Childhood & Elementary UN Day Celebration ~ 8:15 - 9:30 am
October 27 - EC & ES Halloween Family Night ~ 5:30-7:30
October 31 - Parent - Teacher Conference Day (No school for students)
November 16 - Early Childhood Picture Book Day
November 21 - Family Thanksgiving Lunch
November 22-23 - Thanksgiving Holiday - No School
December 5 - Early Childhood Holiday Concert 8:30 am
December 6 - Early Childhood & Elementary After School Activities end
December 14 - EC & ES Holiday Gift Parade~8:15 - 9:30 am; ½ day for students
December 15 - January 13 - Winter Holidays
January 14 - First day of Second Semester
January 28 - Early Childhood & Elementary After School Activities Start
February 1 - World Read Aloud Day
February 18 - Presidents Day - No School
February 23 - CDS Family Fun Run
February 27 - Pink Shirt Day
March 15 - End Third Quarter
March 18 - June 13 - Fourth Quarter - PE Swimming Classes
March 20 - Parent - Teacher Conference Day (No school for students)
April 1-5 - Early Childhood Book Week
April 6 - CDS International Fair ~ 10 am - 3 pm
April 10 - Prep Choir Concert
April 11 - Dia de Juan Santamaria - School Closed
April 12 - No School for Students
April 15 - 19 - Semana Santa - School Closed
April 22 - Earth Day Celebration
May 1 - Dia del Trabajador - School Closed
May 17 - Early Childhood & Elementary Celebration of Learning ~ 8:15-10:15 am
June 6 - Early Childhood & Elementary Field Day!
May 30 - Early Childhood & Elementary After School Activities end
June 11 - Prep Move Up Ceremony
June 13 - ½ day dismissal for all students - last day of school!

Early Childhood Contact Information

Office Numbers

Country Day School telephone 2289-0919
Country Day School fax 2228-2076
Early Childhood Extensions 2221 or 2277
Early Childhood Counselor 2237
Nurse 2258

Administrative Team

Director: Scott Adams
Early Childhood Principal: Keitsa Brisson
Elementary School Principal: Jack Young
Middle School Principal: James Tucker
High School Principal: Jose Luis Menendez
Admissions Coordinator: María F. Cardona
Business Manager: Dora Sevilla
Transportation Coordinator: Alvaro Zamora

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Office Staff Email Information

Ivannia Espeleta (EC Counselor)
Jonathan Morera (EC Secretary)
Evelyn Borbon (EC Receptionist)
Martha Bello (Nurse)
Marie Franklin (EC/ES Curriculum Coordinator)
Early Childhood Transportation Changes

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marie_franklin@cds.ed.cr
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Teacher Email Information

Viviana Araya (Pre-Kinder 1 A)
Liliana Rodriguez (Pre-Kinder 1 A)
Evelyn Cruz (Pre-Kinder 2 A)
Francine Monteil (Pre-Kinder 2 B)
Shirley Garro (Pre-Kinder 2 C)
Katherine Granados (Kinder A)
Irene Asch (Kinder B)
Katherine Williams (Kinder C)
Lourdes Soler (Prep A)
Carolina Caballero (Prep B)
Martha Farrand (Prep C)
Anabelle Jervis (Prep D)
Rosemary Chavarría (PE)
Adriana Jiménez (Spanish)
Katia Méndez (Music)
Shannon Sweetman (Literacy Coach)
Adriana San Gil (Learning Center)
Karla Paola Angulo (Computer)
Vanessa Chavarría (ELD)

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Country Day School Mission and Objectives

Country Day School, a U.S. accredited college preparatory school serving an international community, inspires a passion for learning and provides children with the skills, values, and courage to become responsible leaders in their communities and the world.

In keeping with this mission, Country Day School:

- Provides for the development of intellectual, social, aesthetic, and moral values that satisfy the needs of our students.
- Serves students from the expatriate and local communities.
- Maintains high academic standards and fosters a love of learning.
- Provides a program that focuses on the basics: English, literature, science, social studies, Spanish, physical education and the arts (drama, art, and music).
- Maintains a structured curriculum plan for learning
- Evaluates student learning frequently with a variety of assessment tools to ensure that each child is progressing appropriately.
- Helps students prepare for a world of rapid change in which critical thinking, creativity, technology, and teamwork are essential.
- Values and teaches cultural understanding and knowledge of the complexities of our world.
- Teaches and models virtues such as honesty, compassion, diligence, kindness, fairness, and loyalty.
- Prepares students for admission to universities in North America, Costa Rica, and around the world

Belief Statements

We believe that:

- Everyone does learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways.
- Educating children is the shared responsibility of the school, student, family, and the broader community.
- A safe environment supports curiosity, risk-taking, the sharing of ideas and sense of belonging.
- Students learn most effectively when provided opportunities for exploration, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving within authentic situations.
- Achieving personal and academic excellence requires perseverance, courage, dedication, and striving for high standards.
- Effective leadership is derived out of passion, purpose, collaboration and service to community.
- Deliberate development of character and attitude is an essential part of our school's culture and curriculum.
- Positive decision-making enhances emotional, mental, physical and social health and wellbeing.
- Professional growth occurs through dedicated time, collaboration, training, reflection, evaluation, and best practices.
- A learning community is strengthened by diversity and a willingness to improve.

CDS Profile of the Graduate

Our Country Day School students demonstrate a strong academic foundation in the following areas:

- Thinking and communicating mathematically and scientifically
- Knowledge and inquiry processes that allow informed decision-making for the public good as citizens of an interdependent world
- Coherent oral and written expression in Spanish including listening, and speaking
- Responsible, safe, and effective use of technology for education and personal satisfaction
- Literacy in the areas of print and electronic media
- Organizational skills, study habits and effective time management
- Analytical and critical reading of a wide range of texts

Our Country Day School students are able to utilize the following thinking skills:

- Specific elements of critical thinking such as discerning purpose, asking questions, challenging assumptions, and recognizing implications and point of view
- Problem solving which includes defining a problem, considering solutions, and making right decisions, both independently and as a team member
- Innovative thinking that allows creative ideas to become reality
- Curiosity as demonstrated by a desire to explore, generate questions, and seek answers
- Self-awareness as shown through reflection and understanding about own learning styles, behavior, personality, and perspective

Our Country Day School students are able to actively and meaningfully contribute in various communities by:

- Working both independently and collaboratively
- Actively building community locally, nationally, and globally
- Courageously showing empathy and compassion to others
- Demonstrating respect for people of different backgrounds, including ethnicity, learning differences, country of origin, race, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, or beliefs
- Respecting and caring for our planet through active stewardship

Our Country Day School students exhibit the following personal qualities:

- Integrity through adherence to moral and ethical principles
- Accountability by accepting responsibility for his or her own actions
- Leadership as shown through self-discipline, communication and organizational skills, and initiative
- Adaptability as shown through adjustment to new environments, challenges, and conditions
- Commitment to wellness as shown through making good choices that enhance emotional and physical health

History of Country Day School

Country Day School was founded in 1963 as a private coeducational American curriculum school, similar to U.S. college preparatory independent schools. The school grew from an initial 18 students to its present enrollment of nearly 800 students, representing over forty nationalities from four continents. After more than 30 years in the San José suburb of Escazú, we now occupy our amazing new campus in San Rafael de Alajuela. CDS has always been a proprietary school, owned and operated since 1975 by the Woodson Brown family.

Country Day School is recognized throughout Costa Rica and Central America for its level of consistent excellence in academics. We employ and retain excellent teachers and educational leaders. At many levels, Country Day students consistently outscore and outperform their peers from the United States, and are well prepared academically for the next grade level if they return to the United States or move to another international school.

Country Day School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools of the United States, and the Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP) of Costa Rica. We are also a member of the Association of American Schools of Central America (AASCA). For more information, you may access our [web site](#) and keep up with up to date information on our [facebook page](#).

Houses of Country Day School

Country Day School consists of four “Houses”: Early Childhood (EC): Pre-Kinder - Preparatory; Elementary School (ES) grades 1-5, Middle School (MS) grades 6-8; and High School (HS) grades 9-12. Each house has its own principal and administrative staff. The school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 or 3:10 p.m., depending on which house your child is in. If you wish to visit, please feel free to call for an appointment. We need to have time to dedicate to each visitor, applicant and family.

Admissions Policy

Admission to Country Day School requires review of transcripts or any other information from previous school years, a placement test, and an interview. Vaccine and health records, a photograph, and a copy of the passport must be attached to the completed application form. In order to reserve a space, it is important to apply before May for the following August.

Parent Involvement

We welcome parent involvement and many parents volunteer in their children’s classrooms in various ways. In addition to your individual choices, we have various

activities for parent volunteers such as Book Week, a Thanksgiving Lunch, United Nations Day, and much more! We frequently ask parents to chaperone field trips or other special events.

Parent Association

All parents of CDS students are members of the Parent Association. The purpose and mission of the CDS Parent Association is:

- To foster communication, participation, and a feeling of community among parents in support of the programs and activities of CDS.
- To provide support and assistance for school activities, such as student led community service, recognition of faculty and staff members, and spirit building activities.
- To provide parent input to the PA Executive Committee, the administration and the faculty on matters of importance to the parents and students.

Meetings are held several times a year and are open to any parent who wants to come to be updated on school wide activities, or to voice ideas as to how parents can better support the school, faculty and children.

In an effort to support CDS in its goals, parents provide leadership, promote school spirit, and provide a channel for parent's voices to be heard by the school administration.

All parents are encouraged to become active in the Parent Association by attending divisional meetings and volunteering to help with parent sponsored activities. This year's President is Patty Monsour and our Early Childhood Parent Representatives are Stephanie Nordlander and Carol Molina. For more information, you may access the [Parent Association web site](#).

Family-Teacher Communication

Our Early Childhood staff knows that close communication between home and school is a factor in the success of your child. Our teachers will frequently be in contact with you in informal ways as you drop off or at pick-up your child, as well as MyCDS, through email, and other forms of communication. All official school communication will be made through MyCDS. We will use MyCDS to communicate information such as classroom and school events, your child's progress, class information. Parents are asked to check their MyCDS page regularly to keep up-to-date important school information. The principal will send a weekly blogpost, *Early Childhood News*, to communicate all Early Childhood and Country Day School news. Please be sure to read this weekly. At times information will be sent home by email or a hard copy in backpacks. Please check and clean your child's backpack daily for newsletters, notes and completed work. Be sure to sign up for email notifications on your MyCDS account in order to get the latest updates.

Appointments

Please feel free to make an appointment with your child's teacher at any time by calling the Early Childhood office secretary or emailing the teacher directly. We ask that you do not arrive unannounced for a conference, as it benefits the student, parent, and the child to have adequate time to prepare for it.

Classroom Placement

At Country Day School, each student will be provided an appropriate program of studies designed to inspire a passion for learning and an opportunity to acquire skills, instill values and develop courage. Consequently, classrooms are balanced according to a multitude of factors and are created by the grade level team of the child's current year, the principal, counselor and, if needed, learning support team.

We encourage any parent who wishes to request a particular learning environment for his or her child to do so; information from parents is often valuable in adding to the School's observations and expertise. The only type of request accepted by CDS is one that describes a particular type of learning environment based on a student's specific needs. Requests that include a specific teacher's name will not be considered. Parent input must be done so in writing to Ms. Brisson by the middle of May of the previous school year.

While we can not honor all requests, we do assure that all of the information sent by parents will receive full consideration as part of the classroom placement process. This policy provides for fair and equal treatment for all concerned. The practice of honoring an individual parent request for a specific teacher is not condoned, as it could deny equal educational opportunity to some personnel and to some students. Requests identifying a teacher's name will be returned to the requestor. **Country Day School will make the final decision regarding student placement for the best possible learning environment for all students.**

Behavioral Expectations

Establishing good classroom discipline is essential to each child's success, confidence, and well-being. Every child should feel that the classroom, environment is safe and secure; free from all threats of physical or emotional harm. In addition, it is important that each child develop self-control and good work habits. We will help the children develop skills to resolve conflicts peacefully and to think independently.

Country Day School is a community of children, teachers, and staff who learn, play, and grow together. We support and respect each other in order to function well as a community. All members of the CDS community should always behave in a manner that reflects honesty, trust, and concern for the rights and property of others. We want to foster openness to ideas, feelings, and diverse cultures. Our community will not tolerate actions which are rude, disrespectful or dishonest. Good habits build strong character.

In the Early Childhood Program, our goal is to promote self-discipline, a sense of caring and responsibility for all members of the school community.

The classroom teachers use developmentally appropriate practices when guiding a child's behavior. Helping children gain self-regulation skills is one of the most important parts of the early childhood years and our teachers treat each child with kindness and firmness. We are consistent in our behavioral expectations. In Early Childhood we practice "logical consequences". That is the idea is for a consequence to be related to the child's behavior and act as a solution for any challenging situation. For example, if a child spills something, he/she must help clean it up. By having the consequence directly related to the act, the child will begin to understand cause-effect relationship. A visit to the principal's office is a rarely used last resort. On occasion a child will be sent to the principal or counselor when further guidance is needed. Parents will be kept up to date on your child's progress and any concerns that the school may have.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily routine and curriculum, and the children will be enjoying it every day, unless it is raining. Your child might need a raincoat or umbrella and boots to leave at school during the rainy season. Daily use of sunscreen and a sun hat are also recommended.

Early Childhood Athletic Philosophy

In the Early Childhood, we believe that the purpose of athletics is to teach children sportsmanship and give them the opportunity to play both on a team and as an individual, as well as to build skill - all while having fun! Young children need to learn to use their bodies through both gross and fine motor skills. We will not promote the idea of "winning" or "losing" at any level in Early Childhood. We will focus on the student learning to enjoy athletics and being a member of a team.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Generally held in October of the first semester and in April at the end of the third quarter, parent/teacher conferences provide a special opportunity to look at the student's work, his report card, and to discuss individual progress. The school sends a letter to each parent with the scheduled time for the conference. We will do our best to schedule conference around the same time for families who have more than one child at Country Day. If you cannot attend at the scheduled time, please contact your child's teacher to reschedule.

Please make sure all bills have been paid so that the student's report card can be given on this day.

Report Cards

We also communicate formally through Developmental Reports which are sent home electronically at the end of each quarter. Your child's teacher will explain the report card

to you at Open House. We ask that you share your child's report card with him to celebrate his learning. No report card will be given to your child if he/she has outstanding bills, such as bus, tuition or library fines.

Report cards will not be distributed early. See school year calendar for report card distribution dates.

Grading System

Our reporting system is based on current best practices in the United States. In Kinder and Prep, student progress is shown on the report card with the following letter grades:

(E) Emerging	(D) Developing	(P) Proficient	(M) Mastered
Beginning to demonstrate aspects of the understanding, knowledge and skills aligned with this grade level learning expectation; requires substantial assistance when working on tasks/assignments.	Partially demonstrates the understanding, knowledge and skills aligned with this grade level learning expectation; requires some assistance when working on tasks/assignments.	Fully demonstrates the understanding, knowledge and skills aligned with this grade level learning expectation; requires very little assistance when working on tasks/assignments. May make minor errors.	Consistently and over time, demonstrates an in-depth command of the understanding, knowledge and skills aligned with this grade level learning expectation; requires no assistance when working on tasks/assignments. May make rare, minor errors.

In Pre-Kinder, student progress is communicated through anecdotal notes which report on developmental levels in all areas: social-emotional, language, fine motor skills, and math readiness. Report Cards are distributed electronically.

Promotion / Retention

Current education research shows that most often retention does not benefit a child. The entire Early Childhood staff will do everything possible to ensure your that child is not only successful academically; but that he/she also shows appropriate development and growth socially, emotionally, and physically. However, when the teacher feels that a child is not ready for the next grade, a team meeting will be held with the child's teacher, the counselor, the Learning Center specialists, the principal, and the child's parents. The child's best interest will always be of foremost concern. **Country Day School reserves the right to make the final decision regarding student placement, promotion and retention.**

Attendance

Students must to be at school each day to have a successful school experience and progress appropriately through the curriculum. It is expected that all students attend school daily except in cases of illness or special circumstances that are pre-arranged with the teacher and principal. The school has a responsibility to know where every student is every day, therefore, we keep careful attendance records. Parents are expected to call or send an email to explain an absence.

We want to spend as much time with your child as possible, so please schedule doctor, dental and other appointments after school. It is also very important that each child arrive on time for school. It is the parent's responsibility to help teach his child the importance of arriving on time. Children often find it difficult to enter the classroom late. Our teachers are ready to greet your children in the classroom at 7:45 a.m. Assistants are available to supervise your child on the playground at 7:30 a.m.

Country Day School reserves the right to use school attendance records in promotion/retention decisions.

Pre-Kinder - Kinder Days of Attendance

In Pre-Kinder and Kinder parents may choose if your child attends school full day (until 3:00 pm) or half day (until noon). You may also choose the number of days you wish for your child to stay full day. Your child may attend 0, 2, 3, or 5 FULL days each week. This choice is flexible and left up to the parent and teacher for decision. However, the days or afternoons may not be interchanged. There is no exchanging of days for holidays, school ½ days, or illness. If you wish to change your child's schedule, contact your child's teacher *and* Mr. Jonathan Morera (email: jonathan_morera@cds.ed.cr) to make a permanent change in schedule.

At minimum, students attend 5 half days (until noon) per week.

In addition, you may choose to have your child stay full day (until 3:00 pm) 2, 3, or 5 days each week. You will create this schedule at the beginning of the semester with Ms. Sylvia Espinach and your child's teacher. **These days are not interchangeable.**

Student Support Services

In Early Childhood, our Student Services focus on *early intervention* to help students gain all necessary skills and attributes necessary to be successful in school. This simply means doing things as early as possible to work on your child's developmental, health, academic, and social emotional needs. Research has shown that early intervention can prevent learning difficulties later in life. Early intervention services give specialized support to children and families in the early childhood years. This support might include individualized or small group instruction, informal evaluation, counselling, or additional English language acquisition assistance.

The Student Support Services team holds regular weekly meetings to discuss individual student concerns and action plans. The team includes:

Principal, Keitsa Brisson

Student Support Specialist, Adriana San Gil

Counselor, Ivania Espeleta

English Language Development Teacher, Vanessa Chavarria

English Language Development

English Language Development (ELD) is a systematic instructional service that focuses on teaching academic and social English to students who require support in order to

function and succeed in the classroom. Students benefit from these services until they reach the proficiency level to function appropriately in the mainstream classroom or are at their grade level.

ELD instruction is offered as both story time and as a pull-out lesson twice a week for all Kinder and Prep classes. In Pre-Kinder, ELD is provided through “push in” with small groups of students from each classroom once a week.

The goal of pull out ELD classes is to develop students’ English levels depending on their needs through personalized instruction in order to get them to a point at which they feel confident and secure in their English language skills.

Counseling Program

The Early Childhood guidance counselor is available to work with students concerning emotional, behavior, or personal situations that may arise during the school year. Other support programs such as whole class guidance lessons implementing CDS Social Emotional Curriculum based on the Child Protection Program and consultation with faculty and parents are also provided. It is not permitted for the Early Childhood Counselor to work as individual therapy, rather, this is a guidance counseling service for parents and students.

Student Support Specialist

The Early Childhood Student Support Services provide extra support in visual-motor skills, mathematics, and language arts. There is a referral process which helps us manage the services provided and know what each student’s learning needs are. The first step in the process is when the classroom teacher submits a referral form. Then, the Student Services Team meets to discuss the information provided and come up with an action plan for the individual student. After the classroom teacher has identified the strengths and challenges of the student, we test internally and share the results and recommendations with classroom teachers and parents.

Depending on the evaluation results, the student will either receive support in school, or see an external specialist if he or she needs services that we do not provide internally (speech, occupational, or emotional therapy). The Student Support Services intervention is provided either as a push-in service during center time or as a pull-out depending on the needs and age of the student.

External Therapists

The Student Support Services team works closely with a variety of external therapists to provide students and families with support. As needed, we are happy to recommend therapists to meet your child’s individual needs. As a convenience for families, we do allow some external therapists to serve students on campus during school hours at the family’s expense. In these cases, the therapist must be approved by the school and a written contract between family, school and therapist is required. The most common external therapists that work with early childhood children for early intervention purposes include speech therapy and occupational therapy.

Speech Therapy focused on spoken language disorders such as:

- Articulation disorders: difficulties producing sounds in syllables or saying words incorrectly to the point that listeners can't understand what's being said.
- Fluency disorders: problems such as stuttering, in which the flow of speech is interrupted by abnormal stoppages, partial-word repetitions ("b-b-boy"), or prolonging sounds and syllables (sssssnake).
- Resonance or voice disorders: problems with the pitch, volume, or quality of the voice that distract listeners from what's being said. These types of disorders may also cause pain or discomfort for a child when speaking.
- Oral Language disorders: Language disorders can be either receptive or expressive:
 - Receptive disorders: difficulties understanding or processing language.
 - Expressive disorders: difficulty putting words together, limited vocabulary, or inability to use language in a socially appropriate way.

Occupational Therapy to work on activities of daily living, play exploration, play participation, leisure, social integration, gross and fine motor skills, muscle tone, and sensory-motor processing and integration.

Professional Learning / Early Release Wednesdays

At Country Day School we are dedicated to the use of research based best practices in all facets of our learning community. To maintain this standard, our teachers and teaching assistants must participate in ongoing professional growth to remain current in their practice. In recent years, we have utilized several different schedules to attempt to provide regular and consistent professional learning time for our teachers. For the 2018-2019 school year we will continue to have early release each Wednesday.

Each Wednesday student dismissal is at 2 pm. Please make arrangements to either pick your child up each Wednesday at 2 pm or have someone to meet the bus at this time.

CDS is a Closed Campus

Because the school is responsible for the students' safety, all Country Day School students' must remain on campus during the school day, including after-school activities. If, however, the student must leave campus for an appointment or other valid reason, the student may do so with written permission or e-mail from a parent or guardian and with a pass from the Early Childhood Principal which is given to the guard on the way out. (Student Release Form only given by office staff) this is the pass to leave school grounds early or before dismissal.

Emergency, Security, & Safety Procedures

Parents and all staff members are issued school identification cards and should be prepared to show them to security personnel each time they enter the CDS campus. Visitors must sign in at the entrance.

Because the school is responsible for student safety and wellbeing, Country Day School students must remain on campus during the school day, including after-school activities. If, however, the student must leave the campus for an appointment or other valid reason, parents or other designated adult, need to stop by the office to pick up the Student Release Form that should be given to the guards on the way out of school.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency preparedness is our most important ally, and at school we run regular drills so that students will know exactly what to do in case of an emergency. At home, parents should talk with their children beforehand about what to expect should an emergency occur. Reassure them that they are doing their part by remaining at the school and following the instructions of their teachers, and that you or one of your designated alternates will pick them up as soon as possible.

Information about emergency/evacuation procedures are posted on the website. The information below is given as a quick reference.

Our school has a public address system. The signal for an emergency drill is a continuous bell or a siren. Students and teachers evacuate the buildings quickly, calmly and quietly proceed to their designated areas. Students should remain with their teachers throughout the emergency drill. At the conclusion of the drill, the sounding of a long bell will signal the orderly return to classes.

Everyone should keep in mind that instructions for grouping or for location may vary, depending on the emergency.

Please review the [CDS Emergency Protocol](#) for further information.

Evacuation Plan

In the event of a major fire or earthquake, emergency information in both English and Spanish will be broadcast on Radio Monumental (93.5 on the FM dial or 670 on the AM dial) or TV Channel 7. Do not call the school, as phone lines must be kept open for calls related to the emergency. If phones are not working, the school may not be able to contact the media. In that case, you must make your own decision about whether to come to the school or not. Should evacuation of the school be deemed necessary, parents must pick up their children since bus transportation will not be available. In order to reduce traffic jams, only one-way traffic will be allowed on the road inside the gates. Please follow the instructions of the guards and teachers directing traffic, so that evacuation flows as smoothly as possible.

Emergency Consent Forms

Country Day provides a consent form for parents to designate an alternate person to pick up their children in case of an emergency. Such designated drivers should keep this form in their cars at all times. In an emergency, they will be allowed to pick up your children only if they give the consent form to the teacher in charge.

Medical Emergency

In the event of injury to a student, the school will render first aid as necessary and will notify the parent immediately. CDS is covered by Emergencias Medicas for ambulance service, and they would be immediately notified if the child needed to be transported to

the hospital. A student is never sent alone; he or she is always accompanied by the nurse, teacher, or principal.

Accident Insurance

All students enrolled at Country Day are insured against accident and injury 24 hours per day, year round. The policy covers medical expenses incurred from an accident. Claim forms, as well as more information, are available in the Business Office, for reimbursement of expenses incurred for medical treatment.

Safeguarding Students

Country Day School has worked diligently to be on the forefront of Child Protection amongst schools in our region. In the 2015-2016 school year, the school organized a Child Protection Task Force charged with the task of establishing a comprehensive Child Protection Policy that is in congruence with international standards. As the policy was completed, the Task Force evolved into our current *Child Protection Team* charged with upholding, maintaining and reviewing our policy.

The Child Protection Team is comprised of the General Director, the Principal from each house, the Counselor from each house, the school nurse, and the head of the Human Resources Department.

A significant component of the Country Day School Child Protection Policy is a developmentally appropriate child safety curriculum for all age levels, as well as a parent education component.

Please take a few minutes to review the full [Child Protection Policy](#).

Should you ever have concerns related to child protection, please contact your child's principal or counselor, the Child Protection Lead (Keitsa Brisson: keitsa_brisson@cds.ed.cr), or the Human Resources department. You may also use the direct and anonymous Child Protection email: cds_child_protection@cds.ed.cr

Health Services

Country Day offers the full-time services of a registered nurse, whose office is located behind the pavillion and next to the North Gate. The nurse will not administer medicine to any student, unless permission is given by the parents. If a student develops a fever or otherwise becomes ill at school, the parents will be called immediately to come and pick up the student. Please do not send your child to school if she/he has a fever, is vomiting, has diarrhea, conjunctivitis, head lice, or any contagious virus or disease.

Attendance Policy for Illness:

To prevent transmitting diseases we ask you to ***please DO NOT send your child to school*** if any of the following symptoms or signs are present ***in the previous 24 hours.******

- Fever greater than 100* Fahrenheit or 37.7* Celsius
- Acute cold, sore throat or persistent cough
- Vomiting, nausea or severe abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Pus like discharge from nose or eyes
- Red or inflamed eyes/lids
- Suspected untreated impetigo, scabies or lice
- If your child complains often of headaches or stomach aches or frequently does not feel well, please notify your physician or health care provider

Note: *Your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school*

Another component of this policy is that medicine may not be sent in with children to be administered during school without a written authorization. Written authorization must be provided from the parent and/or doctor including the dosage, timing, and purpose of the medication. **Parents must fill out an Authorization to Administer Medication form** before any new prescription medication can be given. The only exception is if authorization was given on the initial Health Forms during the admission process for over the counter medication. All medication must be stored in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse.

Please take a close look at the [Medication Policy](#) which includes information regarding injury, medication distribution, attendance regarding illness, immunization requirements, and general information about the nurse's office.

Food Service

Children need to bring a snack each day. We want to help the children develop the habit of healthy eating, so please send a nutritious snack. Gum, candy, and soda are NOT allowed. For safety reasons, we cannot allow breakable containers on campus. Please see the Country Day School Nutrition Policy for specific rules & guidelines.

The following foods are not allowed:

- * gum or candy
- * soft drinks, sports drinks or iced teas
- * beverages containing caffeine
- * We also ask that you avoid processed snacks (packaged cookies, chips, etc.)

The school menu is published monthly. There is an app available for the CDS menu. Find it here [CDS Menu App](#)

Hot and cold lunches, including a variety of drinks, desserts, and a vegetarian menu are available each day in the school dining hall. Each child needs to have an account in the Business Office. Students may also bring lunch from home. The dining hall has several

microwaves for heating food. The teacher and assistant will help your child with his/her lunch and will encourage the child to eat what is sent. Please let us know of any special circumstances (such as allergies) as well as your expectations.

Food Allergies

Please note that it is the parent's responsibility to notify all members of EC staff (classroom teacher, assistant, nurse, and principal) of any food or other serious allergies.

If there is a food allergy in your child's class, we ask that students not share food for the safety of all student health.

Going Green

In keeping with our CDS Profile of the Graduate that states that our students are able to actively and meaningfully contribute in various communities by respecting and caring for our planet through active stewardship, the middle school has several initiatives designed to reduce waste and to support reducing and recycling.

- All Early Childhood students are expected to obtain and regularly use a reusable water bottle.
- These may be brought from home already filled with water or may be filled at school in one of the purified water dispensers.
- All clean used paper products in the Early Childhood school must be recycled. Recycling bins and boxes are located in the classrooms, hallways, and office.

Transportation

Buses

Country Day School offers a transportation pay service for many of its students in the morning, midday and at the end of the day. However, because we serve a large variety of locations in which families choose to live, students are not offered door-to-door service in every case. Parents are entirely responsible for bringing and picking up students to and from the designated bus stops along one of the pre-established bus routes. Our only door-to-door service is at 12:00 p.m. for the midday, Early Childhood students.

Our service includes daily coordination of all logistics through our transportation office and includes an after-school express bus service at 4:30 pm for paying students participating in extracurricular activities. Express routes are not our regular routes and are established each year.

New families should consult with the Transportation Coordinator, Mr. Alvaro Zamora, about routes and schedules. alvaro_zamora@cds.ed.cr

Carpools

Carpool drivers are asked to remain in their cars at all times, and to observe the orderly flow of traffic. Please turn off your car while waiting for your child.

Change of Transportation

If parents wish to change their child's usual method of transportation home, they must **fill the transportation changes form [clicking here](#) or send a note in writing or an e-mail to Early Childhood Transportation Changes ec_transportation@cds.ed.cr before 11:00 a.m.** The office will send a return email confirming the receipt of your request. For all children's safety, changes of transportation may not be made through a phone call.

Parking

Please park your car in designated "Visitor" parking spaces. CDS will not be responsible for damage or theft. Please note that the spaces marked "Reservado" are reserved for persons with disabilities or other needs which require close parking to the sidewalk crossing and ramp.

Traffic Flow Plan

To enter the school, there are three lanes. Registered cars should enter through the arm gate in the middle, visitors should report to the guard on the left line and school buses enter through the right lane. Cars dropping students off at the Early Childhood area will be allowed on most of the days to turn left at the entrance to go directly where they need to be. Cars dropping off students for all other sections should go straight and turn left at the end of the parking lot in order to access the main drop off area.

East Gate Pick-Up Procedures

- Stay in your car – A CDS staff member will deliver your child to your car. The gate will not be opened with parents standing in front of the gate.
- If you get to school early to wait for afternoon drop-off, we ask that you *turn the engine off* – this is for the health & safety of all students and staff, it is also kind to our planet.
- Do not drive around cars in line to get to the front – if all cars follow the above procedures, the line will move quickly and your turn will come.
- When exiting, please drive *slowly and carefully*; watching for pedestrians.
- Be considerate and polite while in line. We all have the same goal – to get your child into your car quickly and safely!

Thank you for your cooperation in following these procedures. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any suggestions for improvement.

Personal Items

Lost & Found

Unidentifiable clothing is one problem where children all wear the same uniform! **It is very important to label your child's clothing, lunch box, etc. with your child's full**

name. Personal items left on the school campus will be placed in the Lost and Found Center located outside the Early Childhood Office. Please feel free to come and search for lost items. Items labeled with the student's name will be returned as soon as they are turned into the lost and found.

Money & Valuables

Though Country Day makes a valiant effort to provide on-campus security, it is not responsible for any money, radios, compact disc/cassette players, tape recorders, cameras, handheld computers, clothing, guitars, or any other personal property brought to school by its students. Any money or valuables which must be brought to school should be entrusted with the secretary for safekeeping until the time needed. Please send any money for field trips in a labeled envelope.

Student Messages

Please call, email, or come to the Early Childhood office to leave messages or items; do not go to the child's classroom. Even though the parent's message may be brief or the item quite small, such innocent, well-meaning presence causes a disruption of the educational process. The secretary will be happy to deliver such messages or items to any student or teacher as quickly as possible.

Special Events

Assemblies

Students participate in various assemblies each year. Assemblies provide each child with the unique opportunity for self-expression in front of an audience. Please note the dates on your calendar, so you can share these special occasions. Most assemblies are held in the theater, usually at 8:15 a.m.

Birthdays

At Country Day, we like to acknowledge children's birthdays! However, we recognize the effects that celebrating multiple birthdays with food in a given time period have on students and the interruption to learning that is caused. For this reason, **in Early Childhood we celebrate birthdays monthly.** Don't worry, your child's birthday will be recognized & honored in class on the day; however, the celebration (involving food) will be as a class on a specified day. The first Friday of each month we will celebrate all of the birthdays for the month in each class. Parents may bring treats for the entire class to share on this day with agreement in advance from your child's teacher. Please be in touch with your child's teacher prior to this date to organize this event. Please do not send party favors or piñatas to school.

If you would like to send invitations to your child's classmates for a birthday party, your child's teacher will distribute them provided that all students in the class are invited. If you are planning to invite just a few, we ask that you mail or telephone your invitations in order to avoid hurt feelings among classmates.

Field Trips

Teachers schedule field trips for the purpose of educational enrichment or community awareness. Each student who wishes to participate must return a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian prior to leaving the campus. Students wear the school uniform on the field trip, unless the Principal has given approval for clothing which may be more weather appropriate.

Occasionally, your child's teacher may ask for family volunteers for field trips. If you volunteer, you will be supervising a small group of students. We encourage a parent, grandparent, or other adult family members to volunteer. For safety reasons, siblings cannot attend field trips with us.

After School Activities Program

The Early Childhood and Elementary After School program provides opportunities for students, beginning in Kinder, to engage in safe and fun recreational activities that extend their educational experience at Country Day School. A range of activities and sports are offered from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Wednesdays are slightly earlier). This program is offered to students who want to keep active, develop skills and take part in a rotating selection of sports and activities. Fun, low-level intramural games are also a part of this program with students being able to play in mini- tournaments and mixed-ability teams.

Course Programs are sent out twice per year; they may include activities such as:

- Performing Arts such as, Ballet, Dance, Strings classes, Violin and Piano
- Sports and Martial Arts including Swimming, Basketball, Chess, Volleyball, Soccer, Parkour and Karate
- Clubs such as Robotics, Science and Lego
- Arts such as Arts and Crafts, Cooking, Painting and Drawing
- Languages including Spanish and French

Questions regarding the After School Activity Program should be directed to the Program Coordinator, Rocio Rivas (rocio_rivas@cds.ed.cr).

School Photos & Yearbooks

At some point in October school photos are taken of each student by a professional photographer. Parents will be notified in advance of the school photo schedule, i.e. what grade on which day. If your child is absent on the scheduled photo-taking day, do not despair. A day for retakes is generally scheduled early in the second semester.

At the beginning of the year you will be sent a Photo/Video consent form (electronically, with all of the beginning of the year forms). This is authorizing CDS to take photographs/videos of your child for educational purposes. We do post photos/videos

on both MyCDS and the CDS social media sites; however, we will never post your child's photograph in conjunction with his or her full name. Please be certain to sign and return this form.

Each student at Country Day School receives a copy of the yearbook, free of charge. The yearbook is distributed near the end of the school year to all students who have no outstanding library fines or unpaid lost books. Generally taken during the first semester, school photos are made of each student by a professional photographer. Students will be notified in advance of the school photo schedule.

Dress Code

The purpose of a uniform at Country Day School is to minimize distractions and to help students learn to keep themselves neat, modest, and well-groomed. Concern for personal appearance is an indication of self-respect and courtesy to others, and creates a favorable climate for learning. In addition, it is Costa Rican law that all school age children wear their school's designated uniform as described in their handbooks. Final interpretation of any uniform rests with the Principal of each House and the Director. Coming to school in uniform is considered a minimum expectation for each student each day. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

Country Day School attaches as much importance to the spirit as to the letter of the uniform and looks to students and families to comply with both. Students should be dressed in clothing in good condition. We expect that parents, without exception, will work with the School in supporting and enforcing the uniform.

The school uniform, along with other CDS items, may be purchased at the Campus Store.

In early childhood, most students wear the PE uniform everyday due to the amount of play in and out of the classroom.

Please contact the Early Childhood office or Campus Store with any questions. The following grid delineates the correct uniform for each house:

	EARLY CHILDHOOD	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL
POLO SHIRT	Light grey polo shirt with red collar and sleeves with CDS logo.	Light grey polo shirt with navy blue collar with CDS logo.	Light grey polo shirt with navy blue collar with CDS logo. *Special shirts for 8th graders are ordered in spring of prior year.	Light grey polo shirt with navy blue collar with CDS logo. *Special shirts for 12th graders are ordered in spring of prior year.
PANTS	Red shorts, skorts or sweatpants.	Pants must be straight, loose-fitting, worn at the waist. No lycra, jeggings, leather, jeans, cargo or fatigue-style pants. No denim or denim-like fabric. Color: navy blue		
SHORTS/ CAPRIS/ SKIRTS	For Early Childhood, all clothing is in red. For boys: Bermuda-style (walking shorts) only. No shorts shorter than three inches above the knee. Color: navy blue For girls: Capri/cropped pants (extending below the knees). No denim. Color: navy blue Skorts and shorts allowed for girls in Elementary and Middle School only. Color: navy Blue			
SHOES	Shoes or sneakers. Minimal additional color is allowed. Colors: navy blue, black, grey or white.			
SOCKS	Socks must be worn. Colors: navy blue, black, white or grey.			
P.E. UNIFORM	White t-shirt with CDS logo on front of t-shirt (or other CDS event t-shirts) with red shorts, sweatpants. Socks and sneakers.		White t-shirt with CDS logo on front of t-shirt (or other CDS event t-shirts) with red shorts, sweatpants and/or CDS athletic team shorts. Socks and sneakers.	
OUTERWEAR	Outerwear must be plain (small, discrete logo allowed). Colors: navy blue, black, grey and white. CDS athletic team outerwear permitted.			
NOT ACCEPTABLE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hats may not be worn inside buildings. • Jewelry and personal embellishments must be discreet and not present a distraction to the learning environment. • No fad or unnaturally colored hair styles are permitted. Hair must be well-groomed and neatly maintained 				

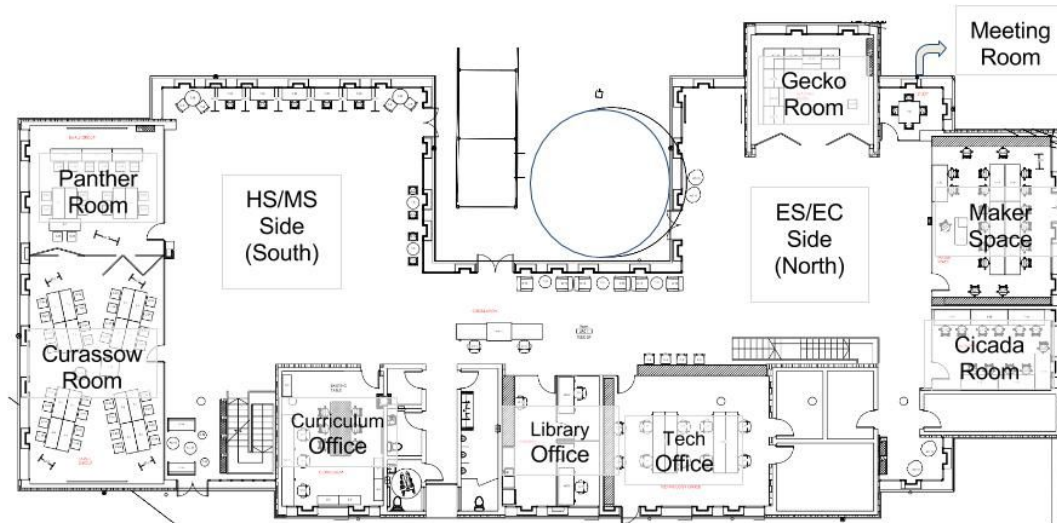
Learning Resource Center (LRC): General Library Policies and Information

The Library offers an excellent selection of over 15,000 titles in its collection, along with magazines, videos, and maps. There are also over 400 titles of ebooks available for the students to read through the online catalog. All Early Childhood classrooms visit the library weekly. Sometime around the sixth week of school, Prep students are given the privilege of checking out one book at a time. All students, parents, faculty and staff are welcome to use its facilities. If you are interested in setting up anthe account, please contact the library directly. Parents may come to check out up to 10 books per child. Check out is for one month. Hours of operation are from 7:30 am to 4:15pm, Monday through Friday. Parent volunteers are welcome. We encourage you to take advantage of this valuable resource.

Mission Statement

The Country Day School Libraries provide diverse collections reflective of a global community that will empower patrons to effectively access and evaluate resources while gaining confidence and independence through using critical thinking as well as engage students to enjoy reading.

Library Spaces



The library has different spaces that can be used for activities that have no other logical meeting space. Staff and CDS parent community members may reserve some of these spaces on a first-come, first serve basis. To make reservations please contact the librarians or LRC director.

Curassow Room - Large reservable lecture room good for meetings with 20+ people or class lecture/research.

Panther Room - Small reservable lecture room good for meetings with 10-20 people or class lecture/research.

Lego Corner - a space for students to build, create and explore using legos

Gecko Room - reading room for the ES and EC students with multi-colored furniture

MakerSpace - multipurpose room for instruction, imagination and creation

Cicada Room - room where all the noisy machines for producing final projects

Crow's Nest - leveled readers for choosing just right books with their teachers; work tables for independent work space

Meeting Room - quiet room for recording voice threads or audio for a movie

Policies

Books

Check-out period is for two weeks for EC & ES students. For MS, HS and parents the check-out period is a month.

- Prep children can check out 1 book at a time.
- Students in grade 1-3 may check out 2 books at a time.
- Students in grades 4-5 may check out 3 books at a time.
- Students in grades 6 may check out 5 books at a time.
- Students in grades 7-12 may check out a maximum of 10 book at a time.
- Parents are encouraged to check out up to 10 books for each of their children.
- Parent check out times will be announced at the beginning of the school year..

Magazines

Current issues are overnight.

Bound & back issues are the same as books.

Equipment

Computers/Laptops: The LRC has 5 MacBook Air and 20 Dell laptops available for checkout to students and faculty. Laptops are offered in a first-come first-served basis. Student use of school laptops is subject to the terms of the Responsible Use Policy. The chargers will not be included as all available laptops should be fully charged when handed over to be checked out.

*Only High School students and faculty members are allowed to check out the MacBook Air laptops.

Renewals

Students and/or parents need to bring the book in to renew their books.

Holds

Students can log in to their library account and place holds on books. When the book on hold comes in, students will be emailed that the book is in.

Lost/Overdue Books

Fines for overdue books are 25 colones a day per book, excluding weekends and holidays. There is a 3-day grace period, but after the 3 days, the fine starts at 100 colones on day 4.

If a book is lost, the person that borrowed it must either pay 5,000 colones or the cost of the book, whichever is greater. Replacement books are accepted for lost books at the discretion of the librarian.

Students and/or parents are automatically set up to receive emails when their books are overdue or they have fines. A report is sent out Monday morning of each week. If you have any questions, please contact the librarians.

Yearbooks are held at the end of the year in June for lost books and fines. Teachers are responsible for the books checked out in their name. If a book is lost, then they need to pay the replacement cost.

End of Semester Procedures

At the end of each semester, all books and materials should be returned by students as well as teachers.

During the semester breaks, students are allowed to check out books. Grades Prep-2 need to be accompanied by their parents to check out 10 books. Grades 3-5 need to have a signed permission slip from their parents for 5 books. If they want to check out 10, then they must be accompanied by a parent. Grades 6-12 are allowed to check out up to 10 books during the breaks. Fine policies will be applied to books turned in late.

Library Rules

Students are expected to behave properly in the library and this includes no running, using indoor voices, leaving things as they were when they leave, and using the browsing sticks as they look for books.

Respect and responsibility are the two main rules; everything else flows from there. This is a shared space so they should treat it as such. Middle School and Elementary students may come to use the LRC space with a pass.

Students may not eat or drink in the LRC. High school and middle school students may take a water bottle with them. Elementary students may bring in a water bottle and leave it in the designated area.

Noise level must be kept at a non-disruptive level. If students are listening to music, they must have headphones on.

Library Schedule

The LRC is open from 7:30 to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Students are welcome to come and use the spaces available throughout the day.