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The Program

Introduction

Mission Statement

Our mission is to guide young children as they discover through exploration, gain confidence from independence, become respectful, self-disciplined leaders of their community, and ultimately realize their unlimited potential.

Portrait of the Graduate

Our Kindergarten Graduates are:

Intrinsically Motivated Learners

Compassionate Citizens of the World

Critical and Creative Thinkers

American Montessori Society Accreditation

BBCH has achieved accreditation by the American Montessori Society. This is the culmination of a multi-year collaborative process of professional reflection and assessment and is an incredible accomplishment. We are delighted to offer an outstanding, authentic, and accredited Montessori experience to the families of our entire community.

Broad Branch Children's House does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or disability in the admission of students, the employment of staff, or in the administration of its policies.

Philosophy

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was an Italian physician who designed a method of education by observing young children and how they learn. Her extensive early childhood research, which is supported by modern research, revealed that children experience sensitive periods for learning during their early years. They easily learn particular skills during the corresponding sensitive periods, more so than at any other time in the child's life. Dr. Montessori's method encourages the natural development of the whole child from birth through maturity. Out of this research-based foundation, the Montessori "Method of Education" emerged.

Maria Montessori's focus on the whole child led her to develop a school very different from the traditional adult-centered classroom. To emphasize this difference, she named her first school the "Casa de Bambini", or the Children's House. Her words are profound; the Montessori classroom is not the domain of the adults in charge, but rather a carefully-prepared environment designed to facilitate the development of the children's independence and sense of personal empowerment.

Broad Branch Children's House is a true community of young children. They move freely within the classroom, selecting work that captures their interest. Even very young children assist in the care of the environment: When they are hungry, they prepare their own snack and drink. When something spills, they help each other carefully clean things up. Parents are often amazed to see small children in Montessori classrooms cut raw fruits and vegetables, sweep and dust, carry pitchers of water, and pour liquids with barely a drop spilled. The children go about their work so calmly and purposefully that it is clear to even the casual observer that this is, in fact, their own environment.

If you have never been to a Montessori classroom, even as an adult, you have missed a great treat. The Montessori classroom is an intricate, fascinating place for children to unfold and discover. The Montessori ideal is that a child's own awakened love of discovery and learning will fuel his or her own education. From dazzling displays of bright, multicolored counting beads, to various blocks of specific wood and fabric textures that engage greater sensory development, the Montessori method stimulates childhood learning with countless, practical educational tools that children love.

The Montessori Approach

The Montessori Classroom

Perhaps the biggest difference in Montessori education from a traditional program is that the Montessori curriculum emphasizes the development of children as independent people. The child moves freely around the room, makes his/her choice, and independently takes that work off the shelf. The child completes the work and replaces it in the same place (often again and again, as children choose certain work over and over to gain mastery of it). Instead of waiting for an adult to choose for him, the child learns to think, “What do I want to do?” and takes the initiative on this repeatedly, day after day.

Because an adult is not standing over the student at every moment, praising or disciplining, a child becomes focused on his own work and behavior. Thus, ideally, a Montessori child is able to develop his own sense of concentration as well as a greater sense of confidence, character, and self-esteem. So, if a child drops or breaks something, the teacher is there to make sure the child is unharmed, and encourages the child to recover so that the child will clean up her own mess, again affirming to the child that she is capable of handling her own errors.

Six Characteristics of our Montessori Program

❖ Specialized Montessori Materials

Dr. Montessori began her career as an educator of young children by working with a group of fifty children aged three to five years old. She had a few developmental materials, which she had previously developed to help learning-impaired children and were designed to help with sensory perceptions. She discovered that once these materials were introduced, the children worked spontaneously and repeatedly with them in total concentration. Being a scientist, Dr. Montessori observed and responded to this phenomenon by perfecting those materials little by little, through the experimental process of trial and error, which resulted in the creation of highly specialized materials that aided in skill development of children. Over a century later, Montessori materials continue to be used by children all over the world in response to their inner drives to learn.

❖ A “Well-Prepared Environment” for Children

As children form and develop, they take from the environment what is needed for self-construction; children clearly show an inner need to learn about and to know themselves and their world. They want to develop their intelligence and become independent and responsible. When adults prepare and provide these specialized environments, children can experience the fulfillment of their potential.

Each Montessori classroom is a well-prepared environment designed to support the child’s need for learning and growth. It is a “child’s house” where there are many carefully-designed materials to meet the child’s natural interests. The atmosphere is positive, supportive, and non-competitive. The classroom has six distinct areas (practical life, language, sensorial, math, social studies, and science – more on those later) to encourage a child’s natural budding interest, with the main objective of providing creative and stimulating developmental experiences for the young child.

❖ **Multi-Age Groups of Children**

In a Montessori classroom children grow as their interests lead them from one level of skill to another. Having children of different age groups together provides models for younger children to imitate and gives the older ones an opportunity to reinforce their knowledge by helping the younger ones.

❖ **Specially-Trained Teachers**

Montessori teachers are specially-trained in child development and in the Montessori approach. The teacher's task is to observe children "at work", keeping a record of the child's work with the materials. The teacher will note periods of readiness and may redirect a child who chooses materials that are beyond his or her current abilities, while at other times the teacher might encourage a child to try a new, more difficult task. Whenever a child makes an error, the teacher allows the child to discover his or her own mistake through further manipulation of the self-correcting material. The Montessori teacher tries to be sensitive to the needs of the child and values the process over the product. By letting children work toward their own goals, teachers are able to encourage children's natural enthusiasm for learning.

❖ **An Integrated Approach**

In addition to the Montessori materials and specialized areas of the classroom, quality Montessori programs include a full complement of before and after care. Children have daily opportunities to use their large motor skills during outdoor play and enjoy creative dramatics, art, music, food exploration, and special classes that offer them many opportunities for self-expression. Such integration provides children the ability to make a smooth transition to other educational settings.

❖ **A Life-Long Approach to Learning**

Dr. Montessori once wrote, "It is true, we cannot make a genius; we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his or her potential possibilities to become an independent, secure, and balanced human being." Montessori classrooms provide children with a solid foundation on which to build later learning experiences. Children who are encouraged to be creative, independent, and responsible during early childhood grow into competent, happy adults.

The Montessori Toddler Program

For Children Ages 24 to 36 Months

Educational Goals

The environment for our growing two-year-old children is professionally designed to help them feel secure and comfortable in their home-away-from-home. Our curriculum centers on age-appropriate materials and activities that develop control, order, concentration, and independence. These skills develop through the daily practice of caring for self and environment, language exploration, fine and gross motor activities, and observing/learning from other toddlers.

The Classroom

From low shelving and toddler-sized furniture to materials especially designed to entice each child's individual developmental needs, the toddler community is carefully created to be warm and inviting. All materials are placed neatly in trays or little baskets to help define the child's space. Each material (or "work" as it is most commonly called) has an objective. These materials help to create a sense of order, build concentration, draw attention to details, develop eye-hand coordination, strengthen fine and gross motor skills, instill pride in accomplishing a task, and foster the child's self-esteem and independence.

The Montessori Primary Program

Preschool & Kindergarten

Educational Goals

The Montessori curriculum is designed to accommodate various stages of development that occur in roughly three-year cycles. While the child is three to six years of age, he or she is progressing through a stage in which repetition and manipulation of the environment is critical to the development of concentration, coordination, independence, and a sense of order. The child learns skills for everyday living such as sorting, grading, and classifying - all of which contribute to the development of a mind that is skilled in writing, reading, and math. Under the guidance of a certified Montessori teacher, learning is individualized and self-paced. Our beautiful, well-equipped Montessori classrooms are spacious and comfortable. Each classroom provides a stimulating environment for children ranging from two and a half to six years of age. Emphasis is placed on task analysis and development of a logical and ordered thought process. Each classroom activity is executed from beginning to end with careful attention to the accuracy of sequence and process.

The Classroom

The classroom contains six interrelated sets of learning areas. The following information gives a brief description of the objectives in each area:

❖ Practical Life

*"The first essential tool for the child's development is concentration.
The child who concentrates is immensely happy." - Maria Montessori*

The child develops an independent approach to personal care and care of his/her surroundings while increasing small motor coordination. Various exercises involving buttons, brushes, pitchers, water, and other objects that the child might recognize from home help the child feel comfortable and successful. The child also learns to pay attention to detail as he or she follows a sequence of actions. Practical Life prepares the child for all other areas of the room, including reading and writing. The emphasis on task completion and continuity encourages good working habits.

❖ Language

*"Written language can be acquired more easily by children of four years than by those of six.
While children of six usually need at least two years to learn how to write, children of four years
learn this second language within a few months." - Maria Montessori*

Oral communication is encouraged as children learn to communicate with each other in small group or whole group situations. Children are given names for everything in the environment. Letters are introduced using individual sounds along with the tactile reinforcement of tracing the sandpaper letters. After acquiring the ability to recognize several sounds, the child uses a moveable alphabet to make words. Miniature objects or pictures are used to represent the word, and each sound in the word is found in the moveable alphabet box and placed, in order, next to the object. While the child is acquiring a solid foundation in phonics, sight words are introduced. A variety of reading series awaits the child who has learned to decode the written language. Emergent readers can progress independently through a reading series designed to increase both decoding skills and comprehension. Word study and parts of speech are all addressed through manipulative activities designed to help the child acquire beginning grammatical concepts. The reading and writing connection is fostered through countless classroom opportunities as the child begins to use handwriting as a learning tool and an avenue of creative self-expression.

❖ Sensorial

"The senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge." - Maria Montessori

A young child meets the world around him through the constant use of his or her senses. This is an ideal time to give the child equipment that will sharpen the senses and enable the child

to understand the many sensorial impressions found in the environment. Visual, auditory, and tactile activities sharpen the child's discriminatory skills. To help the child organize sensorial impressions, each piece of classroom equipment is carefully designed to define only one quality such as color, weight, size, or sound. As the child uses and manipulates the sensorial impressions, he or she begins to discover the multi-dimensional interrelationships found among the various pieces of classroom equipment. Further exploration leads to delight as the child progresses through a wide array of extension activities, more discoveries, and keener perceptions about the surrounding environment.

❖ Mathematics

"Sometimes very small children in a proper environment develop a skill and exactness in their work that can only surprise us." - Maria Montessori

If a child has access to concrete mathematical materials, he or she can easily assimilate the many facts and skills of arithmetic. Montessori mathematical materials help the child acquire conceptual understanding through repetition, manipulation, and mastery of skills. Enticed by inviting activities, the child is introduced to the concepts of counting, place value, and finally, the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

❖ Social Studies

"The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child." - Maria Montessori

With geography tools such as globes, puzzle maps, and the atlas, the child begins to develop a spatial sense of the world around him/her. The passage of time is a concept presented through seasonal and daily time lines, while the various land and water forms are illustrated through actual models the child fills with water. Picture files, objects, and an extensive library collection bring life to the different aspects of cultures, traditions, and celebrations from around the world.

❖ Science

"The secret of good teaching is to regard the child's intelligence as a fertile field in which seeds may be sown, to grow under the heat of flaming imagination." - Maria Montessori

The objective of the science program is to make the child aware of the world around him/her. It builds on the child's natural curiosity and helps the child to ask and answer "Why?" Plenty of opportunities are provided for the child to manipulate, classify, predict, and experiment.

Enrichment Programs

Beyond the Walls

Under the guidance of BBCH teachers, our students explore the natural world through gardening, walks around our neighborhood, and trips to Lafayette Park.

Extended Care Programs

Before Care

Early Risers

8:10am - 9:00am

We roll out the welcome mat promptly at 8:10am. Mornings are important - they set the tone for the entire day. A quiet and comforting arrival time gives children a chance to start the day at their own pace and make the necessary mental preparation for school. Children enjoy preparing the classroom for the day and beginning their work.

After Care

Afternoon Adventures

3:00pm - 5:50pm

A carefully thought-out balance of activities provides age-appropriate times for active indoor and outdoor play and a choice of open-ended experiences in our classrooms. The daily schedule will be modified for daylight savings.

Students may “drop-in” for Before Care or After Care at a rate of **\$20.00 per any portion of an hour used**. Same day accommodations are unlikely - because these programs are very popular, please contact the school at least 24 hours in advance to see if space is available.

School Day Programs

All students participate in Montessori Mornings from 9:00am - 12:15pm.

Students who stay for a full day will participate in one of the following:

Nap Time

We encourage the children to nap by playing soft music, lowering the lights, and giving back rubs. If your child will be napping, please bring a small blanket, small pillow, and (optional) small stuffed animal.

- BBCH will provide each child with a nap bag.
- On Fridays, all nap items will be sent home in the child's nap bag for laundering.
- Parents are asked to return all laundered items to school on Mondays.

Montessori Afternoons

Montessori afternoons provide additional opportunities for children ages 4 and older to explore and develop in the Montessori environment. These students must exhibit the readiness and maturity to take on additional challenges in the Montessori classroom. Children in the afternoon class are able to work independently and in small groups, and show the concentration needed to complete a second Montessori work cycle.

Montessori afternoons include a mix of classroom work time, outdoor play, and weekly neighborhood explorations.

Policies & Procedures

Arrival & Dismissal

The Morning Drop-Off

Morning drop-off for Primary classrooms will take place at the BBCH gate, where a BBCH staff member will happily welcome your child to school. Toddler families will walk their children upstairs to the Magnolia classroom.

Dismissal & Pick-Up

12:15pm dismissals: Families should use the door code and come upstairs to pick up your child. Your child will be ready and waiting in the hallway.

3:00pm dismissals: A teacher will bring the 3pm dismissals outside to the BBCH garden. If it is raining, families should use the door code and come inside to pick up your child.

For children staying at school for the extended day, families will pick up the children in the BBCH garden. During the months of November-March, the aftercare children will come inside to the Sycamore room at 5:00pm.

At Pick-up Tip: When you come to pick up your child, arrive confidently and leave with your child. If you give your child a choice and agree to leave and come back later, you are allowing your child to make the decision to leave, which he/she may use in the future when you don't have this flexibility.

For safety and security reasons, children can only be dismissed into the care of parents, legal guardians, or those designated on the authorized pickup list. When a child is going home with a friend or another adult, **please email the school in advance (bbch@bbchmontessori.com) or send written permission.** Staff members will request a photo ID to verify identification before releasing the child. If an unauthorized adult comes to the school to pick up your child, he/she will not be allowed to pick up your child until your written or verbal permission is given to an administrator.

Late Pick-Up

We understand that occasionally, emergencies arise and there is just no way to avoid a late pickup. However, Broad Branch Children's House is only licensed between 8:00am - 6:00pm. It is important that you pick up your child promptly at the end of the school day. Please make alternate arrangements for pick up if you cannot arrive by 6:00pm, and plan for traffic and weather delays in your calculations.

Late pick-ups are subject to the following penalties:

For **half day students** scheduled to be picked up at 12:15pm:

- **12:30pm or later:** \$15 per hour or any fraction of an hour

For **full day students** scheduled to be picked up at 3:00pm:

- **3:15pm or later:** \$15 per hour or any fraction of an hour

After 6:00pm pick-up:

- \$10.00 for the first five minutes
- \$5.00 for each additional minute

Excessive incidence of late pick-up can be grounds for termination of your child's enrollment.

Inclement Weather Policy

Inclement weather can affect the safe operation of Broad Branch Children's House. At times (typically due to winter weather) the condition of roads and the school grounds render operation of the school impractical. Please be aware of local forecasts to anticipate possible school closings. The inclement weather decisions made by the District of Columbia and Montgomery County Public Schools, WMATA, and the Federal Government will be highly persuasive. However, the ultimate decision to remain open or close will be made by the BBCH administration, taking into account the safety of travel to school for both children and staff.

In the event of a school closing, BBCH will notify parents via Transparent Classroom (text message AND email) by 6:30am. If a delayed opening is necessary, there will be no Before Care and BBCH will open for ALL students at 10:30am.

When road conditions become unsafe in the afternoon (when students are already at school), please take the extra time to be at school by 5:50pm to avoid incurring considerable late fees. If road conditions indicate that closing school early is necessary, BBCH will notify parents via Transparent Classroom (text message AND email) when school will close. Please make every effort to pick up your child by this time and consider the safety of families and staff.

Clothing

When dressing your child for school, please keep the following in mind:

- Send your child in comfortable play clothes appropriate for messy art projects and active outdoor play.
- We encourage independence. Children are very proud when they can use the bathroom unassisted and put their coats and boots on without the help of a teacher. Therefore, please avoid overalls and complicated outfits (difficult buttons, snaps, belts), especially for children who are self-toileting.
- Boots and heavy or hard-soled shoes are cumbersome and uncomfortable for the children to work on the floor. We will provide classroom slippers for each child.
- Please send your child in supportive, closed-toed shoes. Please no Crocs, flip-flops, open-toed sandals, or dress shoes as they do not provide support and protection for active play. Running, climbing, and playground equipment present hazards when children are wearing open-toed or non-supportive shoes.
- **Very Important!** Send in **two (2)** changes of clothing in a **clearly labeled** plastic bag. Even older children spill water or have occasional accidents. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING ITEMS, including sweaters, jackets, underwear, shoes, gloves, and hats.** BBCH will not share children's clothing, including underwear, when your child runs out. Teachers will send notes home to request extra clothes. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child has enough extra clothing at school.

Toilet Learning

We expect all Primary children to use the bathroom independently and wear cotton underwear to school. Having said that, we recognize that some of our younger friends may still need assistance with toileting. Please let the teacher know if your child is still in the process of toilet training so we may support his/her efforts. **For those children who are working on self-toileting, 3-4 sets of extra clothes are required.**

Toddler families are required to provide diapers and BBCH will supply wipes. We will work with each child and family to complete the process of toilet learning.

Our goal is to work cooperatively with parents to begin the steps of toilet learning once a child demonstrates readiness and interest:

Please use this checklist to ensure your child is ready to begin the process.

- ✓ Consistently stays dry for 2-3 hour stretches
- ✓ Stays dry during naps
- ✓ Has regular, well-formed bowel movements at relatively predictable times
- ✓ Can pull down and pull up pants independently
- ✓ Is consistently interested in sitting on the toilet during a diaper change
- ✓ Has words to indicate urine and stool
- ✓ Gives a verbal or physical sign when urinating or having a bowel movement
- ✓ Can follow 2 step directions
- ✓ Seems uncomfortable in a soiled diaper

If your child does not yet show these signs, revisit this list in 3-4 weeks to check again.

If your child is ready to begin toilet training, let's take the following steps:

- 1) At home, allow easy access to a training toilet and let your child spend time naked or in cotton underwear (with no pants).
- 2) When out of the house, dress your child in a diaper. Send your child to school in a diaper**.
- 3) When we observe that your child's diaper is consistently dry and your child is toileting successfully 10 days in a row (2 weeks), we will recommend a change to cotton underwear.
- 4) When in cotton underwear, be sure to stock your child's cubby with 5 pairs of underwear and pants.

****We prefer diapers to “pull-ups” as children are still able to remove independently without getting fully undressed.**

Outdoor Play

The children go outside daily (except in heavy rain or severe weather) in accordance with the Child Care Weather Watch chart below. If a child is well enough to be at school, then he/she is well enough to go outside.

Understand the Weather

Wind-Chill

- 30° is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed *skin will freeze* in 1 minute

Heat Index

- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
Wind Speed in mph										
Air Temperature	Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43	

 Comfortable for out door play  Caution  Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
Relative Humidity (Percent)														
Air Temperature (F)	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100	
	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

2010

We will not go outside with a wind chill of 9 or below, or a heat index of 110 or above. All other wind chills below 32 will be limited by 1 minute per degree of wind chill. Heat indexes above 90 will be subtracted from 110 for the time frame. For example, $110 - 90 = 20$, so with a 90-degree heat index, the children may be outside for 20 minutes.

In the event of inclement weather, opportunities for gross motor play will be made available indoors.

To ensure your child enjoys the time outside, please be sure he or she is “geared-up” for the weather with the following:

Rainy Days:



Raincoat with a Hood



Rainboots



No Umbrellas Needed

Snowy Days:



Warm, Waterproof Coat with Hood



Snow Boots



Hat, Scarf, and Mittens

Children may come to school dressed for the weather (including boots) since each child will have a pair of slippers at school.

***** Please remember to LABEL EVERYTHING. *****

Summer Days:



Supportive Athletic Shoes



No Flip-Flops or Open Toed Sandals



No Crocs

Water Days:



Change of Clothing
(to be worn OVER swimsuit)



LABELED Towel



Water Shoes

*** Please remember to LABEL EVERYTHING. ***

Food

Peanut Policy

BBCH IS A PEANUT-FREE SCHOOL!

Please refrain from sending peanut-related food. Although our policy is not to share our food, children are sometimes tempted to share and we want to take every precaution necessary to protect our children with peanut allergies. If food containing peanuts is sent in your child's lunch, it will be returned home in a labeled bag.

Lunch

Lunch is a fun and important social time. The children are excited by the opportunity to eat lunch at school with friends. Children should bring their food in a Bento type box, CLEARLY labeled with the child's first and last name.

- Please provide a cold pack or hot thermos, as we cannot refrigerate or heat meals. As mentioned above, please refrain from sending **peanut-related food**.
- We will provide milk and water at lunchtime daily. Please do not send sippy-cups.
- While keeping food preferences in mind, please send your child to school with a nutritious and appropriate lunch packed in containers that they can access independently. We recommend that children practice opening/closing lunch containers before bringing them to school.
- NO CANDY PLEASE.



(sample of a lunch container)

Snack

BBCH provides an afternoon snack at 3:00pm and 4:30pm for After Care students. Children should bring a snack (separate snack container with a SNACK labeled on it) from home to eat during their Montessori morning.

Water

Children should bring a water bottle, labeled with their name, to school each day. Children have access to water (provided by DrinkMore Water) in their classroom and are able to refill their water bottle as needed.

Classroom

Toys, Books, Jewelry, and other “Prized” Possessions

Please do not send ANY “prized” possessions to school with your child. We cannot be responsible for toys that are lost or broken. Any toys we see will be put away in their cubby until pickup time. Besides having an upset child if something happens, many toys look alike and this presents unnecessary confusion. We have more than enough hands-on activities to keep every child engaged!

Transportation

BBCH does not provide daily transportation to and from school. If transportation is required for a field trip, parents will be notified in advance and be required to provide their own transportation. Staff members are not permitted to transport students to and from school. The exception to this is our walking trips, when the staff walk with the students to Lafayette Park across the street around the neighborhood. The students walk together using a rope with rings.

Birthdays

Birthdays are important events! Our Montessori classes have a special birthday ritual, a Sun Celebration. Parents are invited to attend and participate (usually 15 to 30 minutes) at the time specified by your child’s teacher. Please contact your teacher to arrange your child’s sun celebration at school.

The teacher will provide a biography for you to complete for your child and return with printed photos. Please plan to return this completed form at least one day before your child’s celebration.

Summer Birthdays may be celebrated on your child’s half birthday during the school year, or at the end of the school year, and should be coordinated with your child’s teacher.

Please notify teachers of any special circumstances regarding your child’s birth or birthday that may require sensitive handling.

Birthday Invitation Policy

To help ensure there are no hurt feelings and in fairness to all, please do not send invitations, gifts, or thank you notes to school unless there is one for every child in the class. You may also email invitations home using our student directory.

Holidays

Throughout the year we plan events to recognize the many and varied celebrations of life. Parents will be notified of holiday celebrations through emails and monthly calendars.

B BCH is proud of its multi-cultural student body and we encourage our families to share their culture's traditions. If you have a special holiday that you would like to celebrate at school please contact the child's lead teacher.

Nap

If your child rests at school, they will need the following **LABELED** items:

Note: Children who are under 4 years old at the start of the school year will rest at school for that school year.



Blanket



Small Pillow



Small Lovey
(optional)



Nap mat

- B BCH will provide each child with a nap bag.
- On Fridays, your child's blanket, pillowcase, and cot sheet will be sent home in the Strawberry nap bag for laundering.
- Parents are asked to return all laundered nap items to school on Monday mornings.

Thursday Folders

Any student work or important papers from school are sent home with your child every Thursday, in a green folder labeled with your child's name. Please refrain from going into the classroom to collect student work on other days (even if your child asks) and remind them that Thursday is the day we take our work home. **Please empty the folder at home and return the folder back to school on Friday morning, so that we have it to use again.**

Backpacks

Children should bring a backpack for their lunches, water bottles, and Thursday folders. Please ensure that your child's backpack is clearly labeled.

Student Records

Confidentiality Policy

Our school is a very personal and friendly environment. Sensitive issues arise occasionally and it is critical that all parents and employees respect the privacy of all families. The following confidentiality rules must be followed so that we can maintain the trust and confidence of all families and staff. Violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action, up to and including exclusion from our program.

Confidentiality Rules:

- Do not discuss children or their families in common or open areas. This includes inside and outside of the school.
- Only discuss a child or parent situation with the child's parents/family or school administration.
- If you are a parent *and* a staff member, please do not discuss information you receive as a staff member with other parents.
- All records, files, conversations, and conferences are held for the benefit of the child and are strictly confidential.

Child Abuse & Neglect Policy

It is the legal responsibility of any parent or worker with children to report suspected child abuse. If an employee suspects that a child is being abused (as per the legal definition of abuse), the employee is directed to consult with Administration immediately. The Administration will report the situation as they understand it to the authorities empowered to investigate such cases.

Student Records

Personal, family, enrollment, and academic information are strictly confidential. Each child's school records will be kept for at least seven years after he or she leaves Broad Branch Children's House. Automatic access will be permitted for teachers and administrators, but written permission signed by a parent, guardian, or the Court must be presented prior to access by anyone else to ensure privacy. For tracking purposes, BBCH will keep a log recording the person, organization, date, time, and signature of anyone who accesses each child's record. A parent/guardian may submit a written request for a performance report of their child to be sent to other persons or institutions. BBCH will mail the requested report wherever designated. This report will be withheld if accounts are not paid in full. Parents/guardians have the right to review their child's record or comments if requested in writing. A cumulative record form will be maintained during the time that a child is enrolled.

Parent Observation

Children enjoy when their parents/grandparents visit and we welcome visits. If you would like to observe your child's class, please contact your child's teacher to coordinate a visit. There are also scheduled opportunities to volunteer and visit your child's classroom, and we encourage you to make opportunities of your own. After all, no one is more important in your child's education than you!

Observation Guidelines

To support the concentration and purposeful activity of our students, we ask you to please follow these guidelines:

- Remain seated in the observation chair during your 30-minute observation. If you would like to move the chair to another area of the classroom, please alert the lead teacher.
- Students may approach you during your observation. Quietly introduce yourself with a handshake and let students know that you are here to “watch them work.” Do not attempt to give students a lesson on any classroom materials.
- If you are observing your child, they may want to stay with you or sit in your lap. We encourage you to support their independence as best as possible. Perhaps your child can place a work mat by you or work at a nearby table.
- Teachers may not be available to speak with you during your observation.
Feel free to take notes and follow up with a phone call or email - we would love to talk with you about your observation.
- Some elements of the classroom to note during your observation include:
 - Teachers as Guides - watch how the teachers support the students
 - Individual, Pair, and Group Work
 - Student-Directed Choice of Activity
 - Student Concentration, Coordination, Independence, and Order
 - The Classroom Environment - sound, movement, and organization

Any parent's behavior that disrupts our learning environment, or threatens the safety or emotional well-being of our students or teachers, is grounds for immediate dismissal from school.

Parent & School Communication

At Broad Branch Children's House, we feel it is important for Parents and Teachers to build a partnership regarding the care and education of the child, and his or her progress and experience in the classroom. Small changes for a child can have a big effect in the classroom. Please keep us informed of any changes at home, such as a parent's business trip, grandparents visiting or leaving, a new sibling on the way, or an extended vacation.

Office Hours

You may contact the school by calling during normal school hours (8:10am - 5:50pm) or sending an email. For classroom-related topics, you are encouraged to email teachers directly during the school day, and they will respond when they are able.

Our phone number: (202) 232-2233

The following e-mail addresses are a convenient way to contact the school:

- bbch@bbchmontessori.com, General BBCH (Gizelle Sartin - Office Manager)
- msnatalie@bbchmontessori.com, Natalie Newell - Head of School

Transparent Classroom

Broad Branch Children's House administrators and teachers use Transparent Classroom to centralize communications. It is easy to use and helps you connect with your classroom at BBCH. The Transparent Classroom desktop version and app allow you to access classroom photos and the BBCH directory. Transparent Classroom is also our way to contact you in case of emergency or inclement weather delays/closings.

New families will receive an email invitation to join Transparent Classroom at the start of the school year. They can use the link to join Transparent Classroom, create a profile, and add their cell phone number and phone provider so we may send text messages for emergency announcements.

Weekly Thursday Folders

Folders containing student work and communication to parents are sent home every Thursday (See "Thursday Folders" section under "Classroom") - Please return this folder on the following Friday.

Classroom Communications

Classroom teachers will provide families with a weekly classroom email (sent on Fridays) detailing some of the highlights from the class that week (e.g., new lessons, songs, books, general reminders). Teachers are accessible by email (maple@bbchmontessori.com, oak@bbchmontessori.com, magnolia@bbchmontessori.com) and will respond to questions/concerns within 24 hours. Teachers will also reach out throughout the year to

schedule check-in meetings, as a way to discuss children’s growth and development within their Montessori environment. Regular communication is important to our BBCH team, as we value a strong partnership between home and school.

Social Media

We encourage you to “like” our Facebook page (Broad Branch Children’s House) and “follow” us on Instagram (bbch_montessori) for pictures, updates, and reminders. Please share with friends and family, too!

Parent Events

Room Parents

Each classroom has a volunteer who serves as a Room Parent. The Room Parents act as liaisons between the families and teachers helping to coordinate class celebrations, school charity projects, and class social gatherings.

Special Events

Throughout the year, parents, children, and staff have opportunities to meet outside the normal school day. These opportunities include Back to School Pizza Party, Winter Celebration, Classroom Visits, Earth Day, and End of School Pizza Party. Special events will be advertised through Transparent Classroom, Thursday folders, and posters on our school doors (main door and upstairs door).

Tuition

Tuition for Broad Branch Children's House is annual and payable through 10 or 12 monthly installments. All tuition payments are made online through FACTS Tuition Management. Details about all payment options are included in your enrollment agreement and are available from the office. Tuition obligations are effective for the entire school year - Tuition credit cannot be given for absences due to illness, vacations, or other personal plans or inclement weather.

Withdrawal

A child may be withdrawn from school by providing a 60-day written notice to the school. This letter shall be effective on the first day of the calendar month following the date of submission. Parents are obligated to pay tuition during the 60-day notice period. For more information on our withdrawal policy, please see your enrollment agreement.

Returned Checks

Uh-oh ~ a returned check! There is a \$30.00 charge every time a check is returned. Late payments are also subject to a fee of \$30.00.

Required Forms

All forms are available to download from our website.

- **DOH Universal Certificate** – This form must be filled out by the pediatrician with proof of current vaccinations, TB test, Lead test and a physical within the calendar year. It must be updated annually. By law, your child is not permitted to attend school without these items being on file in the office.
- **District of Columbia Registration Record for Child Receiving Care Away from Home**
- **District of Columbia Oral Health Assessment Form** – For children over 3. Must be updated annually.
- **District of Columbia Authorization for Child's Emergency Medical Treatment**
- **District of Columbia Travel and Activity Authorization**
- **Emergency Form**
- **Sunscreen and Insect Repellent Form**

Safety Procedures

Safety Drills

The safety of your child and family is our top priority at BBCH. To ensure the safety of our students and staff we engage in three different types of safety drills:

- **Fire Drills:** Students practice evacuating the school within 2 minutes each month.
- **Shelter in Basement:** Students practice leaving their classroom and taking shelter in the basement each quarter.
- **Lockdown:** Teachers and administrators practice securing the space and locking all doors twice per year.

Should there be an actual emergency, you will be contacted via Transparent Classroom (text message AND email) with directions. Our emergency evacuation site is Lafayette Elementary School across the street.

Traveling Off-Site

For trips to Lafayette Park, walks around the block, and visits to the Chevy Chase Library, students will walk off-site with teachers. To ensure your child's safety we use the following procedures:

- Teachers must bring an emergency first aid backpack including contact information for all students, a roster of all students in attendance, a walkie-talkie, and a cell phone.
- Teachers lead all students on "donuts" (a rope with individual rings) when they are within 5 feet of a road.
- Three teachers must accompany a group. Any group larger than 30 students requires 4 adults.
- Attendance is taken 4 times: Prior to leaving the building, once students have arrived at the destination, before leaving the destination, and upon returning to school.

Health Policy

Please remember that school days are very busy and full of activities that require energy and concentration. If your child is over-tired, lethargic, or just not feeling him- or herself, a busy day at school may not be “just what the doctor ordered.” **Please support our policy by making the healthiest decision for your child.** Please let us know if your child is sick. It is important you notify the school of communicable diseases such as strep throat, head lice, chicken pox, or conjunctivitis (pink eye).

Exclusion During Illness

Since our school is not equipped to accommodate sick little ones for long periods of time, a sick child will be excluded from the rest of the children and remain in the office while awaiting the arrival of a parent or designated pick-up person.

We will monitor a child for signs and symptoms of acute illness (and use an ear thermometer with disposable lens filter) and will:

- Notify a child’s parent or designated person upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness, and
- Provide temporary isolation for the affected child in a supervised separate area (office).

Fever is defined at BBCH as a temperature above 100.4 taken by an ear thermometer. If we call requesting pick-up of a sick child, please make arrangements for pick-up within one hour. If you are called to pick up a sick child and you are not here **within one hour**, the school will call the next person on your emergency contact list. Likewise, if we leave a voicemail or send an email and you do not contact us **within twenty minutes**, we will call the next person on your emergency contact list. Please understand that the health and safety of all children in our care (sick and healthy) are a priority.

Your child may return to school 24 hours after symptoms have subsided, or you may provide a doctor’s note verifying that the symptoms are not contagious. If your child requires an antibiotic or other medication for a contagious illness, he/she must take the prescribed medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child is well enough to attend school, he or she must be prepared to participate in all scheduled indoor and outdoor activities.

BBCH Teacher Guide
to Student Illness



- ✓ Consistent temperature between 99.8 and 100.4 degrees
- ✓ 1x Diarrhea
- ✓ Stomach Ache
- ✓ Lethargy
- ✓ Rash
(call to confirm origin)
- ✓ Crying
- ✓ Sore Throat
- ✓ Ear Ache

- ✓ Stand alone fever (no other symptoms) of 100.4 degrees or above
- ✓ 1x Diarrhea and fever over 100.4
- ✓ 2x Diarrhea
- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Irritated eyes with discharge
- ✓ Secondary symptom (crying, sore throat, ear ache, lethargy, confusion, rash) with fever over 100.4 degrees
- ✓ Increased or unusual respiration
- ✓ Injury to the head, face, or mouth

Students may return to school 24 hours after symptoms subside OR
with a doctor's note stating they are not contagious.

Sick Child/Wellness Policy

We take every precaution to keep our environment safe, clean, and healthy. Some of the methods we use are scrupulously cleaning and disinfecting the school, washing our hands and the children's hands frequently, and separating the sick children from the well children. The last of these methods is used to control the spread of viruses and requires the help of all parents.

Please do not bring your child to school if he or she has any of the following:

- A fever (above 100.4°F and above)
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head or body lice
- Vomiting or Diarrhea (2 loose stools in 3 hours)
- Open sores from a contagious disease (such as Chicken Pox or Herpes)
- Unexplained Rash (can be a sign of a potentially contagious disease such as Scarlet Fever, Fifth Disease, or Chicken Pox)

Infectious & Communicable Disease

Per licensing regulations, should your child show symptoms of a known or suspected communicable disease, please notify us within 24 hours so that we can alert our teachers and parents. The name of the child and family are kept confidential within BBCH to the best of our ability.

BBCH shall immediately transmit to the health officer a report of the name and address of a child or a staff member who appears to be infected with a reportable communicable disease, or who has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease.

Policy for Handling Blood Borne Pathogens

Standard Precautions

Standard Precautions, formerly referred to as Universal Precautions, refers to a concept of blood borne disease control. It requires that all human blood and certain body fluids be treated as if infectious with HIV, HBV, and other blood borne pathogens. BBCH will adopt and implement the use of Standard Precautions whenever handling any human blood or other potentially infectious materials ("OPIM").

In addition, it is important to note that this policy is intended to supplement procedures already in place, such as routine hand washing and using protective gloves to preclude exposure to blood or OPIM. Standard Precautions are intended to prevent potential mucous membrane and non-intact skin exposures to all blood borne pathogens by providing proper awareness.

Exposure Incidents

An exposure incident is defined as skin, eye, mucous membrane, or potential contact with blood. If there is an exposure incident during the performance of our duties as parents or teachers, the affected individual must immediately seek medical attention.

Medication Policy

In order to administer any medication, we must have a signed and up-to-date Medication Authorization Form on file. **Over-the-counter medications will be administered once per illness unless a physician signs the form.** Once we have your child's form and medication, the medication is available in the school medicine cabinet. All medications must be kept locked in this cabinet and must be labeled clearly with the child's name and original prescription information. OTC medication must be in its original packaging.

Medical Emergency Policy

If an emergency situation should require immediate medical action, we will call 911 and your child will be transported to the nearest healthcare facility. While parents are contacted, a certified BBCH Employee will administer CPR, if necessary, until EMS arrives. If non-emergency attention is needed, parents will be called to arrange medical treatment.

Order of Contact in case of a life-threatening medical emergency:

1. CPR first if needed.
2. EMS is contacted.
3. Parent is contacted.
4. Parent arranges and determines medical treatment.

Severe Allergy Medications

Children with a history of anaphylactic allergic reaction may be prescribed intramuscular epinephrine (Epi-Pen). If your child has an Epi-Pen, please bring it to school labeled with your child's full name and accompanied by your doctor's prescription for its use. Unless otherwise instructed, BBCH Staff will administer Epi-Pen immediately upon exposure or suspected exposure to the allergen. If IM epinephrine Epi-pen is administered, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Exposure to allergen observed or suspected. Epi-Pen is administered.
2. Parent is contacted.
3. EMS is contacted.
4. Licensing personnel are contacted.

Accident Reports

Occasionally, accidents occur at school. Outlined below is our procedure in handling accidents:

- Each time an accident occurs that requires first aid, parents will receive an “Unlucky Duck” report. Sometimes the accident is very small, but it is our policy to be overly protective and cautious.
- We make one copy for the injured child’s parents and one for the office. Any injury to the head or face requires immediate notification to the parent.
- If another child causes the accident through biting, we notify the parents of both children involved.
- BBCH will not mention the name of a child who hits, pushes, or bites. A child may, but teachers will not provide this information.
- We document the name of a child who hit, pushed, or bit for our records. This enables us to take the necessary steps and precautions in ensuring the safety of all children in our care.
- If there is a pattern of aggressive behavior, the Head of School will initiate a meeting with the parents of involved children.
- If the behavior continues, recommendations might be made to seek assistance from an outside professional to help the child with the specific behavior. We will follow up with parents.

Discipline Policy

Appropriate behavior is elicited in a positive and kind manner. We do not use corporal punishment or punitive measures that instill fear. A child who demonstrates inappropriate behavior is gently reminded how to behave. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the child is removed from the group to a nearby area from which the child can observe all activities in the room but can no longer participate. After a short period, the child is asked if he/she is ready to return to the group.

Should the discipline continue to be a problem for any child, parents may be asked to come to school for an observation period, which is followed by a conference with the child’s teacher.

Mischief or Misconduct

Learning appropriate classroom behavior and self-control is an important aspect of our Montessori program. This process is varied and gradual - Positive reinforcement of desirable behavior is most successful. When mischief becomes misconduct, a child demonstrating inappropriate behavior is gently and consistently reminded how to behave. When actions warrant a consequence, the staff makes sure that those consequences are logical. In this way, unacceptable behavior is used as an opportunity to instruct rather than punish. If a child continues to have difficulty behaving or suddenly exhibits a change in behavior, a telephone call to a parent is usually made. This ensures that both parents and staff are aware of the situation and work jointly toward correcting or modifying the behavior. Should BBCH determine for any reason at our sole discretion that a child should be withdrawn, the parent will be given a minimum of two weeks notice.

Positive Reinforcement

Positive reinforcement and logical consequences are the methods of behavior modification and discipline used at our school. We DO NOT use “time out” as punishment.

Research has repeatedly shown that positive reinforcement is much more effective than negative reinforcement or punishment. While negative reinforcement may stop the behavior, it does not teach the child the correct behavior. Furthermore, negative reinforcement can create a mood of hostility and can destroy the child’s self-esteem. Positive reinforcement tends to increase the occurrence of a desirable behavior, enhances the child’s self-concept, and gives the child a feeling of independence and accomplishment. Positive reinforcement should not be used to bribe or manipulate children. However, when used effectively, positive reinforcement will help children see the relationship between their behavior and consequences so they can learn to make good choices and develop self-control.

A Positive Reinforcement Tip: Patience, persistence, and consistency are the keys to making positive reinforcement work for you. Try to ignore inappropriate behavior as much as possible and “catch them being good”. Also, be clear and specifically state the desirable and “good” behavior. For example, “Good boy!” and “Good girl!” mean little to children. “I like the way you put away the crayons!” or “Thank you for sharing the ball!” are much more effective. Above all, praise should always be sincere, meaningful, specific, and deserved.

Biting Policy

Biting is a very common behavior among children under three years of age. Biting is a form of communication and is almost always done in response to a child’s needs not being met or coping with a challenge or stressor. At BBCH we believe by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can proactively prevent many biting behaviors in the peaceful and nurturing environment we create for our students.

We understand that children biting other children are one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to deal with in group child care settings. It can occur without warning, can be difficult to defend against, and provoke strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the families, and the caregivers involved.

For many toddlers, the biting stage is just a passing problem. Toddlers try it out as a way to get what they want and influence others: they are in the process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not and quickly discover that biting is a sure-fire way to cause other children to respond.

For other children biting is a persistent and chronic problem. They may bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened, or to feel a sense of power.

In order to alleviate some triggers for biting, BBCH has many practices in place that help prevent incidence of biting:

- **Quality relationships:** Staff develops nurturing relationships with the children and get to know each other individually.
- **Environmental influences:** Children are given opportunities to work in both small and larger groups; there is a variety of work and children are taught how to take turns. The environment in a Montessori classroom is often quiet and productive which is very soothing to the children. Additionally, staff is very aware of and willing to help a child who is feeling overwhelmed.
- **Social Emotional supports:** Students have a predictable daily routine with consistent expectations and staff support. Children learn how to navigate the classroom in a way that helps them build self-confidence and alleviate stress. Staff talk to children and care for each individual child in ways that support emotional awareness and regulation.

If or when a bite occurs, BBCH staff will use the following plan of action:

For the biter:

1. The biter is immediately removed with no emotional, using words such as “biting is not okay - it hurts.” Staff will avoid any response that reinforces the biting by calling attention to the biter. Caring attention will be focused on the child who was bitten.
2. The biter will not be allowed to return to work/play and will be talked to on a level with he/she can understand. “I see you want that truck, but I can’t let you hurt another child. We do not put our teeth on people.”
3. The child will be given a “chewlrey”.
4. The child will be redirected to other work/play.
5. The lead teacher will complete a BBCH incident report and email the family of the biter before the end of the school day.

For the victim:

1. Staff will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
2. Special attention will be given to comfort the child.
3. Staff will wash the bite with mild soap and warm water, pat the area dry, and apply a Band-Aid if the skin was broken. The victim will also be offered an ice pack to reduce swelling and inflammation.
4. The lead teacher will complete an unlucky duck for the victim. If the bite occurs on the face or breaks the skin anywhere on the body, the lead teacher will call the family before the end of the school day.

For each occurrence staff will confer to review the context of the biting incident, whether adequate supervision was present and whether the environment contributed to the biting incident. If changes in supervision or the environment are warranted, then those changes will be implemented.

If biting continues:

1. Staff will chart occurrences including attempted bites, indicating location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances.
2. Staff will “shadow” a child who demonstrates a tendency to bite in order to discourage biting situations before they occur and teach non-biting responses to stressful situations.
3. Staff will work with parents to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change.
4. As a last resort, if it is deemed in the best interest of the child, classroom, and other students, the biter’s enrollment at BBCH may be terminated with an advance written warning to the parents.

At all times, BBCH staff will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or has bit another child.

Grievance Policy

Should any parent disagree with a policy, action, or decision made by Broad Branch Children’s House, a conference may be arranged with the Head of School and/or the appropriate staff member to discuss the nature of the disagreement. Every reasonable attempt will be made in a timely manner to reach a satisfactory solution for all parties involved.