

The Program

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

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 a 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 the 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 that 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; the child clearly shows an inner need to learn about and to know themselves and their world. They want very much to develop their intelligence and to 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) to encourage a child’s natural budding interest with the main objectives 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 divert 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 children 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 care of self, care of environment, language exploration, fine and gross motor activities and 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.

Toddler Daily Schedule

8:00-9:00	Before Care in Sassafras Classroom
9:00-9:15	All Students Arrive in Magnolia Classroom
9:15-10:30	Work Time
10:30-10:45	Group Time and Preparation for Outdoors
10:45-11:30	Outdoor Play in Garden
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:30	Half Day Dismissal
12:15-2:45	Nap
3:00-3:15	Full Day Dismissal
3:00-6:00	After Care in Sassafras Classroom and Outdoor Play in Garden

Enrichment Programs:

11:30-12:00 French Lunch on Tuesdays

9:45- 10:15 Beyond the Walls on Fridays

The Montessori Primary Program

Pre-school & Kindergarten

Educational Goals

The Montessori curriculum is designed to accommodate various stages of development that occur in roughly three-year cycles in children. 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 these activities 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 up to 30 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 classrooms contain six interrelated sets of learning areas. The following information gives a brief description of the objectives of 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 or 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 to 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; the individual sounds in the word are 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 or 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 or 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.

Primary Daily Schedule

8:00-9:00	Before Care in Sassafras Classroom
9:00-9:15	All Students Arrive in Maple and Oak Classrooms
9:15-9:30	Group Time
9:30-11:10	Work Time
11:10-11:30	Preparation for Outdoors
11:30-12:15	Outdoor Play in the Garden or Lafayette Park
12:15-12:30	Half Day Dismissal
12:15-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:45	Nap in Oak Room and Afternoon Class in Maple Room
3:00-3:15	Full Day Dismissal
3:00-6:00	After Care in Maple Classroom and Outdoor Play in Garden

Enrichment Programs:

French on Tuesdays (9:45-10:30 in Maple, 10:30-11:15 in Oak)

Beyond the Walls on Fridays (10:15-11:00 in Maple, 11:15-12:00 in Oak)

Enrichment Programs

Music with Julie Billingsley

Julie Billingsley visits the students at least once a month to teach them new songs, rhythms, dances and more. Julie is a talented musician and brings a variety of instruments for students to listen to and play.

French with Melissa Kerley, PhD

On Tuesdays students participate in small group French language lessons. Students are encouraged to explore the French language and culture through songs, stories, and play guided by Dr. Melissa Kerley.

Beyond the Walls with Amy Beam

On Fridays all students venture “Beyond the Walls” with nature specialist Amy Beam. This is a time of exploration, curiosity and wonder. Students should be dressed appropriately to participate in this weekly adventure.

Extended Care Programs

Before Care

Early Risers

8:00am- 9:00am

Sassafras Room

We roll out the welcome mat promptly at 8:00am. 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 free and creative play with art, music, manipulative, and dramatic play.

After Care

Afternoon Adventures

3:00pm-6:00pm

Sassafras & Maple Rooms

Afternoons at BBCH are planned to be exciting. A special theme-based afternoon curriculum is planned monthly. Each theme is explored through art, science, food exploration, movement, games and fun, fun, fun! Each of these activities has been designed to allow your child to explore a wide variety of special interests. A carefully thought out balance of activities, indoors and in the garden, provides age appropriate times for active indoor and outdoor play and a choice of open-ended experiences in our various classroom centers.

If you need our Extended Care Programs on an occasional basis, please contact the school to make arrangements. We have a limited number of spaces available and would like to make sure that everybody who depends on this service is taken care of.

After Care Daily Schedule

3:00-3:30	Group Snack and Story
3:30-4:30	Outdoor Play in the Garden
4:30-5:30	Play Time with Primary Students in Maple and Toddlers in Sassafras
5:30-6:00	Clean Up and Prepare for Home

School Day Programs

All students participate in Montessori Mornings from 9:15-12:15. Students who stay for a full day will participate in one of the following:

Quiet Afternoons 1:00pm until 3:00pm

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. You may also choose to send in a *small* pillow and stuffed animal for the week. All students are encouraged to rest from 1:00-1:45, at which time students who are not asleep may choose quiet activities.

- BBCH will provide each child with a cot sheet and a nap bag.
- On Friday 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 Monday
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The Afternoon Class 1:00pm until 3:00pm

The Afternoon Class provides additional opportunities for children who are age 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. The Teacher and Head of School determine eligibility for the afternoon program.

Policies & Procedures

Arrival & Dismissal

Part of a child's journey toward independence begins at the door in a Montessori classroom. This may include: hanging up one's coat, putting away a lunch box or extra clothes when entering class and at the end of the day, putting on a coat and gathering belongings, each serving as an important step on this journey. **In order to support the efforts of our young friends we ask that you respect their efforts and remain outside the classroom.**

The Morning Drop Off

Before care students should put all of their belongings in the designated places within their classrooms prior to joining the Sassafra room.

Morning drop off occurs during the window of 9:00am-9:15am **at the front door of the school**. We ask that parents and caregivers say their goodbyes at the door and allow their child to walk independently to their classroom. There will be someone available to greet and assist your child.

Valet drop off will last between 9:10am-9:15am and requires a reservation in advance. Valet drop off will begin during the second week in September.

Late Arrivals

If you arrive after 9:15am, escort your child to the front desk and sign them in. A member of the administration will walk your child into their classroom. We ask that you limit tardiness to ensure your child has the best possible start to their Montessori morning.

Dismissal & Pick-Up

From **12:15-12:30** and **3:00-3:15** students will be ready and waiting to be picked up downstairs in the Parent Room/Foyer area. Please stand outside of the front door until your child is dismissed into your care.

For safety and security reasons, children can only be dismissed into the care of parents, legal guardians, or those designated on the emergency list. When a child is going home with a friend or another adult, **please call the school in advance and send written permission** for him or her to do so. 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, they

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. You will receive one warning notice, after that late pick-ups are subject to the following penalties:

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

- **12:30 or later:** \$10 per hour or any fraction of an hour.

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

- **3:15pm or later:** \$10 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

Periods of inclement weather can effect 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 will be highly persuasive. However, the ultimate decision to remain open or close will be made by the BBCH administration.

BBCH will make every effort to contact each parent by email and/or phone as soon as a decision to close the school has been made during the course of the day. Cancellation of school emails will be sent by 6:30 am in the morning.

When the safety of the road conditions are questionable in the late afternoon, please take the extra time to be at school by 6:00pm in order to avoid incurring considerable late fees.

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. So please avoid overalls and complicated outfits (difficult buttons, snaps & belts) especially for children who are self-toileting since they are difficult to manage.
- Boots and heavy or hard-soled shoes are cumbersome and uncomfortable for the children to work on the floor. Please send **1 pair of slippers** for your child to wear indoors. This pair of slippers will remain at school for the year.
- Please send your child in supportive closed-toed shoes. No “Cros”, “flip-flops” and open-toed sandals 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 a change of clothing, including shoes, in a **clearly labeled** plastic bag. Even older children spill water or have occasional accidents. It is your responsibility to ensure that the soiled clothes we send home are replaced with fresh ones. **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING ITEMS, including sweaters, coats, and jackets!** BBCH will not share children’s clothing, including underwear, when your child runs out. Teachers will endeavor to send notes home to request extra clothes. It is the parent’s responsibility to ensure that their child has enough supplies of extra clothing in school.

Toilet Training

We expect that all Primary children are able to use the bathroom independently. Having said that, we realize that some of our very youngest friends may still need assistance with toileting. Please let your teacher know if your child is still in the process of toilet training so we may support them in their efforts. **For those children who are working on self-toileting, multiple sets of extra clothes are required. Toddler students will be required to provide appropriate toileting supplies.**

Outdoor Play

The children go outside daily, with the exception of heavy rain or severe weather, in accordance with the included Child Care Weather Watch Chart. The clean, fresh air is wonderful after a morning of being inside, especially during the “runny-nose season”. If a child is well enough to be in school, then they are 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 outdoors 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) with a 90-degree heat index, the children may be outdoors for 20 minutes.

To ensure your child enjoys their time outdoors, please be sure they are “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

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

Food

Peanut Policy

BBCH IS A PEANUT FREE SCHOOL!

Please refrain from sending peanut related food. Since children are sometimes tempted to share, we like to take every precaution necessary to protect those of our children who have very serious peanut allergies.

Lunch

Lunch is a fun and important social time. All Toddler students will eat lunch at school. Primary students attending after 12:15pm will eat lunch at school. The children are excited by the opportunity to eat lunch at school with friends. Children should bring their food and a drink in a lunch box clearly labeled with the child's first and last name.

- Please provide a cold pack or hot thermos as needed we do not have the ability to refrigerate or heat meals. As we mentioned above, please refrain from sending **peanut related food**.
- We will provide milk at lunchtime on a daily basis. Please do not send sippy-cups.
- While keeping in mind their food preferences, please send your child to school with a nutritious and appropriate lunch packed in containers that they are able to access independently.
- **NO CANDY PLEASE.**

Snack & Birthday Snack

Broad Branch provides mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks. Should your child want to bring a treat for the class to celebrate a birthday, holiday, or special event, please consult your child's teacher for dietary restrictions and appropriate times. We would like to request **NO** icing, and favor simple choices such as: quick breads, muffins, cookies or fruit for birthday treats.

Water

Children have unlimited access to Deer Park water in each classroom.

Classroom

Toys and Backpacks

Please do not send ANY toys to school with your child. We cannot be responsible for toys that are lost or broken. Many toys look alike and this presents unnecessary confusion. We have more than enough hands-on activities to keep every child engaged!

Backpacks are also unnecessary at BBCH as we use strawberry bags and Thursday folders to send items home.

Transportation

The school does not provide daily transportation to and from school. If transportation is required for a field trip, parents will be notified in advance.

Community Awareness

Once a year, we may request your participation in a Community Awareness Project organized through the Parent Guild. We gather canned goods, fruit, books, small toys, or sandwich ingredients to donate to area shelters to help the children understand the need to give to those less fortunate than themselves.

Birthdays

Birthdays are important events; please contact your teacher to arrange for your child's birthday celebration at school. Our Montessori preschool classes have a special birthday ritual. Parents are invited to attend and participate (usually 15 to 30 minutes) at the beginning or end of class. Please send in a photograph of your child as an infant and one for each year of their life. Mount each photo on a separate piece of letter size or construction paper (available from the school) and include a brief caption. This serves as a beginning timeline of your child's life, and shows how your child has grown and changed!

Children often want to celebrate by sharing a treat with their schoolmates, please see guidelines for "Snack & Birthday Snack" on page 14. It is important that your birthday boy or girl be excited about their birthday treat; please help them to make a healthy choice. Birthdays that occur over the summer months may be celebrated on your child's half birthday during the school year or at the end of the school year.

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

Birthday Invitation Policy

Birthdays should be fun occasions! In fairness to all, and to help ensure that there are no hurt feelings when birthday parties are on the horizon, please do not send invitations, gifts, or thank you notes to school if there is not one for every child in the class. Feel free to mail invitations home using the student directory.

Fire Drill

We have a fire drill once a month. If you are caught up during one of these drills, we prefer that you join us.

- We use the emergency exit door.
- We double check to make sure no child is left inside.
- We take attendance outside and return to our rooms.
- Timing is crucial.

Student Records

Policy On Confidentiality

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 other families and our 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 anyone working with children to report any suspected child abuse. If a staff member suspects that a child is currently being abused (as per the legal definition of abuse), they are directed to consult with members of the 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, administrators, and administrative assistants, 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 request in writing 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. A parent/guardian has the right to review their child's record or comments if requested in writing. A cumulative record form will be maintained during the period of time that a child is enrolled.

Parent Observations

Children enjoy when parents/grandparents visit and we welcome non-disruptive parent visits. If you would like to observe your child's class, please let us know when we can expect you. There are many scheduled opportunities to volunteer and visit in 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! Any parent's behavior that disrupts our learning environment or threatens the safety or the emotional well-being of our students or teachers is grounds for immediate dismissal from school.

Observation Guidelines

The following is a set of guidelines to help your observation:

- 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.
- Teachers may not be available to speak with you during your observation. Feel free to take notes on 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 and Group Work
 - Student Choice of Activity
 - Student Concentration, Coordination, Independence and Order
 - The Classroom Environment - sound, movement, and organization

Parent & Teacher Communication

At Broad Branch Children's House we feel it is important for the 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: a parent's business trip, Grandparents visiting or leaving, a new sibling on the way or an extended holiday...

You may contact the teachers by leaving a written note, calling during normal business hours or sending e-mail. Teachers are able to return calls before 9:00 am and after 3:30pm in the afternoon.

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

- bbch@metromontessori.com, General BBCH
- laura@metromontessori.com, Head of School
- stacey@metromontessori.com, Maple Room
- msdenise@metromontessori.com Oak Room
- msgwen@metromontessori.com, Magnolia Room

Weekly

Thursday Folders, containing all communications to parents for the week, and student work for the week, are sent home on Thursdays.

Monthly

Classroom newsletters will be sent via Thursday Folder each month.

Bi-Annually

We schedule two Parent Teacher Conferences during the school year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. (Please see the calendar for the exact dates).

Parent Events

Parent Education

There are a variety of parent education opportunities at BBCH. This year in addition to Back to School Night we will have a regularly scheduled parent nights with interesting and applicable topics to raising young children. Please check your calendar for exact dates.

We have a scheduled parent visit day once a year; however, parents are welcome to arrange additional visits by calling the school office.

Special Events

Parents, children, and staff have several opportunities to meet outside the normal school day throughout the year. These opportunities include school picnics, celebrations and Parent Guild events. Information about parent/teacher conferences, performances, and celebrations will be communicated through Thursday folders and e-mail.

The Parent Guild

The Parent Guild is the official parent volunteer body of BBCH. They Guild organizes social gatherings for parents to meet, provides hospitality at various parent meetings, arranges for food drives, raises funds for special projects and occasionally volunteers in the classroom. The Parent Guild also provides outreach to families in times of loss or celebration. Volunteering for the Parent Guild and participating in scheduled events are fun ways to meet Montessori families and support the school!

Tuition

Tuition for Broad Branch Children's House is annual and payable through the following three options: tuition may be paid in full by the first day of school, in two payments at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, or 10 -12 installment payments through FACTS Tuition Management. Details about all payment options are included in your enrollment packet and are available in the office.

Withdrawal

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. 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! We do receive them from time to time, but oh, what a pain for the bookkeeper. There is a \$25 charge every time a check is returned. Late payments are also subject to a fee of \$30.00.

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 ~ and us ~ 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

BBCH will monitor a child for signs and symptoms of acute illness and will:

- Notify a child’s parent or other designated person upon observing a sign or symptom of acute illness, and
- Provide temporary isolation for the affected child in a suitably equipped separate area within sight and hearing of an adult.

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

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 we need to call you to pick-up 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 voice mail message 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 well children as well as the sick children in our care are a priority.

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

Sick Child/Wellness Policy*

We take every precaution to keep our environment safe, clean, and healthful. 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 all viruses and requires the help of all parents.

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

- A fever (above 100°F)
- Conjunctivitis

- 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's, Chicken Pox)

Infectious & Communicable Disease

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, which requires that all human blood and certain human body fluids be treated as if known to be infectious for 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 serve as a supplement to procedures already in place, such as routine hand washing and utilization of 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 incidence during the performance of our duties as parents or teachers, the affected individual must immediately seek medical attention.

Medication Policy

Whenever we administer any medication we must have a signed and up-to-date Physician's Medication Order 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 on file, 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.

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 staff 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 Medical Emergencies in case of a life threatening medical emergency:

1. **CPR first if needed**
2. **EMS called**
3. **Parent called**
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 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, parents will receive an "Unlucky Duck" report. Sometimes the accident seems 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.
- BBCH will not mention the name of a child who hits, pushes, or bites. A child may, but teachers will not.
- We document the name of the child who hit, bit, or pushed for our records.
- If another child causes the accident, we notify the parents of both children involved.
- We keep track of the aggressor to enable us 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 to deal with the specific behavior. We will follow up with parents personally.

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 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 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 working jointly toward correcting or modifying the inappropriate behavior.

Should we at 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.

How Do You Use Positive Reinforcement?

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.

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 specific and state exactly what the child has done that you approve of. "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, and deserved.

Grievance Policy

Should any parent be in disagreement 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 faculty 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.