



The Prepared Environment – Material That Invites Activity

Practical Life – Skills of Daily Living

Sensorial – Exploring The World

Mathematics – From concrete to abstract

Language – From Spoken to Written and Writing

Art, Music – Integrated in Program

Cultural Subject – Broadly based and integrated

A complete Montessori education provides your child with an integrated, individualized, and academically challenging program that meets his/her changing developmental needs from year to year.

Childhood happens once. A Montessori education ensures that your child will make the best of hers/his.

The Montessori Approach

Complemented by her training in medicine, psychology and anthropology, Dr. Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952) developed her philosophy of education based upon actual observations of children.

Children in the primary (pre-school) program possess what Dr. Montessori called the ***absorbent mind***, the ability to absorb all aspects of one's culture and environment without effort or fatigue. It is during this stage that a child has a tremendous ability to learn and assimilate from the world around him, without conscious effort. During this time, children are particularly receptive to certain external stimuli.

The following areas of activity cultivate the children's adaptation and ability to express and think with clarity:

Practical life exercises instill care for self, for others, and for the environment. Activities include many of the tasks children see as part of the daily routine in their home, such as preparing food and washing dishes, along with exercises of grace and courtesy. Through these tasks, children develop muscular coordination, enabling movement and the exploration of their surroundings. They learn to work at a task from beginning to end, and develop their powers of control and concentration.

Sensorial materials serve as tools for development. Children build cognitive skills, and learn to order and classify impressions by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, listening, and exploring the physical properties of their environment.

Language development is vital to human development. The Montessori environment is rich in oral language opportunities, allowing the child to experience conversations, stories and poetry. The sandpaper letters help children link sound and symbol effortlessly, encouraging the development of written expression and reading skills.

Geography, Biology, Botany, Zoology, Art and Music is presented as extensions of the sensorial and language activities. Children learn about people and cultures in other countries with an attitude of respect and admiration. Through familiarity, children come to feel connected to the global human family. Lessons and experiences with nature inspire a reverence for all life. The comprehensive art and music programs give children every opportunity to enjoy a variety of creative activities, as well as gain knowledge of the great masters.

Mathematics activities help children learn and understand the concepts of math by manipulating concrete materials. This work gives children a solid understanding of basic mathematical principles, prepares them for later abstract reasoning, and helps to develop problem-solving capabilities.

The importance of the complete three year cycle

Montessori recognized the advantage of educating children in distinct age groupings. Children start when they are 2 ½ to 3 years old and continue till they are six. **We strongly encourage parents to have their child enrolled for the entire three-year cycle.** The last year is extremely important for a number of reasons. Child is at the age when solidifying his knowledge

and is embracing more abstract ideas. In the final year he/she will receive the support and confidence needed in order to succeed and make an easy transition into elementary schooling.

Overview

The preschool program at Bright Star Montessori School includes children from 2 ½ to 6 years of age.

Morning classes 8:45 am -11:30 am

Afternoon classes from 12:30 pm – 3:15 pm

Extended day program for 4 and 5 years old from 8:45 am to 3:15 pm

Before and after school care from 8:00 – 8:45 and 3:15 – 5:30 pm (only for our children)

Our Daycare with integrated Montessori preschool is open from 7:30 – 6:00 pm.

For our Parksville location, the schedules are different. Please see Parksville Schedules & Fees website page.

Children must be 3 years old by December 31st of the school year to be registered in the preschool program from September.

The program and materials encourage children to develop naturally at their own pace, proceeding from simple activities, which satisfy their curiosity and their sense of wonder for the world, fosters INDEPENDENCE. Through these activities special encouragement and support is given to the child's developing skills of concentration and attention to the details.

Confidence is developed by guiding the child through an individualized program offering challenges and ensuring success.

Communications

Parent – teacher trust and expectations are best maintained through an effective system of communication, before issues become problems, benefit all members of Bright Star Montessori School. The school welcomes comments and encourages parents to seek answers to their questions. To speak directly to a teacher about a concern, visit them briefly before or after class to set up a time for meeting. At that time briefly inform the teacher as to the nature of the meeting so they can be best prepared. The same procedures will be followed if a teacher wants to meet with a parent.

Parent – teacher conferences

Parent and teachers conferences are held two times a year. Once in the fall and once in the spring. Conferences are a formal time to discuss the progress of your child. A sign up sheet will be posted in order to serve a conference time.

Observations

We would like to encourage you to come and observe your child's classroom. Parent observation times are offered twice a year. Observation times will be on a sign – up basis and they are a great opportunity to view and appreciate the Montessori approach as well as seeing your child at work. We request that observers do not interact with the teacher, or any of the children in class.

Clothing

In the class, children should wear simple clothing that is free of complicated fastening so they can manage independently. Please have your child dressed appropriately for the weather; i.e. boots for rain and snow, mittens in winter, etc. In the spring and summer you child needs to have and put on sunscreen as well as a hat. Clearly mark your child's name on their clothing.

Birthdays

We celebrate children's birthdays at the end of your child's class time. If you wish to provide food we suggest making small healthy muffins preferably without the icing, or crackers and cheese, or fruits and vegetables. **Please do not send cakes.**

If your child's birthday does not fall within ten months of the school year we will be choosing a date near the end of the year to honor child and their birthday.

Parental Involvement

Parent involvement creates a strong sense of community and contributes to Bright Star Montessori School being a special place for families and staff. We are eager to share it with you. There are a number of ways that we welcome you to contribute and enhance the quality of life for children attending Bright Star Montessori School.

Teachers always need help during **Field trips**, such as organizing before and, driving and chaperoning during outings. A sign up sheet will be posted regarding specific needs.

Cultural and Religious events are an excellent way for parents to share. Involvement may include preparing a presentation of the event with special ethnic dish, presenting clothing /pictures etc.

Field trips

Fieldtrip will be announced well in advance of the event / outing. Permission for your child to attend field trips will be made on general form at the beginning of the year. Should you not want your child to go on a particular outing simply inform the teachers and keep your child at home for the day.

Parents are expected to be designated drivers for field trips. Parents are to be active supervisors for all children in their care and to apply disciplinary action toward inappropriate behaviours. Teachers will advise you of their expectations. The general rule is that siblings do not attend field trips.

Responsibility for the costs of the field trips will fall upon the parents. All cost will be kept at minimum.

We require that the vehicle / driver transporting the child / children in the program have a **minimum of five million dollars (5,000,000.00) liability insurance.**

Arrival and Dismissal

Being late is not acceptable because of the disruption it creates. If your child arrives more than 10 minutes late the doors will be closed, in order to respect the needs of the class that is in progress. A note will be sent home.

After three late arrivals a meeting with the Head of School will be arranged to discuss the circumstances surrounding the lateness. Our desire is to support you but our concern for the disruption to the class and the comfort of your child takes precedence.

The same policy will apply for picking up your child.

Application and Admission

Parents of children already registered in the school will be asked to pre-register their child for the following year in order to guarantee a space. The final commitment to register will be in the month of March.

We begin taking a "wait list" of potential "new students" in the fall. We will provide a time for OPEN HOUSE to visit in February and will be registering new students very shortly after our returning students have registered.

A fee of \$100 is paid at the time of registration. This fee is paid one time only and is not refundable for any reason at any time.

Post - dated cheques for the full amount of the monthly fee for the ten months of the school year are required at the time of registration, along with the completed registration forms.

Notice of withdrawal

Parents must give the school one month's written notice when withdrawing their child from the school. When notice of withdrawal is given all remaining postdated checks (allowing for the period of notice) will be returned.

If a decision is made **by the school** to request your child be withdrawn from the school, it will be done according to the rules in the Enrollment Agreement, see copy attached at the back of this handbook. All checks for the upcoming months will be returned. Fees for the month that is in progress will not be refunded.

Absences

Please call the school by 8:30 A.M. if your child is going to be absent from school. Attendance is taking in the classroom first thing in the morning.

Items from home

Candies, gum toys and miscellaneous must not be brought to school as they may lead to unnecessary difficulties for your children. It is important that teachers are free to form a positive relationship with your child. This should not include having to confiscate these items. The other children will also be affected negatively if an individual brings these items to school. However, a specific time can be set aside for your child to share a special book or item relating to a school theme, a family trip, special event, etc



Discipline Policy and Procedures

Bright Star Montessori School staff members are absolutely not permitted to use any form of physical punishment, including spanking. Staff members may not single out a child for ridicule, threaten harm to the child or the child's family, and may not specifically aim to degrade a child or a child's family. They may not use harsh, demeaning or abusive language in the presence of children. We use the following disciplinary techniques where they are age appropriate:

Redirecting
Giving choices
Problem solving
Natural and Logical Consequences
Ignoring
Time out

Discipline does not mean punishment. Discipline is teaching a child how to be safe, how to behave on his/her own and how to know the difference between right and wrong. The staff will use praise and positive methods of discipline and guidance to encourage self-expression and self-direction of the children in the school. The limits may be set at times in order to keep children from losing control or causing harm to themselves or others. Time out is only one-way to handle a situation and allows the child regain control of his/her actions and feelings. Time away from the group will not exceed 5 –7 minutes.

Positive ways to channel children's emotions and handling misbehavior include:

Redirect negative behavior to an acceptable activity by gently encouraging the child to change activities.

Ignore the behavior.

Help children to understand consequences to behavior.

Limit choices

Use humor

Use the resources available at the school or ask for assistance with specific situations you are uncomfortable handling.

Remember never to humiliate, frighten or abuse a child. Respect their feelings and let them know whatever they are feeling is OK but is the way they express it that we want to help them control. Let the children know your feelings. Tell them you are not upset with them, but with their actions. Communicate with the children and model positive behaviors for them to imitate. Make sure what you are asking the children are appropriate for their developmental level.

Consult with parents since they know their child best. Emphasize the partnership between caregiver and parent an attempt to defuse a tense situation involving a problem with the child's behavior.



Health and Illness Policy and Procedures

How Sick Is Too Sick To Come To school?

- A temperature of 100F/38.3C or more accompanied by general symptoms such as listlessness or sluggishness may be an early sign of an illness that requires a doctor's attention
- Unexplained diarrhea or loose stool combined with nausea, vomiting or abdominal cramps
- A rash that not has been diagnosed as not being contagious.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye) or any other eye condition where the eye is itchy red, swollen or oozing except in the case of diagnosed allergies.)
- Impetigo. Ringworm or pinworm.
- Any contagious disease (measles, chicken pox, etc.)
- A severe cold or flu with fever, runny nose, sneezing or bad cough.
- Severe itching of body or scalp
- Know of suspected communicable disease

Parents are also required to keep a child home if the child is not well enough to take part in the regular program of the facility

All children returning to the facility after an illness must be free from symptoms or have a doctor's approval.

It is requested that a child be on any antibiotics for one full day before returning to school. This is to allow time for any reaction to the antibiotic to occur before re-entering school.

If a child becomes ill while attending school the parent or alternate will be contact. The child will be closely monitored while waiting to be picked up. If the symptoms become severe, we will contact the child's physician or call emergency care.

If a communicable disease breaks out in school parents will be notify within 24 hours – same rules apply to families. In some cases the public health nurse will also be notify.

We are both, myself and substitute teacher holding a current First Aid Training Certificate.

Administering Medication

We prefer not to dispense medication. However, if there is an ongoing medical problem a form for permission to administer medication must be completed before we can give medications. Medication will only be given as directed by label on the original prescription locked container. We will check the expiry date on medication and maintain a written record of medication administered, stating time and dosage given and the signature of the staff member involved. Staff will promptly returned all unused medication at the dismissal time.



Child Abuse Policy and Procedures

The term "child abuse and neglect" means the physical injury by other than accidental means, injury resulting in a mental or emotional condition which is a result of abuse or neglect; negligent treatment, sexual abuse, maltreatment, mistreatment, non-treatment or exploitation or abandonment of a child the age of 18 or of an individual who appears to be mentally retarded.

All employees of Bright Star Montessori School, know or reasonably suspect child abuse or neglect are **required by law** to file a report with the Community care licensing, Ministry of Social services and police. An Immediate oral report is mandatory, followed by written report if requested. Anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal that otherwise exist and such immunity shall extend to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.

Please be advised that Bright Star Montessori School **WILL NOT TOLERATE ABUSE OR NEGLECT!** No employee is permitted at any time to use corporal punishment or to engage in the behaviors outlined at any time for any reason. If there is a doubt as to whether a discipline practice may be construed as abuse or neglect, that practice shall not be conducted.

Should an incident of suspected child abuse or neglect occur by an employee, the following procedure will be enforced:

1. The employee will not work directly with children until the investigation is completed. The manager will conduct this investigation.
2. The employee, other co-workers, and any other persons that may have information pertaining to the investigation will be questioned. Dishonesty or intentional omission of information will not be tolerated and may result in the immediate termination of all employees not fully cooperating with the investigation.
3. The Director and/or Co-Director will conclude the investigation as substantiated or unsubstantiated.
4. In the case of a substantiated claim, the employee will be terminated immediately if the person's continued employment at the Center would place the children at risk. If the children are not at risk, the employee may still be terminated immediately. At a minimum, however, that person will receive a written warning to be placed in their personnel file. A second substantiated incident of abuse or neglect, even if continued employment would not place the children at risk, will result in termination