

BASTROP MONTESSORI

*Learning Through Wonder and Discovery*

2022-2023  
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 that young people retain their natural sense of curiosity, ingenuity, 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, and will prepare your child to thrive in a future that we cannot yet imagine. Montessori is an investment not only in your child's life, but in the future of humanity itself.

Before you proceed with enrolling your child 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 principles of your family and Bastrop Montessori are 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 be contributing members of their communities. 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. Throughout the school day, Guides use both concrete teaching materials and a well-defined, innovative curriculum tailored to each child, and will demonstrate a wide array of sequential activities through individual and small group instruction. Classrooms are organized to be easily used by the children, requiring little to no help from the Guide or Assistant, and are thoughtfully arranged to offer 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, and well-defined spaces for each part of the curriculum; Sensorial, Practical Life, Language Arts, Math, World Cultures, Art and Music, featuring 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

**TODDLER CLASS, AGES 18 - 36 MONTHS:** A Montessori classroom for toddlers safely supports your child's drive to do things alone, developing confidence and a sense of competence. The environment is language-rich, with adults using proper nomenclature rather than baby talk so that the children are exposed to and develop a broad vocabulary. Adults also support toddlers in communicating with each other. In this learning environment, children work independently, observe others, explore freely, and express their curiosity and creativity. A self-care area fosters toilet awareness and independence in maintaining personal hygiene (such as learning how to wipe one's nose and wash hands independently). There is also an area for gross motor activities to help children coordinate their movements, and low tables that enable them to help prepare, serve, eat, and clean up their snacks and meals.

**PRIMARY CLASS, AGES 3 - 6 YEARS:** The Early Childhood level, for children ages 2 ½ – 6, encourages preschoolers to explore and discover, to collaborate with classmates, and to take ownership of their education. The Montessori Method encourages self-directed learning that promotes self-confidence, independent thought and action, and critical thinking, while fostering social-emotional and intellectual growth. Education for peace is a foundational component of Montessori education at all levels. At the Early Childhood level, the teaching of peace, social justice, and global citizenship is based on fostering respect for all people and living things, and helping children learn the tools for peaceful conflict resolution.

Following is a brief description of the learning areas in a Montessori Primary Classroom:

**SENSORIAL:** 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. 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 minimize 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.

**PRACTICAL LIFE:** Young children are fascinated by tasks which an adult considers ordinary, such as washing dishes, pouring water, sweeping, 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, setting a table, returning their work to the shelf once they are finished, cleaning up after themselves and other daily tasks.

**LANGUAGE ARTS:** The Montessori language curriculum follows the natural development of language in the child. Around 3 years old, children become interested in hearing letter sounds in words and learning which written symbols correspond to the sounds. Children learn letters by their phonetic sounds before learning the alphabet, which facilitates beginning spelling and reading. Once they have mastered several sounds, they will start putting them together to form words. There is a

rich array of materials to support each step of the reading, spelling, and writing process. Activities in all areas of the classroom aim to strengthen children's fine motor muscles to facilitate writing.

**CULTURAL STUDIES:** The Montessori classroom includes many maps, flags, art photographs and items 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 and understanding for mathematics in their early years by working with concrete mathematical materials. Through personal exploration of the many math manipulatives children develop an understanding of such concepts as quantity, "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 asking questions, observing, classifying, recording results; they are objective, organized and able to perform tasks in a predetermined order.

**ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM, AGES 6-12 YEARS:** What sets Montessori apart in the Elementary years—ages 6 – 12—is the individually paced curriculum that challenges children academically and safeguards their well-being and sense of self. Engaging as contributing members of a respectful community, they learn to question, think critically, and take responsibility for their own learning—skills that will support them in later education and in life. As at all Montessori levels, the Elementary program is based on the belief that children learn best through movement and work with their hands, and provides cognitive, social, and emotional support to help them reach their full potential. This includes addressing their needs as they enter a new period of development characterized by:

- A transition from concrete to abstract thinking
- Growing interest in socialization
- Thinking and memory that is enhanced by creativity and imagination
- An interest in fairness, social justice, and compassion

Multi-age groupings of children ages 6 – 9 and 9 –12 (or 6 –12) provide a heterogeneous mix in which children can collaborate and socialize. These inter-age relationships strengthen the entire community. Older children are seen as role models within the community. They support the growth and development of younger children through socialization, assisting with new work, or teaching skills they have mastered themselves. They can also work with younger students in areas of the curriculum in which they themselves may need more practice, without stigma. Younger children follow the example set by the older students and have peers to work with in areas of the curriculum in which they may be more advanced. This multi-age community provides opportunities for all individuals to learn from each other, at times leading, sharing, or serving as role models. It also develops an appreciation of differences. Within this supportive, inclusive community, children work through the curriculum at their own pace, accelerating during some tasks or taking additional time with others.

## FLOW OF THE DAY

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

<b>TODDLER CLASS</b>	<b>PRIMARY AND LOWER ELEMENTARY CLASSES</b>
<b>8:00 – 9:00  Arrival:</b> Supervised free play. Due to COVID precautions and parking limitations, arrival times may need to be staggered.	<b>8:00 – 8:45  Arrival:</b> Supervised free play. Due to COVID precautions and parking limitations, Arrival times may need to be staggered.
<b>9:00 - 9:30   Supervised free play, usually outside.</b>	<b>8:45 - 9:15  Supervised free play, usually outside.</b>
<b>9:30 – 11:30   Morning Learning Period:</b> 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, song and story time.	<b>9:30 – 12:30   Morning Learning Period:</b> The children will have both individual and group lessons as well as choosing their own work. This morning learning period will include a large group time, morning snack, and story time.
<b>11:30 -12:00  Wash Hands &amp; Eat Lunch</b>	<b>12:30 -1:00  Wash Hands &amp; Eat Lunch</b>
<b>12:00 – 12:30   Diapers, potty and handwashing</b>	<b>1:00 – 3:00  Naptime</b> (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).
<b>12:30 - 2:30   Naptime</b>	<b>3:00- 3:30   Wash Hands, Eat Snack</b>
<b>2:30- 3:00   Diapers, potty, wash Hands, snack time</b>	<b>3:30 – 4:00   Playtime, usually outside</b>
<b>3:00 – 4:00   Playtime, usually outside</b>	<b>3:45 - 4:00   DISMISSAL</b>
<b>3:45 - 4:00   DISMISSAL</b>	

**NOTE: Morning free play is NOT an extended arrival time! It is a critical part of the children's social learning and development. Please organize your morning routine to assure that you will consistently arrive to school by 9 am**

## DAYS AND HOURS OF SCHOOL OPERATION

Bastrop Montessori is open, 8 am – 4 pm, Monday – Friday, September through May, and (mostly) follows the BISD holiday breaks, staff and student breaks, staff development days, weather closings, and delayed starts, but not make-up days

The full school calendar is included in the Application and Enrollment Packet.

## 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 DFPS 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: Parking recommendations at our new location (875 Hwy 71) will be determined and posted as we spend time on the new campus and decide on what system will work best.

## 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 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. This includes, but is not limited to, unwanted touching, disrespectful language about a person's abilities, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation. 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 addressed 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 most 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 and call 911 if appropriate, while another teacher gathers the children into a safe location.

TOBACCO, ALCOHOL, AND 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](mailto:info@BastropMontessori.com)

## EMERGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Safety is 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.

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

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES: If a child becomes ill at school parents will be notified by phone, and the child kept under adult supervision until the 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 first aid as needed, and the child's parent/s will be notified by phone. Bastrop Montessori will notify DFPS of reportable incidents using the standard Incident Report form.

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 at **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**. Staff shall have contact information for the parents and will notify parents of any departure from campus at the first opportunity.

**NOTE: A specific location will be announced before school opens at our new location, 875 Hwy 71, Bastrop, Texas.**

**BASTROP MONTESSORI HIGHLY RECOMMENDS VACCINATION AGAINST COVID19**

**BASTROP MONTESSORI IS REQUIRED TO REPORT OUTBREAKS OF COVID TO OUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT, AND TO FOLLOW THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS PER TEMPORARY CLOSURE.**

**ADDITIONALLY, WE WILL FOLLOW OUR OWN JUDGEMENT TO PROTECT THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY FROM COVID.**

**PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT ANY INCIDENTS OF COVID19 OUTBREAK IN YOUR FAMILY'S IMMEDIATE COMMUNITY, INCLUDING HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS, WORK COLLEAGUES, SPORTS TEAMS, CHURCH GROUPS, ETC.**

**FAILURE TO REPORT COULD RESULT IN YOUR CHILD'S EXPULSION FROM SCHOOL**

- Arrival and Dismissal will be from outside.
- Staff and 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.
- Parents will not be allowed in the building unless necessary.
- Children and staff will wash hands often and well.
- Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily
- Fresh air will be circulating through the school regularly.
- Classrooms are arranged to allow plenty of room between work areas, and all children aged 3 and up will be wearing masks indoors (except for nap-time).
- Napping children will be arranged head to toe, and with as much distance between them as is possible.
- Weather permitting, the children will have lunch outside.
- Children will have their own individual supplies box with pencils, colors, etc. - so that they aren't sharing.
- Staff and Children in the Primary and Lower Elementary Classes will wear masks inside.
- Following illness, children will not be allowed back to school until they are at least 24 hours fever free, with no medications.
- Children in the Toddler Class will NOT be wearing masks.



## 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, including items from each food group, such as cheese, fresh fruit, non-sugary yogurt, whole-grain crackers, veggies, cold cuts, legumes, and raisins (leftovers from dinners make for a tasty addition to lunch).
- do not pack: yogurt tubes, juice boxes, Nutella, sweets, candy, cookies, lunchables, or processed fruit snacks. Most processed foods contain a lot of sugar. Please read labels and do your best to steer away from the added sugars.
- 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.)

**BREAKFAST:** We respectfully ask that you refrain from feeding your children sugary breakfasts, such as pancakes, waffles, donuts, and the like on school days, and focus more on protein rich foods like eggs, nut butters, breakfast tacos, etc., that will help to sustain a steady level of energy, emotional stability, and mental focus.

**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 is good handwashing practices. 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. At school, children are taught to wet their hands first, then turn off the water, get soap and rub hands together being sure to get all parts of the hands and between the fingers, then turn the water back on to rinse.

**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. Children should stay at home if:

- Anyone in the household is Covid Positive, or if the child has [Covid Symptoms](#)
- Temperature of 99.9 degrees or higher.
- 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 asked 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:

- Child is fever free with no medications, for a full 24 hours
- It is preferable, but not mandatory, to obtain a doctor's note before your child returns to school.
- 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 Cheryl or 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 choose 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.

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. Self-discipline includes how children conduct themselves alone as well as how they interact with others. It is encouraged and supported by proactively setting clear expectations/boundaries and presenting clear, simple step-by-step procedures, so that children know what to expect. Expectations are age-appropriate and achievable and are reinforced by social modeling and guided practice. As Maria Montessori said, “teach teaching, not correcting”. Self-Discipline is very much a process and depends on the child and his/her home environment and individual personality. Teachers must use their judgment in handling each situation.

Among our practices are:

- allowing the child time/space/assistance to calm down, either alone or with an adult or another child
- providing 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.
- firm reiteration of expectations and possible consequences
- encouraging children to “give messages” to each other as problems arise, rather than “tattling” which relies on adults to solve the problem. Encourage/support problem-solving between children, guiding/allowing children to come to a resolution of their choosing instead of the adult imposing a set resolution.
- focusing on attending to the injured party; notice how that child feels, listen to the complaint and ask clarifying questions, offer comfort, a glass of water, or wet rag, bringing the aggressor into the conversation so that they have an active role in remedying whatever circumstances led to the upset. Adults support the injured party in giving a message (“I didn’t like...” or “Don’t do that again.”) the aggressor then responds to the injured party, or takes some time until ready to respond. Adults support the process that unfolds: Some conflicts are resolved quickly, and sometimes there is disagreement about how to resolve and the problem-solving must continue a while until a solution arises that is acceptable to all involved.
- a child may lose a privilege in the classroom or playground for some period of time, until they show that they are ready to try again. A balance of freedom is in the best interest of the child,

and teachers look for ways to allow the appropriate amount of freedom for each child to be successful.

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.

## 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 via email.

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 asked to briefly exchange child-relevant information at arrival and dismissal times, accompanied by a written communication, either paper or via email to the Director and the child's teacher. 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.

## SCHOOL LIFE

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

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 your child’s teacher.

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.

**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! We ask the children NOT to talk about birthday parties and invitations at school, as it distracts the children from regular school activities.

## **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 Child Care Center Training and Immunizations requirements, including Pediatric First Aid and CPR Training, engage in continuing education and training and have passed thorough background checks.

## 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 work time 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! Following DFPS requirements we are not allowing parents in the classroom unnecessarily; we may have extra precautions in place during covid.

PARENT SUPPORT: Parent Support 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](mailto:info@BastropMontessori.com)

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

- Working together to maintain and improve our school helps build community, and helps us to keep costs down, plus the children LOVE having their parents be an active part of their school! We ask that each family contributes 15 hours per semester, a total of 30 hours per school year. Following are some of the areas in which you can contribute to Bastrop Montessori or make a suggestion of your own. And if you simply don't have the extra time these days, you may select the buyout option.
  - Marketing, promotion, and fundraising, including website development, promotional events
  - Classroom assistance, including substituting in the classroom, lunchtime, or playground assistance, making or repairing classroom materials.
  - Library maintenance
  - Grounds maintenance, including mowing, weed eating, tree trimming, garden installation
  - Building maintenance, including playground and fence repair, and assorted indoor projects
  - Occasional classroom deep cleaning
  - Organize annual service projects
  - Parent Participation Coordinator
  - Parent Suggestion
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## **SCHOOL LOCATION AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

### SCHOOL:

Physical Address: 875 Hwy 71 W, Bastrop, Texas 78602

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

Email Address: [info@BastropMontessori.com](mailto:info@BastropMontessori.com)

Website: [www.BastropMontessori.com](http://www.BastropMontessori.com)

### TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)

Bastrop Montessori follows Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) minimum standards for Licensed Child Care Homes. To review these regulations, refer to the DFPS website (below) for the latest updated version, or ask a staff member to view the copy on file at school. The most recent DFPS 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: Paulette Clemons | 512-839-5205 | [Paulette.Clemons@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:Paulette.Clemons@hhs.texas.gov)

PARENTS RIGHT TO REVIEW TDFPS LICENSING REPORTS: As per DFPS code, parents may review DFPS 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 DFPS 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