

BASTROP MONTESSORI

Learning Through Wonder and Discovery

2021-2022

PARENTS HANDBOOK

Our Mission at Bastrop Montessori is to provide a nurturing and engaging Montessori Learning Community for children ages 18 months through 12 years, where learning happens through wonder and discovery, and independence, confidence and a lifelong passion for learning and contribution comes alive in each child.

Bastrop Montessori is an inclusive Learning Community and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, national origin, military status, or any other personal belief in any of its activities or operations.

MONTESSORI PHILOSOPHY

In today's rapidly changing world it is more important than ever before that young people retain their natural sense of curiosity, adaptability and sense of exploration and adventure and their compassion for others! With each passing year we are seeing innovations in how and where people work, with an incredible upsurge of entrepreneurship, and more work communities valuing creative "outside the box" thinking. The philosophy and educational approach that Dr. Maria Montessori developed over 100 years ago, provides a learning environment that encourages children to care for one another and their environment, to explore, think for themselves, collaborate and think creatively. A Montessori education is education for the whole child, encompassing not only academics, but world cultures, social emotional learning, conflict resolution, care of the environment, arts, music and creativity! A Montessori education will prepare your child to thrive in a future that we cannot yet imagine and is an investment not only in your child's life, but in the future of humanity itself.

Before you proceed with enrolling your precious young one into Bastrop Montessori, it's important that you, your child's most important advocate and teacher, understand some of the basic aspects of the Montessori Method, and feel that the values and principals of your family and Bastrop Montessori are fairly well aligned.

The term "Montessori" implies both a philosophy and a method of education, based on the extensive research of Dr. Maria Montessori – an Italian physician and educator. The Montessori method is based on the belief that children naturally want to learn, to get along with others and to become contributing members of the community. At its heart, the Montessori method emphasizes independence, freedom within limits, and a respect for the individual.

The experience and training of a Montessori Guide (teacher) is integral to the Montessori method. The Montessori Guide is specially trained to observe each child and to design lessons based on that child's natural curiosity and love of learning. During the course of a day Guides use both concrete teaching materials and a well-defined innovative curriculum tailored to the child and will demonstrate a wide array of concrete sensorial materials and sequential activities through individual and small group instruction.

Based on the foundational beliefs of independence, freedom within limits, and a respect for the child, the classrooms and materials at Bastrop Montessori are organized to be easily used by the children, requiring little to no help from the Guide or Assistant. Each of the classrooms is thoughtfully arranged and offers an inviting space for activity that is focused and calm. Learning materials are displayed on shelves that are accessible to

the children to foster independence as the students go about their daily work. There are spaces in the classroom that allow for group activity as well as areas where children can work alone. There are well-defined spaces for each part of the curriculum; Sensorial, Practical Life, Language Arts, Math, World Cultures, Art and Music. Each of these areas features shelves or display tables with a variety of inviting materials from which students can choose. Materials are beautiful and often fragile; thus, the children learn to appreciate, respect and care for precious things.

Thank you so much for considering Bastrop Montessori for your child, we look forward to your family joining our community and to many years of growing and learning together!

Cheryl Kruckeberg, Director

MONTESSORI CURRICULUM

SENSORIAL MATERIALS: Each of the Sensorial Materials isolates one defining quality such as color, weight, shape, texture, size, sound, smell, etc. The materials emphasize this one quality and minimizing the other differences. Dr. Montessori believed this process to be the beginning of conscious knowledge which is brought about by the impressions given by the senses. The Sensorial Materials in the classroom help to educate the child's five senses. Through exploring the materials, the children become aware of details and learn to distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what they already know.

PRACTICAL LIFE: Young children are fascinated by tasks which an adult considers ordinary, such as washing dishes, paring vegetables, polishing shoes, folding laundry. Mastering such basic everyday tasks excites the children, as it allows them to imitate adults. Imitation is one of a child's strongest urges during the early years! In this area of the classroom children perfect their coordination and can become absorbed in activities such as pouring or scooping from one container to another. They gradually lengthen their span of concentration with various other exercises and learn to pay attention to details as they follow a regular sequence of actions. Finally, they learn good working habits as they finish each task and put away all the materials before beginning another activity. Social Skills, Grace and Courtesy are a very important part of Practical Life. Basic manners are reinforced, i.e. "thank you, hello, excuse me, may I...?" Children practice sitting at a table correctly, cutting bread, setting a table, returning their work to the shelf once they are finished, cleaning up after themselves and opening and closing a door.

LANGUAGE ARTS: In the classroom children will learn the phonetic sounds of the letters before learning the alphabet. The reason for this is that they will need to know these sounds to be able to read. Once they have mastered several sounds, they will start putting them together and forming words. The children also learn to read sight

words which are words that do not fit or follow the patterns or rules of the English language. The sight words are learned through word bingo or other work that is available to them. In the classroom there will be language boxes composed of sandpaper letters and several objects to match the phonetic sound of that letter.

CULTURAL STUDIES: The Montessori classroom includes many maps, flags, art photographs and items countries from around the world. The beauty of these different items draws the children to them for hours of further exploration! The study of different cultures also helps to raise the consciousness about other people and to gain an understanding and respect for all people in the world. The children will also explore and learn about common land formations such as rivers, seas, islands, mountains, peninsulas and more.

MATHEMATICS: Children develop a love for mathematics in their early years by working with concrete mathematical materials. Through personal exploration of the many math manipulatives children develop their own understanding of such concepts as “even and odd” numbers, skip counting, adding, subtracting, multiplication and division, and so on.

SCIENCE: Children are fascinated by the real world around them, i.e., worms, butterflies, beautiful flowers, birds and the list goes on...The science materials in the classroom present certain aspects of this world in such a way that the child can observe and experiment what they have learned. Puzzles showing different parts of the tree, flower, horse, fish and frog are all examples of these materials. A garden where children plant seeds and grow vegetables, flowers and fruit give children hands-on experiences. The focus of science is that the child learns how to be a scientist by classifying, recording results; they are objective, organized and able to perform tasks in a predetermined order.

SCHOOL POLICIES

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: Bastrop Montessori is an inclusive Learning Community and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, or any other personal belief in any of its activities or operations.

HARASSMENT: Bastrop Montessori is committed to maintaining an emotionally and physically safe learning environment. We do not tolerate discrimination, bullying or harassment of any kind; verbal or physical. This includes, but is not limited to, unwanted touching, disrespectful language about a person’s race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. Should anyone experience or become aware of harassment or bullying at Bastrop Montessori please report it to the Director immediately. All reports will remain

confidential and will be explored and dealt with on a case by case basis. Repercussions for bullying or harassment may include suspension or expulsion.

NEGLECT & ABUSE: Bastrop Montessori Staff are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

GANG FREE ZONE: As per the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang free zone. Bastrop Montessori will not allow any aggressive or suspicious persons, or any person who has no direct business with the school to enter the school's premises. Through the majority of the school day at least two teachers are always on duty: in the event that a suspicious or aggressive person enters the property, one teacher will encounter the person and attempt to de-escalate the situation, while another teacher will gather the children into either the hallway or the assembly point, as appropriate.

TOBACCO AND DRUG FREE ZONE: Tobacco-Alcohol-Drug Free Zone.

Bastrop Montessori prohibits the use or consumption of tobacco products, alcohol, and drugs while children are in care, nor shall anyone be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on school grounds. Bastrop Montessori will take immediate action of removing any person who violates this policy.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL POLICIES: Parents will be notified of any revisions to the school policies via email and through the school bulletin board. Parents may request a meeting with the Director to review and discuss school policies at any time. Please schedule a meeting via info@BastropMontessori.com

EMERGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your child's safety is always our highest concern. Parents will be notified via telephone, email and/or text messages if immediate pick-up of their child is required due to an emergency. Thus, it is extremely important that all your contact information is regularly updated in our records.

EMERGENCY DRILLS: In order to respond appropriately and quickly in emergencies, including accidents and illness, all Bastrop Montessori teachers and staff are required to have current first aid and CPR training, and are well-practiced emergency procedures, such as fire drills and inclement weather exercises.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES: If a child becomes ill while attending school, the parents will be notified by phone. The child shall be kept under adult supervision until the child's parent/s, or a person designated by the parent/s, or emergency services personnel takes responsibility for the child.

If a child requires immediate medical aid, Bastrop Montessori teachers will contact 911 and apply, as needed, First Aid, CPR, or Heimlich maneuver and the child's parent/s will be notified by phone.

The Admissions Packet includes a medical release form to authorize teachers, administrative staff, and volunteers to take children to a medical facility, administer medicine, or to perform CPR and First Aid.

Bastrop Montessori will report incidents to TDFPS, using the standard Incident Report form.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Bastrop Montessori follows Bastrop ISD weather closings and delays. Should BISD or other entity recommend early dismissal, please heed their warnings, and make plans to have your child picked up from school.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN: If, for any reason, Bastrop Montessori must evacuate the building and campus, the Staff will walk with the children to the off-campus shelter located 2006 Pecan Street, Bastrop Tx. Staff shall have contact information for the parents and will notify parents at the first opportunity,

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

It is our goal to keep our precious community safe and healthy!

FOOD AND NUTRITION: Parents are responsible for providing food and drink for their children's snacks and lunchtime meal. Children will not be allowed to share their food with others. While Bastrop Montessori is not responsible for the dietary needs of the students, the school does promote healthy snacks and lunches for all students. Our staff encourages children to finish all their lunch, especially the protein and vegetable portions, but do not dictate what they must eat. We ask that parents:

- provide a variety of options, such as whole-grain crackers, cheese, fresh fruit, non-sugary yogurt, veggies, cold cuts, legumes, and raisins (leftovers from dinners make for a tasty addition to lunch).
- do not pack a lunch that contains yogurt tubes, sweets, candy, cookies, lunchables, or processed fruit snacks.
- pay attention to the unfinished food that comes home in the lunchbox each day and discuss with your child what s/he does and does not like to eat while at school.
- if your child resists healthy choices, please discuss with Bastrop Montessori staff.
- provide a water bottle for your child to use while at school, and

- notify your child's teachers regarding allergies and sensitivities (e.g., milk, eggs, wheat, etc.),

ALLERGY AWARENESS: Bastrop Montessori is vigilant in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all children. In case of a child who may suffer from life-threatening nut allergies, we will notify the community to be proactive and not to send nuts in the children's lunches. Otherwise, children may bring nuts for snack or lunch.

HANDWASHING: Research has shown the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs in the child-care setting is good handwashing by caregivers and children. Hand washing is not only required by the Texas Department of Health, but also an important part of the self-help component of Montessori's Practical Life curriculum.

WELLNESS CHECK: All students should have a current "Wellness Check" from their physician on file. Most doctor's offices have their own version of this on hand.

ILLNESS: Exclusion of a Child in Case of Illness Bastrop Montessori follows the **GUIDELINES RECOMMENDED BY THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH** regarding the exclusion of a child in case of illness. A child should stay at home if they have:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher. Your child may return to school after being diagnosed free of COVID, and fever-free for 24 hours without aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen. (See below about returning to school after a fever.)
- Conjunctivitis, commonly referred to as "pink eye," is highly contagious. The eye is generally red with tearing or thick yellow discharge. The eye may or may not be slightly painful. Your child can return to school with your doctor's note/instructions.
- Rashes that you cannot identify and that have not been diagnosed by a physician.
- Impetigo, which shows up as red pimples that eventually form blisters that break open and secrete a contagious pus or liquid. Another symptom is a cut or sore that does not heal properly. Your child may return to school with your doctor's written note and only when all the crusts are well formed.
- A cold with fever, dry, painful cough, and/or symptoms that prevent the child from enjoying full activity.
- Ear and throat infections diagnosed by a doctor who prescribes antibiotics. The child should not be brought to school until s/he has taken medication for at least 24 hours.
- Diarrhea (watery bowel movements that are much more frequent than usual)
- Unusual paleness, irritability, tiredness, or lack of interest, which could indicate illness without more obvious accompanying symptoms
- Nasal mucus that is not clear (a sign of an infection) unless on medication (see above)

- Head lice – any child who comes to school with lice or eggs (nits) will be asked to leave and permitted to return only upon washing with medicated shampoo and after all nits have been combed out of the child’s scalp and hair. The teachers will inform the parent upon the child’s return to school if further treatment or combing is needed.
- Contagious diseases such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, rosella, or other viral or bacterial infections. Your doctor is required to report contagious diseases to the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Division. In addition, you are encouraged to contact BASTROP MONTESSORI as soon as possible so that other parents may be informed. Your anonymity will be respected.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING ILLNESS: The safety and comfort of each child is our greatest concern, both the sick child and others who may be exposed to contagions. Consider these guidelines when deciding when a sick child should return to school.

- In the case of fever 99.9 Bastrop Montessori follows the CDC’s recommendation that the child “should go home and stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.”
- It is preferable, but not mandatory, to obtain a doctor’s note before your child returns to school, UNLESS there has been a fever.
- In the event of a prolonged or known contagious illness (such as COVID, influenza or pertussis) a child may return to school upon a written & signed permission from a physician.
- Part of our daily routine is to take children outside for exercise and active play and instruction. For supervisory reasons, staff may not remain indoors with a single child. Please keep this in mind when sending your child back to school after an illness.

If you are unsure whether it is OK for your child to return, please call and speak to your child’s teacher before bringing your child to school.

IMMUNIZATIONS: As required by Texas Department of State Health Services, all children must either be immunized or provide a waiver of immunization exemption from the Texas Department of State Health Services. [Here is a link to that waiver.](#) Should your family chooses not to vaccinate your child we may ask that, in the event of an immunization preventable disease presenting itself on the Bastrop Montessori campus, and in order to protect any children with weakened immune systems in our community, that you keep your child at home until the illness has passed. At the time of (your child’s) enrollment, immunization documentation was submitted to the school administrator. It is understood that you will keep immunizations up-to-date, and school documentation updated.

MEDICATIONS: If a child requires medication during the school day, the parent/caregiver will be asked to complete and sign a Prescribed [Medication Dispensing](#)

[Authorization form](#). Medications should come in the original container, with the original label. Please be aware of prescription expiration dates and replace expired medication immediately. Otherwise, in compliance with state law, the only medications that our staff can administer are sunscreen, over-the-counter ointments (such as Neosporin) and insect repellent.

FIRST AID: The School maintains first aid kits on campus.

HEARING AND VISION TESTING: Children 4 years and older are required to have a Vision and Hearing test on file/ The Director will advise of this requirement at the appropriate time.

COVID19 SYSTEMS & PROTOCOLS:

- Children's temperatures will be taken every morning, and no one with a temperature of 99.9 or higher will be allowed to remain on campus.
- Arrival and Dismissal will be from outside.
- Unvaccinated parents will be asked to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose at drop off/pick up and will not be allowed in the building unless necessary.
- Children will, of course, wash hands often and well.
- Masks: At this time, we are not asking children to wear masks, either inside or out.
- The classrooms are set up so that there is plenty of space in between worktables, and room to spread out between the three classrooms. We plan to spend a lot of time outside and have a very nice classroom space set up on the back porch. We'll also have the children spread out during lunch and naptime.
- We will be cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day and teaching the children to participate in regular cleaning as well (which they love!).
- Teachers will regularly clean and disinfect the classrooms, and we will be running an air purifier.
- Children will have their own individual supplies box with pencils, colors, etc. - so that they aren't sharing, and we'll do our best to keep personal items separated.
- Systems will be adapted as we find out what's working and what's not.

Updated on 7/26/21

DAYS AND HOURS OF SCHOOL OPERATION

Bastrop Montessori is open, 8 am – 4 pm, Monday – Friday, September 1, 2021, through May 27, 2022, and (mostly) follows the BISD Holiday Breaks, Staff and Student Breaks, Staff Development Days, and Weather Closings and Delayed Starts.

FLOW OF THE DAY

Subject to changes to accommodate the needs of the children and the natural rhythm of the day.

NOTE: As the Lead Teacher, Ann is on campus daily from 9 am – 2:30 pm. Cheryl is on campus daily from 8 am – 4:00 pm.

8:00 – 9:30| Arrival: Supervised Free Play. Due to COVID precautions and parking limitations, Arrival times will need to be staggered. A Google sign up document will be sent out so that you can sign up for the times that works best for your family.

9:30 – 12:30 | Morning Learning Period: The children will have both individual and group lessons as well as choosing their own work. This morning learning period will include a morning snack.

12:30 -1:00| Wash Hands & Eat Lunch

1:00 – 3:00| Naptime (children who consistently do not need to nap will be asked to rest quietly until everyone is settled, and then may get up and do some independent work).

3:00- 3:30 | Wash Hands, Eat Snack

3:30 – 4:00 | Playtime, usually outside

4:00 – 4:15| Dismissal. Due to COVID precautions and parking limitations, Departure times will need to be staggered. A Google sign up document will be sent out so that you can sign up for the times that works best for your family.

TUITION & FEES | SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 – MAY 27, 2022

- **REGISTRATION FEE:** There is a one-time \$100 non-refundable registration fee
- **STUDENT SUPPLY FEE:** There is a student supplies fee of \$100.00, due at the time of School Year Enrollment.
- **TUITION DEPOSIT:** A non-refundable tuition deposit of \$500 is due at the time of enrollment. This deposit will be credited to your final month's tuition.
- **MONTHLY TUITION:** Tuition is \$5400 for the year and may be paid either in one lump sum at the time of registration or paid in monthly installments of \$600. The first month's tuition (non-refundable) is due at the time of enrollment. School tuition is calculated based on the full school year, regardless of days attended, or early withdrawal, and is due on the last day of the preceding month. If the last day falls on a weekend or school holiday, payment is due on the Friday before. Tuition is considered late on the 3rd day of the month and a late fee of \$25.00 will be charged.

If you do need to withdraw your child before the end of the school year, please give us 2 months' notice, and we will make every effort to fill your child's space and release you from the contract.

Tuition that is consistently late will affect your child's status with the school. If your account is delinquent or you have not paid your tuition, we ask that you not bring your child to school until your account is brought up to date.

APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT

ENROLLMENT POLICY: We strive to ensure a good fit and a successful school experience for each child. Please let us know at the time of application if your child has ever been evaluated for, or you suspect that they might be demonstrating any characteristics that might obstruct him/her from thriving in a choice based environment, connecting with peers, or causing harm to self, others or the environment, or you think your child may need additional support to thrive in an independent, choice based learning environment. We can then explore possibilities for support together and determine whether Bastrop Montessori is the best fit for your child.

WAITING POOL: Siblings of currently enrolled students have enrollment priority. All other applications received when a class is filled are filed in our "Waiting Pool". Parents will be notified when an appropriate opening is available. Enrollment decisions lay solely with the Admissions Committee of Bastrop Montessori and are based on the following qualifications: Age and Gender balance in classrooms, Philosophical Alignment with School Principals and Values, The School's ability to serve the Child.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION: Children will only be suspended or expelled from Bastrop Montessori in the most unworkable of circumstances such as, a consistent disruption of other's activities, verbal or physical abuse of others or of property, declining to participate in classroom activities, or if the parents fail to fulfill their payment and participation commitments, and only after every attempt has been made to reach a workable solution to any difficulties through face to face meetings.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

AUTHORIZED PICK UP PERSONS: Children will ONLY be released to the authorized persons on your Application for Enrollment. If someone not listed is expected to pick up your child, we MUST have that in writing (including email or text) from the parents.

SIGNING IN & OUT: It is the parent or authorized guardians' responsibility to sign children in and out on the designated form EVERY TIME, and PLEASE let us know that you are dropping them off/picking them up as well. Per TDFPS standards, logs are kept as an official attendance record.

DAILY ROUTINE OF DROP OFF AND PICK UP: Transitions can be difficult for children, and some of the biggest transitions of the school-day are pick-up and drop-off, and we want to work with you to make these times as calm and consistent as possible. We ask your help in establishing a brief, but not rushed, consistent drop-off routine. Please let us know if you need our help!

PARKING: Bastrop Montessori at Pecan Street is in a residential neighborhood, and so has limited parking. You may park either in front of my house, or in the side yard against the north fence, of my neighbor at 2000 Pecan Street. Entrance to school will be through the BACKYARD. You will enter through the gate at the south side of the house and will find a sign in/sign out area under a pavilion.

ATTENDANCE

REGULAR ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance and timely arrival is SO important to your child! It helps them connect with the school environment and to develop a sense of belonging and community, and it is critical to your child's success that they attend school consistently and arrive in a timely manner. If this proves to be unworkable for your family, we'll ask for a meeting to determine how we can support you or if our schedule works for your family. Of course, if your child is not feeling well, it is in everyone's best interest if he or she does not attend school, and if something comes up

to delay your arrival from time to time, or your child will be missing a day of school please let us know – we rest easier knowing that, overall, everything is ok in your family!

SCHOOL LIFE

TRANSPORTATION & FIELD TRIPS: Due to the logistical and liability issues involved, we will not be going on field trips during this School Year.

CLOTHING: Please dress your child in comfortable, simple, media free clothes. No costume type clothing please (capes, “TuTu’s, etc). Remember that we will be painting, planting, drawing, building and making other assorted messes every day! We do have smocks at school, but they do not completely protect clothing. Depending on the type of fabric, even “washable” paints may not completely wash out. We want children to concentrate more on their creative work rather than on keeping their clothes clean. We will go outside to play in all but the most intense weather and ask that you dress your child appropriately for the forecasted weather of the day. Several complete changes of clothing (including extra socks, underwear, shirts, and pants) always need to be kept at school. Please label or otherwise mark all belongings with your child's name. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag and should be replaced with a clean set the next day. Remember that many children are still learning to dress themselves independently. It is helpful to have your children wear easy-on/easy-off clothing and shoes, especially when toilet training.

No dress up or costume type clothes at school please.

SHOES: We recommend comfortable, closed-toe shoes with rubber soles for running, dancing, and climbing. We also recommend that you send your child in rubber boots in rainy weather, and to leave sneakers or shoes in the cubbies for indoor wear. Children are free to remove their shoes at school, both indoors and outdoors. Comfortable, unencumbered feet help children to feel relaxed and relaxed children are happier and more engaged in learning!

WATER PLAY: Water play is an integral part of a Montessori education. Children will be involved with watering the garden or water table play or works involving pouring liquids. From time to time sprinklers may be used in the playground for both entertainment and practical reasons.

TOYS AND PERSONAL ITEMS: Transitional objects are important for young children. They are concrete links to home and can be comforting if a child misses a parent or guardian while at school. A special blanket or stuffed toy can help a child say goodbye to a parent or guardian in the beginning of the year. As children become more familiar with school, they will need these objects less and less. Usually, the object stays in your child's cubby, only to be brought out for rest or to help soothe little “boo-boos” or hurt feelings. Please discuss these expectations with your child, and use your best judgment

when selecting transitional items, being sure to avoid easily damaged, irreplaceable, or otherwise inappropriate objects. If personal items become a distraction, we will ask that they remain at home.

SCHOOL WORK: Acknowledging and discussing his/her schoolwork is important to your child's development. Most works that your child completes will be left in a work folder. Each child will also have an area to place his/her personal work. Priceless paintings and yet-to-be published stories may be left nearby to be discovered by parents. Some works of art are displayed on the school walls. Your child would love for you to notice these at pick-up time. For each of the above reasons, do not expect pick-up to be something that happens quickly at the door – your children are so proud of their accomplishments and are eager to share them with YOU – the most important people in their lives! Due to COVID precautions, we will ask you to arrange indoor visits with Ann or Cheryl.

SCHOOL MATERIALS: All our teachers are committed to creating attractive, age-appropriate learning environments for the children. From the first day of school, each classroom is guided by the principle of respect: respect for oneself, respect for others and respect for the classroom materials. Children begin to understand and practice respect for their environment by participating in the care of their classrooms. Occasionally, little things (Montessori materials like wooden cubes or beads) may find their way to your home via children's pockets. Although these objects may seem unimportant, they are often integral parts of our classroom materials. Please help by reminding your children to leave school materials in their proper place at Bastrop Montessori and returning any found items right away.

COMMUNICATION

CONFIDENTIALITY: Bastrop Montessori relies on trust between families and our teachers, staff, and volunteers. We respect the confidentiality rights of every child who attends our program as well as the rights of his/her family. Our staff will not discuss or otherwise communicate any form of information concerning the care or condition of any child with unauthorized individuals.

IMPORTANT SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS: Important announcements such as weather closings, special events, contagious disease in the community, and the like will be made via group email. Please join the email group at the time of their enrollment and stay abreast of important announcements. Announcements and Policy changes will also come out in the school newsletter.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION: We value your partnership! Open, honest and regular communication between home and school is the cornerstone to our ability to serve your child and support them in reaching their highest potential. We therefore ask that you please keep us updated on any disruptions to your family's home life so that we may support your child at school, including:

- Trips away by a parent
- Change in marital status
- A new caregiver
- Any symptoms of illness
- Medication, or change in medication
- Illness or death of someone close, including pets
- Visiting relative(s)
- Sleeplessness
- Worries or fears

If you ever have concerns about how your child is doing at school, or how something is being handled please let us know immediately! Teachers and parents are encouraged to briefly exchange child-relevant information at arrival and dismissal times. If more in-depth discussion is needed, please send an email and/or schedule a conference with your child's teachers. This allows teachers to enter conversation with you well rested, focused and ready to give you their full attention. At any time, you may request a conference to view your child's records. For non-academic questions such as tuition payments, updating child files, policy or administrative issues please contact the School Director.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES: In addition to the standard 2 Parent/Teacher Conferences held during the school year, on-going dialogue and classroom observation, formal Parent-Teacher Conferences may be had by request at any time. We will always try to schedule a convenient time for you to confer with your child's teachers. Because the discussion is about your child it is necessary that children, including the student(s) and siblings other than infants, must not be present at conferences.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS: Accidents or incidents that occur during the school day, including before and after care, will be recorded on an Accident/Injury" form and delivered to the parents by the end of the school day.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION, DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

MONTESSORI SELF DISCIPLINE: The self-discipline that we aim for in a "normalized" Montessori classroom does not come about in a few short days or weeks; rather, it is the result of inner growth and achievement gained through months in the classroom. It is very much a process and, depending on the child and his/her home environment and individual personality, the teacher must use his/her judgment in handling each situation. If a situation arises where a firm reiteration of the ground rules is not effective, we may try some or all the following behavioral techniques:

1. Find a peaceful place for the child away from the situation where the problem arose.

2. Sit with the child until he/she is calm.
3. Listen to his/her story without judgmental response.
4. Provide the child with the appropriate language to help him/her understand and verbalize the situation. Sometimes, a child needs some time to think over what happened. The child may be directed to a quiet place where s/he can sit and reflect. We do not think of, or refer to, this place as punitive. The child chooses to return to the group when he/she feels ready or is invited back. The fact that the child makes this choice is important to his/her development. Occasionally, a child needs some guidance: more time, firm instructions, and an understanding that one must earn the privilege of working fully in the classroom. If any faculty member feels the need for help and insight into a child's behavior, he or she is encouraged to schedule a time for observations, consultations and parent conferences as needed.

We strive to resolve all conflicts using Non-Violent Communication techniques. If you ever have any concerns about your child's experience at school or with any school policies, please let us know immediately so that we can work together to resolve your concerns. Bastrop Montessori Staff adhere to the Texas Administrative Code 746.2803, Discipline and Guidance, which requires that:

- ❖ Discipline must be:
 1. Individualized and consistent for each child;
 2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
 3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- ❖ Teachers, administrative staff, caregivers and volunteers use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
 1. Encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
 4. Using brief supervised separation from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- ❖ Teachers, administrative staff, caregivers and volunteers must not use harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:
 1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.

2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
3. Pinching, shaking or biting a child.
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room with the door closed.
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

PARENT COMMUNITY

BREASTFEEDING ON CAMPUS: Mothers are invited to make themselves comfortable anywhere on campus and nurse their young children.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: Observation of your child in his or her classroom environment provides a valuable opportunity for you to better understand the Montessori experience. If you wish to observe worktime in order to learn more about the Montessori philosophy, please let the teachers know so they could assist you and provide explanations. Observers are asked to sit in a space, designated by your child's teacher, that doesn't obstruct or disrupt the flow of children's work and concentration. In any observational situation, please be aware of the individuality inherent in each child. A core belief of Montessori principles is that each child develops in their own way and at their own pace. TDFPS requires schools to allow parents to visit and observe their child's school without prior approval, and we welcome your visits! Because of COVID precautions we will have parent observers sit on the porch, not in the indoor classrooms.

PARENT SUPPORT: Parent Support Groups and Information Opportunities will be announced through the school email group. If you have any ideas to share or requests for specific discussion topics, please let us know! The best way to communicate with us about this is via info@BastropMontessori.com

PARENT PARTICIPATION: Parents are an integral part of the school community. Children LOVE seeing their parents helping and around campus and being a meaningful part of their school. If you would like to volunteer time on campus, either during the school day, making improvements on campus after hours, or at special events in Bastrop, please let the Director know, and we'll work something out!

CHILDRENS COMMUNITY

CLASSROOM GROUND RULES: In keeping with the Montessori philosophy described above, all classrooms at Bastrop Montessori abide by the following Ground Rules:

1. Children learn to put their materials away.
2. Children learn to respect each other's work and must obtain the permission of another to work with him/her. The right of each child to work alone is to be respected.
3. No child may hurt another child, emotionally or physically.
4. To prevent accidents, running is not allowed in classrooms and hallways.
5. Children learn best by doing things for themselves, so teachers do not do anything for a child that he/she has learned and is trying to do.
6. Children are free to move around and speak, unless it is meeting (circle) time.

CURRICULUM: Bastrop Montessori adheres to the Montessori model of education. Classrooms are designed to foster independence and the pursuit of knowledge in each of the following areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, World Cultures, Art and Music. We also enjoy time outside exploring nature and learning about gardening and care of the environment. Guides have individual and group lesson plans for each student throughout the year and track their progress through each of the curriculum areas and social emotional growth and development.

HOLIDAYS: Bastrop Montessori is a secular organization with no religious or spiritual affiliation. Classroom Guides may explore different holidays as part of the cultural studies program but do not teach belief, dogma, or personal spirituality. Families are encouraged to ask about sharing their customs, rituals, music and special foods associated with the observance of their holidays in an educational and non-dogmatic manner.

BIRTHDAYS: We will be delighted to honor your child on their special day! If you would like to bring a treat for the children to share you may, but please do not feel that you must. Please talk with your child's teacher to organize the details. Some examples of appropriate birthday snacks include sliced fresh fruit or veggies, muffins (no icing, very little sugar, and no artificial colors), frozen fruit popsicles (no sugar or artificial colors), cheese sticks, peanut butter crackers.

INVITATIONS TO OFF CAMPUS BIRTHDAY PARTIES: We ask that no invitations to off campus parties be distributed at or through school. You are more than welcome to make announcements through the school email group!

STAFF

In addition to training and experience in early childhood education and the Montessori Method, all Staff at Bastrop Montessori comply with Department of Family Protective Services Licensed Childcare Center Training and Immunizations requirements, including Pediatric First Aid and CPR Training, engage in continuing education and training and have passed thorough background checks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

SCHOOL LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Physical Address: 2000 Pecan Street, Bastrop, Texas 78602

Please note that the addresses in my neighborhood are out of order! I live in the green house on the west side of the street, just past the railroad tracks.

School Phone: 512) 626-5018 (Cheryl's Cell)

Email Address: info@BastropMontessori.com

Website: www.BastropMontessori.com

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY PROTECTIVE SERVICES (TDFPS)

Bastrop Montessori follows Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("TDFPS") minimum standards for Licensed Child Care Homes. To review these regulations, refer the TDFPS website (below) for the latest updated version, or ask a staff member to view the copy on file at school. The most recent TDFPS inspection is posted by the school entrance.

TDFPS AND CHILD CARE LICENSING CONTACT INFORMATION:

Child-Care Licensing office:

3809 E. Loop 150, Ste. 102

Bastrop, Texas 78602

(512) 321-3995

<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

LOCAL LICENSING AGENT: Roy Jones: 512-413-9502 | roy.jones2@hhsc.state.tx.us

PARENTS RIGHT TO REVIEW TDFPS LICENSING REPORTS: As per TDFPS code, parents may review TDFPS inspections of Bastrop Montessori at any time. Reports are kept on file in the school office and may be viewed at any time.

REQUIRED POSTINGS: As per TDFPS code postings, posters, and important information pertaining to the children, daily operations of the school, and emergency contact information are on display at Bastrop Montessori.

TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT CALL: 1-800-252-5400

BASTROP MONTESSORI HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE

Student's Name:

We hope that the above policies have served to make clear how Bastrop Montessori operates, what we value, our commitment to your children's growth, development and happiness and to the community that, together, we want to build with you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please bring them to the attention of the Director or Guide right away. Your input is important to us and we are eager to talk with you!

Please sign and date this page, signifying that you have read and agree to abide by the policies and practices in the Bastrop Montessori Community Handbook to the best of your ability, and return it to the office before the start of the school year.

Wishing you well,

Cheryl Kruckeberg

Director, Bastrop Montessori

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date