



**Montessori School
of Baton Rouge
Parent Handbook**

2021-2022

"It is true, we cannot make a genius," Dr. Montessori once wrote, "we can only give each individual the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities to become an independent, secure and balanced human being."

SCHOOL HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

Montessori School of Baton Rouge was organized in 1964 by a group of community members interested in the Montessori Method. The group met for approximately one year on a weekly basis intent on hiring a teacher and opening a Montessori school for Baton Rouge.

Miss Vera Cramer, a student of Dr. Maria Montessori and a native from Ceylon, was located and hired in August, 1965. The Catholic diocese supported the group's efforts by giving \$5,000 for the purchase of materials and travel expenses for Miss Cramer.

The first class of six children began their work at St. Agnes until its closure. The Board of Directors, at that time, decided to become independent and open a school. The next location was on Napoleon Street. The school grew from six to sixty students. After a one-year merger with Trinity Episcopal Day School, the parents felt the best interest for the school would be to locate the school on its own again, so construction began in 1980 at the Wimbledon location.

Montessori School of Baton Rouge strives to aid children in the development of basic skills and the ability to judge, think and create. We introduce the child to the joy of learning at an early age, providing a framework in which intellectual and social discipline can develop naturally in the child as they mature. We see our task as providing the best environment for children so they can translate what they learn into an intelligent response to the world in which they live.

Montessori School of Baton Rouge welcomes students of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies and other school-administered programs.

OUR MISSION:

To provide an authentic Montessori program which encourages the development of the whole child while supporting them in becoming independent, compassionate global citizens.

OUR VISION:

To expand our program allowing Montessori education to become accessible to every child.

MONTESSORI EDUCATION

Montessori education is a philosophy of child development and a rationale for guiding such development. A basic understanding of the philosophy is, therefore, essential before one can appreciate the operational strategies used in working with young children in Montessori preschool.

1. **AUTO-EDUCATION** - Montessori realized that children are different from each other and therefore need the greatest possible liberty for their individuality to grow. The child competes only with themselves; so, success becomes its own reward. The impulse to learn must come from within; the child must wish to learn; consequently, reward and punishment are unnecessary.

Given the proper conditions, children prefer educating themselves to any other occupation. However, there is a distinction between the work of an adult and that of a child. An adult works to obtain an end, a child works for the process itself.

The child possesses sensitive periods for absorbing and learning from his environment. They have a deep love and need for purposeful work. Montessori school allows the child the freedom (within limits) in a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and activities through which they accomplish the most important goal — the development of self.

2. **DIDACTIC MATERIALS** - The materials in a Montessori classroom stimulate the child's natural desire to act and learn through action. The child must spontaneously take a lively interest in the material before learning can occur. Thus, the materials are as simple and attractive as possible. They are displayed on low shelves in a way that the child can easily see the material. They are arranged so the child may pick up a tray, basket, etc., and successfully carry it to a workspace. There is an abundance of materials so that there is something for every child. The materials progress from simple to more complex design and usage and prepare the child indirectly for future learning. The materials are designed for auto-education and the control of error lies in the materials themselves. The child can recognize his own mistakes.

3. **PREPARED ENVIRONMENT** - The setting in which learning takes place is equally as important as the child and the teacher. Children of different ages are included in the same class. There is a relatively quiet, yet busy atmosphere. The room is arranged for children allowing them to move and develop freely. The furnishings are child size. Children totally involve themselves in their work alone or in small groups. A Montessori classroom is aesthetically pleasing, reflecting the beauty of the world. There is a sense of structure and order, everything has a permanent place. Freedom of movement toward a definite goal is an integral part of the classroom.

MONTESSORI PRIMARY ENVIRONMENT

PRACTICAL LIFE

Aim - Development of coordination, independence, and the understanding and care of the environment.

SENSORIAL

Aim - Perceptions in dimension, chromatic sense, geometrical solid forms, geometrical plane figures, matching sound cylinders and puzzle cubes that develop a strong sense of observation of the environment and a preparation for the base ten concept in math.

MATH

Aim - To develop the mathematical concept of base 10 and the association between quantity and symbol, place value of thousand, hundred, ten, unit operations in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and learning the tables.

PRE-READING

Aim - Association in matching between objects and objects, objects and pictures, pictures and pictures, spatial relation cards, sequencing, opposites and classification.

LANGUAGE

Aim - Development of phonetic reading skills and the introduction of the phonograms to show how sounds change. The introduction into grammar with parts of speech that are phonetic and non-phonetic through an exercise with a farm with which to label the objects that extends into sentence structure.

PRE-WRITING

Aim - Control of the hand in preparation for writing with Practical Life and Sensorial materials, concept of left to right, pin pricking on drawn line and the tracing of sandpaper letters and sandpaper numerals, various tracing exercises and the metal inset apparatus in language.

GEOGRAPHY

Aim - To develop geographical concepts and increase the child's knowledge of his place in the environment and in the world through map puzzles.

SCIENCE

Aim - Development of observation of botany and zoology concepts through parts of plants and animals and simple scientific observations of weather, magnetic and non-magnetic, float and sink, and classification to name a few examples.

MONTESSORI TODDLER ENVIRONMENT

PRACTICAL LIFE

Aim - Development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of environment, exercises in grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement.

SENSORIAL

Aim - Recognition and use of senses to order and classify in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, sound, and smell.

MATH

Aim - Introduction of early math concepts.

LANGUAGE

Aim - Facilitate oral language development, articulation, and expression.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

Aim - To begin to learn and develop the values of living in a community through one-on-one and group interactions. Misunderstandings are resolved in a calm way with an emphasis on grace and courtesy.

CULTURAL

Aim - Exposure to customs, music, movement, and art from different regions of the world.

PHYSICAL

Aim - Development of self-feeding and bathroom skills are learned with consistency, repetition, and patience. With a sense of satisfaction from being increasingly successful, the toddler will move toward independence.

BEHAVIOR OF THE CHILDREN

There is always a busy hum of activity in a Montessori classroom because the use of the materials involves many motions — walking, carrying, pouring, speaking, and particularly the constant use of the hands. All activity, however, is guided by a respect for the teacher, a respect for the work of others, and a respect for the materials themselves. Dr. Montessori never equated goodness with silence and immobility. Children during these early years must have movement in order to learn — but it must also be movement with a purpose. Self discipline, she felt, should be acquired gradually through absorption in meaningful work. When a child becomes vitally interested in a particular classroom activity, their behavior almost always matures. If a child misbehaves in a Montessori classroom, the teacher usually helps them to select work which will more fully absorb the child's attention.

NONCOMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Because the children work individually with the materials, there is no competition in the Montessori classroom. Each child relates only to their own previous work, and progress is not compared to the achievements of other students. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills.

The use of individual materials permits a varied pace that accommodates many levels of ability in the classroom. A younger or slower child may work for many weeks on the same piece of equipment without retarding the progress of the other members of the class. Advanced children in the very same room can move from one activity to another very quickly, thus avoiding the boredom of waiting for other members of the class to catch up. The children with a high level of ability are constantly challenged by the wide variety of materials and their many uses.

It is a well established fact that young children mature at very different rates and their periods of readiness for academic subjects vary a great deal. This continues to be true for the elementary-aged child. Because interest is stimulated and the materials are at hand whenever a child is ready, some students in a Montessori class begin to read and calculate at an unusually early age. However, very early learning was not ever Dr. Montessori's objective. Her idea was only that the learning experience should occur naturally and joyfully at the proper moment for each individual child.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Dr. Montessori always referred to the teacher as a "directress" and her role differs considerably from that of a traditional teacher. She is, first of all, a very keen observer of the individual interests and needs of each child, and her daily work proceeds from her observations rather than from a prepared curriculum. She demonstrates the correct use of materials as they are individually chosen by the student or teacher. She carefully watches the progress of each child and keeps a record of their work with the materials. She is trained to recognize periods of readiness. Sometimes she must divert a child who chooses material which is beyond their ability; at other times she must encourage a child who is hesitant. Whenever a child makes a mistake, she refrains, if possible, from intervening and allows them to discover their own error through further use of the self-correcting material. This procedure follows Dr. Montessori's principle that a child learns through experience.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The main objective of Montessori School of Baton Rouge is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will help children develop within themselves the foundational habits, attitudes, skills, and ideas which are essential for a lifetime of creative thinking and learning. Our specific goals for the children are:

- To develop a positive attitude toward school and learning.
- To develop a sense of high self-esteem.
- To develop habits of concentration for lifelong study skills.
- To develop and foster an abiding curiosity.
- To develop habits of initiative and persistence.
- To foster inner discipline and a sense of order.
- To develop sensory-motor skills in order to sharpen the ability to discriminate and judge.
- To develop socially acceptable behavior.
- To acquire the basic skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.
- To help develop each child's innate, ultimate potential through high self-expectations.

THE FIRST DAYS

When a child starts school for the first time, it's likely that both child and parent will experience mixed feelings.

It is normal, on the one hand, for the child to feel positive and excited about venturing out into the world beyond home, and to be attached to the other children and the interesting things to do at school. On the other hand, it is normal for parents to want the child to have playmates and the social and intellectual stimulation that school can provide. It is also normal for both to have some negative feelings right along with the positive ones.

The child may feel afraid that they may not be safe without mother/father, anxious about controlling himself (without the familiar safeguard of the parental presence); the child may even wonder if they are still loved or feels angry about having to endure this new anxiety. The sadness at being parted for a while from their parent may come rushing over the child at the moment when they say "good-bye" at the school door.

The parent may, to their surprise, have many of the same negative feelings. You have arrived at this choice carefully; sure that Montessori is just what the child needs... and perhaps looking forward to a little freedom for the first time in two-three years. Yet, when the first day comes, you too are filled with uneasiness, especially if the child looks downcast or even cries a little. Do the teachers here really know what they're doing? Maybe this child is too young after all. Underneath this layer may be some deeper fears, not even conscious:

This child, who has defined your identity as a parent is growing up, so who will you be now?

The house will seem so empty while the child is at school.

They miss their child and feel a bit lonely already.

Will you still be needed?

Why can't your spouse understand how upset you are about this?

In short, both parent and child are experiencing normal feelings of fear, sadness, and anger associated with separation. Recognizing these feelings and resolving them may

be the most important tasks to be accomplished all year. This first separation will be the prototype for all those that follow in the child's lifetime. If negative feelings are denied and suppressed now, they may be harbored for years to come, an impediment to the child's healthy development and ability to learn. If the child's heart is home with their parents, their mind and body can't take full advantage of being at school.

SOME SIGNS OF SEPARATION ANXIETY

... in the Child

- says they doesn't want to go to school
- resists getting ready in the morning
- cries when the parent leaves the school
- wanders instead of choosing something to do
- avoids teachers
- withdraws into thumb sucking or wets pants
- when the parent comes to pick the child up, they runs away or want to stay & play (it's your turn to wait, as they have waited for you)
- complains to the parent that they are afraid of the other children or that others hurt them
- gets angry with parents or siblings (about very little)
- complains of a tummy ache before school

...in the Parent

- finding reasons for being late to school
- needing to "explain" the child to the teachers
- feeling overly critical of the teachers
- ashamed or angry if your child cries
- trying to leave the school without saying "good-bye"
- saying "good-bye" more than once a day
- frustration at not knowing what the child did at school today
- asking teachers "how did my child do" each day
- staying with the child at school beyond the first few days
- getting angry with spouse, child, or self (about very little)

WHAT TO DO?

Be Prepared. Know in advance that some of these feelings are normal, and know their signs. If you have decided your child is ready and have taken care to choose a school you can trust, then relax and rely on the judgment you made at a less trying moment to carry you through the separation period.

Decide ahead of time how you will handle the first few days, and let both the child and teachers know. Drop your child off at school; emphasize when you'll be back for them, and what will happen after that. If you feel you need to come with your child to get them started, discuss this need with your child's teacher and decide on the best way to handle it.

Be Honest with your feelings. If it is hard to say good-bye, then let it be hard. Phony cheerfulness won't make it go away faster.

Let your child have their feelings. Let them know it is okay to feel sad, or scared, or mad — and still go to school. This will lay the foundation in helping your child understand that although new experiences bring many positive and negative feelings, they can still forge ahead and jump into the new situation life brings, ready to face all the ups and downs that life will bring!

Give support with your positive expectations. Remember that you are happy that they can go to school, that they will have other kids to play with, and that you expect them to like it as you do.

Let him/her walk into school, as this will give him a feeling of independence. Carrying your child into school will make them feel like a baby.

Give special attention at home for a while. Set aside some "loving time" just for them every day, so your child can count on it.

OBSERVATION OF CLASSES

Parents are welcome to observe their child's classroom at any time, and we encourage you. This will give you a greater understanding of the Montessori Method and allow you to see your child interact with other children and adults. The office serves as an excellent observation room with suggested guidelines for observing posted on the wall.

Before parent-teacher conferences in the fall and spring, we require observation of your child. We will schedule specific times for all parents prior to conferences. During scheduled observation parents are asked only to observe at their scheduled time. Drop-in observation is welcome at any time except during Scheduled Observation and Parent-Teacher Conferences.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences will be scheduled in the fall and spring. Conferences may be requested at any other time a teacher or parent feels that it would be beneficial. If you need to talk to a teacher, please call the office and leave a message for her or send an email. Teachers cannot come to the phone during class time, but they will return their calls and emails after class dismissal. In case of emergency you may call the office at 766-9942 or call our Director at 936-9971. If no one is available, please leave a message and a teacher will call you back as soon as possible.

PARENT MAIL POCKET

The school communicates with parents often through the use of fliers and notices. These are placed in the PARENT ROLLING FILE FOLDER, which will be located at the front door or playgroup room door. Folders are placed in alphabetical order. Teachers are great about passing these out during carpool, however when you come into the school please check your folder.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

You will find a School Calendar on our school website. In case of emergency, severe

weather or unexpected conditions, we will inform our families in regard to morning or unexpected closings. We will generally follow decisions made by East Baton Rouge Parish School System.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A Board of Directors that consists of the current director and five to nine parents of current students, representing each classroom, governs Montessori School of Baton Rouge. The Board meets monthly. The support, dedication and participation of our Board have kept our school a part of the Baton Rouge community for over 50 years. Contact the office if you are interested in becoming a board member.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

- To provide an environment that is clean, safe and attractive.
- To maintain the standards and licensing required by state, parish, and city agencies.
- To provide an authentic Montessori program that is stimulating, developmentally appropriate, and the best possible.
- To provide teachers who are exceptional in their capacities for guiding and caring, and in the excellence of their professional skills.
- To remain committed to professional growth and openness to new ideas.
- To maintain professional recognition by the State Department of Education and Louisiana Montessori Associates.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS

- To bring the child to school on time and to pick up the child on time.
- To inform the school of your location if you are delayed in picking up your child.
- To fulfill financial and legal obligations to the school promptly.
- To support both the school and child by being informed & knowledgeable regarding Montessori education.
- Attend parent meetings and conferences.
- Keep informed of goals and policies of the school.
- Volunteer time, effort and talent as possible.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD

- To accept responsibility for their actions.
- To be an active participant in the Montessori classroom.
- To be independent in the bathroom.
- Demonstrate respect to teachers and staff.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

General Behavior and Dress Code:

- Parents must treat all children with respect both verbally and physically.

- We expect each parent to treat each staff member with respect.
- Clothes should be modest and conservative.
- Use a soft voice while inside the classroom.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language. There are many ears listening.
- If you have a conflict with a staff member, parent, or student, please take it to the Administrator immediately. Any misunderstandings can be cleared up through the office. Unsubstantiated gossip undermines the professionalism of the school.
- Parents must be sober and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol when on campus and picking up children. Smoking is not allowed on campus.
- Firearms are not allowed on campus.

GROUND RULES OF THE CLASSROOM

- We are here to respect each other, not to hurt one another.
- The only activities allowed are safe ones.
- We all have the right to go about our business undisturbed if we so choose. We may touch items that are ours or if we have received permission from the owner. This includes classroom work that is temporarily "owned" by the user.
- We may interrupt by waiting silently to be recognized by the speaker. For emergencies, taps on the teacher's shoulder will draw her attention quickly.
- A child involved in work is not a behavior problem, and normalized children love to work.
- Running is allowed only on the playground, if it is done safely.
- Loud voices and boisterous movements are considered disturbing and will be brought to the attention of the initiator.
- Physical attacks made in anger (as opposed to play) are never allowed.

DISCIPLINE FOR CHILDREN

When a child first breaks the rules, it is assumed they did not know the proper way to behave. The teacher will demonstrate to the child how to behave and what to say in a particular situation.

When a child willfully disobeys, disrupts, injures or destroys, they are immediately, but gently removed to a place apart from the group, but within the same room, when possible. This enables the child to observe other children behaving in a positive way. They may join the group or activities when they feel they can control disruptive actions. Sometimes the child must be held on a staff member's lap until they gain control of their body.

When a child intentionally hurts another person, the parents are called to pick up the child and keep the child home for the rest of the day. If a child bites they will be sent home for the remainder of the day.

When a child repeatedly has problem behavior, the parents are called in for a conference. Consistent methods of discipline are discussed, and the parents and teachers will develop and document a constructive plan of action. The teachers will make every

effort to help the child. If the child or parents are unwilling to follow the steps outlined in the written plan and a problem persists, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the school. Parents are encouraged to avoid spanking or abusive methods of discipline.

If all efforts fail to help the child and they are a negative influence on the classroom, parents may be asked to remove the child permanently from the school. To experience negative attention brought about by negative behavior, reinforces nothing but negative behavior. This would be hurtful to the child's self-esteem. A change in the child's school environment may be helpful or may at least help to identify the source of the child's problem behavior. This is never an easy decision, and never taken lightly. Alternative placements may be considered, if a change in the classroom is thought to be helpful in the child's development. However, this is only done on the approval of the teacher of the suggested classroom and on approval by the Administration.

READINESS

Children may sometimes require special assistance in adjusting to the classroom environment and will be monitored for readiness.

Maria Montessori said, "If the child is not yet master of his actions, if he cannot obey even his own will, so much the less can he obey the will of someone else." This is because they have not yet formed their self. The child is still busy in the unconscious building up the mechanisms needed by their own personality, and has not yet reached the stage when these are so firmly founded that they can be directed consciously.

Readiness signs the teacher will look for in a very young child are as follows:

- Ability to choose work and work independently
- Ability to work with small objects without placing them in mouth
- Ability to follow direction
- Independence in the bathroom, we only wipe tears. A child having more than one accident per week is not considered independent in the bathroom. Parents will be called to assist their child when accidents involving a bowel movement occur.
- Emotional readiness (for example, difficulty separating from parent)

If after careful observation, a teacher finds a child is not ready for the classroom environment a conference will be scheduled with the parents, teacher and the administrator. In the conference any readiness problems will be clarified and a plan will be developed to offer success for the child.

CHILDREN REQUIRING SPECIAL NEEDS

Montessori School of Baton Rouge desires to meet the needs of its students in every developmental and academic area possible. However, if a child has special needs which our curriculum, staff, or classroom cannot provide, or the need requires more intensive or specialized intervention than we can offer, then it is in the best interest of the child that the parents place their child in another environment which will be able to

accommodate their specific needs.

MINOR MISBEHAVIOR

Definition: Behavior or general classroom disruption that minimally interferes with the orderly educational process in the classroom or other areas and/or may be cause for concern if increases in frequency or intensity.

The teacher in the classroom, according to these guidelines, generally makes decisions regarding misbehavior identification -

Procedure - The teacher may do one or more of the following:

- An attempt may be made to ignore the minor misbehavior.
- Suggest gentle direction by the teacher towards work, which will engage the interest of the child.
- Contact the parent through a written note, in person or by phone.
- Record misbehavior as it occurs as documentation to serve as an aid to future intervention and planning.

Additional Consequences:

- Assigning of temporary seat
- Brief time out (non-exclusionary)
- Temporary loss of privilege

SERIOUS MISBEHAVIOR

Definition: Recurring behavior or general classroom disruption that interferes with the orderly educational process in the classroom or other areas that results in property destruction, disturbing of other children's work, willful defiance, or hurting others. This behavior has also been resistant to other less intrusive intervention efforts.

The teacher in the classroom, according to these guidelines, generally makes decisions regarding misbehavior identification -

Additional Procedures - Teacher may do one or more of the following:

- In the event of hurtful behavior, serious property damage or use of inappropriate language a conference will be scheduled with the administrator, teacher and parents. In the event of aggressive behavior immediate action may require the child be permanently removed from the school.
- Immediate intervention by the staff member and inform the parent in writing of the incident.
- Send the child to the office for immediate intervention by the administrator.

Additional Consequences:

- The child may need to be temporarily removed from the classroom (for example, in

the office or on the patio with supervision).

- The child's parents may be called and the child may be sent home for the day.
- In the event of recurring serious behavior, the administrator and teacher may require the child be permanently removed from the school.

A positive approach to discipline shall be an ongoing process with a goal of helping children develop inner control so that they may manage their own behavior. The provision of individual detailed consequences for misbehavior allows freedom to treat each child on an individual basis based on the above guidelines.

CONDITIONS THAT MAY REQUIRE A CHILD'S PERMANENT DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

We will work with children for an extended period of time and exhaust all avenues before requiring a student's enrollment be terminated. The length of time we work with a child is determined on an individual basis by the teacher and administration. We always try to meet the needs of all concerned - foremost, the student, then their classmates, and then the staff. It is always a difficult decision, for the teacher and administration, as well as the parents, to terminate a student's enrollment. It is made only after great efforts have been made to help the child adjust to the classroom and after conferences with parents, teachers, and administration to find ways to help the child adjust their behavior. We are firmly committed to creating an environment that is positive for **all** of our students.

We ask that parents be aware of the love and nurturing that a teacher puts into her classroom and students. She will make every effort to have a positive environment for each individual child. She is an advocate for all of her students and a Montessori teacher will guard each child's right to work undisturbed. Respect for each other and the environment is a high priority in a Montessori classroom. The materials and classroom routine will enable a child to calm themselves and maturity will be able to develop. If your child is not ready for this classroom or has a particular need that our classrooms cannot meet, our teachers will bring this concern to the attention of our administration and the parents. We will then meet and discuss your child's specific needs. Recommendations will then be made determining the suitability of our classroom for your child.

NUT-FREE POLICY

Montessori School of Baton Rouge is a peanut-free and tree nut-free school. Before choosing a snack or food item for your child's lunch, please read the ingredient list to ensure that the product is nut-free. Also, please avoid any products with the warnings:

- May contain peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured on equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured on shared equipment.

FOOD

SNACKS - Parents share responsibility for sending snack three times per week and average sending snack four times per school year. Please send 100% fruit juice and a nutritious snack for the entire class to enjoy. Keep in mind we are a nut free school and avoid foods considered choking hazards in the food safety section below. A few examples of snacks to send are: crackers, cheese, varieties of raw fruits and vegetables, breads, cereal mixes and muffins. The school will provide snack on Tuesdays and Thursdays and provide 100% fruit juice with snack each day. A snack basket will be sent home with your child prior to his snack day. Please return the basket with snack and 100% fruit juice on your designated snack day.

LUNCHESES - Children should bring a lunch in a lunch box that is clearly marked with their name. Bento style lunch boxes are preferred. Lunches should be interesting and well balanced. Please do not send carbonated drinks, gum or candy —100% fruit juice, milk, water, and fruit are preferred. Milk is supplied by Kleinpeter Farms Dairy and may be purchased from the school using the Milk Order Form. Please prepare your child's lunch in the manner in which your child likes it. Fruit should be sliced and peeled. Gogurt and drinkable yogurt should be placed in a plastic container.

The lunch should be enough to finish in one sitting. When a child does not eat part of their lunch, they will bring home the leftover food. If this occurs over several days they should be given smaller portions.

Lunchtime should be a happy, relaxed social period where manners become a natural habit. We encourage you to involve your child in planning and selecting nutritious items for their lunch.

FOOD SAFETY - As part of the safety measures we take to protect our children, we have a list of foods that should not be packed in lunches for children under 4. Please support us in our efforts to prevent choking hazards and promote safe practices by avoiding the following items until your child turns 4: *whole hot dogs, hot dogs sliced in rounds, raw carrot rounds, whole grapes, hard candy, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn, marshmallows, spoons full of peanut butter, or chunks of meat larger than what can be swallowed whole.*

PIZZA - Friday is traditionally Pizza Day at Montessori School of Baton Rouge. Pizza may be purchased for the year using the Pizza Order Form. We will provide pizza, fruit, and milk for lunch.

GUIDE TO PACKING NUTRITIOUS LUNCHESES

We often see portions that are too large for these little children. Too large of a lunch or too many choices overwhelms the child. Please make your portion sizes appropriate to the child's age.

Choose foods that are low in fat. Choose lean meat, fish, poultry, dry beans and peas, low fat cottage cheese and low fat cheeses as protein foods. Examples of high fat foods to avoid when packing lunches for young children include chips, bologna, salami, excessive use of butter, margarine, or mayonnaise.

Choose foods that are low in sugar. Select fresh fruits or fruit canned in its own juice or water packed. Keep all sugars, including white sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, honey and syrups to a minimum. No Go-Gurts, candy, chocolate, soda pop or Kool-aid, please. Read food labels for clues on sugar content. If the names sucrose, glucose, maltose, dextrose, lactose, fructose, or syrups appear first, there is a large amount of sugar in the product. Examples of sugar-containing foods that children should eat in small quantities are: jams, jellies, sugar sweetened cereals, flavored milk, ice cream, candy, cookies, soft drinks, fruit drinks, Kool-Aid, cakes and pies.

Pack foods with adequate starch and fiber. Children should eat fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, beans, and peas. Substitute starches like bread, fruit, and vegetables for fats and sugars. Choose foods that are low in sodium. Examples of high sodium foods children should eat in small quantities: potato chips, pretzels, condiments, pickled foods, and cured meats.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

A "Montessori Celebration of Life" has been planned for your child on their birthday. We emphasize the wonderful changes which have taken place since your child entered the world. Each classroom celebrates birthdays in a variety of ways. We ask that parents prepare a poster board with a pictorial history of your child. Make a family project of making your child's birthday poster colorful and interesting by decorating around the pictures, adding the child's own artwork, etc... If you would like, write a short narration and attach it to the back of the poster for the teacher to read to their classmates. Talk about the child's family members, pets, and favorite foods, book, family vacations, songs, etc.

Note: Please do not send treat bags or food treats! We ask that no treats be brought to school. Sadness mars the celebration when absences occur and a child who is absent misses the treat bag, treats are spilled or lost, and parents feel pressured to measure up to their child's perception of "what everyone else brings".

The joy of having the family work together to make the Birthday Poster, along with the "Celebration of Life" experience in the classroom will allow the child to enjoy their birthday in a new way where the focus is on the milestones the child has made, rather than what goodies they brought!

BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS - If you would like to plan a birthday party for your child outside of the school hours, we ask that this be a private matter that does not involve the school. You may ask for a class list in writing from the office. Please give

the office at least a **full week's notice** to have the list ready for you.

PLEASE DO NOT ASK THE TEACHER/STAFF MEMBER TO GIVE OUT INVITATIONS AT SCHOOL. Please send them by mail. This often hurts the feelings of the uninvited classmates, as well as sometimes a child is absent and misses getting the invitation - or drops it on the ground or on the floor of the car and the parent never sees it!

REST TIME

Children who are enrolled in the full day program will spend a period of time resting each day. We will furnish mats for children to rest on, and you will be responsible for purchasing a naptime package from the school. This package can be used as long as your child is enrolled at our school and is yours to keep at the end of each school year.

Rest items will be sent home on Friday of every other week for cleaning. Rest items should be returned the following Monday.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Items from home that "accidentally" find their way to school (children can be ingenious!) will be immediately placed in a special place out of reach of students for the duration of the class period. It will be sent home at the end of class. Toys, cuddlies, bottles, and blankets are not allowed in the classroom. They are disruptive to classmates and inhibit your child's ability to concentrate on their work.

ITEMS FROM SCHOOL

Children enjoy bringing home books that they are learning to read. We invite them to take a book, enjoy it with you, and then return it the next day. Since we only have a limited supply, please see that they are returned. Also, if your child comes home with some small object that looks like it belongs to the school, it may be part of a puzzle or other "set" material. Please return them as soon as possible. Montessori materials are extremely expensive. When one part is missing, the activity becomes invalid and it must be replaced. Our teachers are very careful in helping students become orderly in returning materials to their proper places on the shelves. However, Montessori materials do "call" to a child and are very inviting! Somehow they find their way to a pocket and go home with children! We appreciate help from the parents in identifying these small pieces and returning them to your teacher. She will be so grateful for your support!

SUN SAFETY

The age of our children put them at the highest risk of skin damage and we are asking for your help. Please apply sunscreen before sending your child to school. We encourage you to send a pair of sunglasses and a hat that can be left in your child's cubby for the school year. Remember to LABEL.

CHILD-FRIENDLY CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Your child will be encouraged to explore, experiment, climb, dance, exercise, paint and run at school. Clothing can help or hinder these activities. Loose-fitting clothes that are not too fancy and have easy or no fastenings make a child's life much easier. Our playground is prepared for children to run, climb, bounce, jump, etc. Please do not send children in overalls or rompers, they are extremely difficult for children to take on and off independently.

NO FLIP-FLOPS, BOOTS, OR COWBOYS BOOTS, PLEASE! They slip easily, and boots hurt fingers and toes much more than the normal shoe. Each piece of removable clothing should be labeled with the child's name. A change of clothing must be sent in case of water spill, bathroom accident, etc. Each item must be labeled. We will have a labeled box for your child. When a child is sent home with wet clothing, please replace the spare clothing as soon as possible so your child always has a change on hand. We wear aprons for messy work, but they are by no means foolproof. Shoes that light up and/or talk can be a distraction in the classroom.

GIRLS' HEADPIECES & BOYS' HATS: Head gear, whether decorative or serviceable, can cause disruption and tears in the classroom. Avoid having your child wear decorative headbands, etc that will fall off, be taken off and shared with a friend, or have pieces that will not hold up well with playground activity. Long or hoop earrings can be unsafe on the playground; please do not allow your child to wear them to school. Hats may not be worn inside the building. Be sure they are labeled clearly inside with your child's name. Jewelry can easily be misplaced or lost and is best left at home.

Please remember that we are not responsible for lost or misplaced items.

REMEMBER: LABEL ALL COATS, SWEATERS, & JACKETS!! Each year we send several articles of clothing to charitable organizations. During cold weather, students bring in numerous jackets, sweaters, etc... Parents wonder where all their child's warm clothing went! Often it is easily found in your child's cubby. Sometimes it went home with another child because it was confused with another student's clothing. The only way this can be helped is if the item was labeled clearly.

LABEL ~ LABEL ~ LABEL ~ LABEL ~ LABEL ~ LABEL

Children should not wear clothing depicting violent cartoon characters to school. Please refrain from sending your child to school with temporary tattoos. We have found that this type of clothing and temporary tattoos encourages inappropriate behavior in the children. Your support of this policy is needed and appreciated.

In the event of an accident we ask you to please bring your child a complete change of labeled clothing including underwear and socks in a labeled zip-lock plastic bag on the first day of school.

ATTENDANCE

All Montessori School of Baton Rouge students are expected to arrive at school on time. The teachers plan their day with the expectation that all students will be arriving promptly at the designated drop-off time. It is important for all students to have enough time to arrive and settle into the classroom before the day begins. Late arrivals are disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class. We understand that there are events out of your control, however we ask that you make every effort to get your child to class on time.

If you will be arriving later than the regularly scheduled drop off time, we ask that you inform the teacher ahead of time.

Should your child become ill during school, we will isolate them, and you will be called so that you can come pick your child up. This protects the other children and staff from excessive exposure to the sickness. If your child is absent from school for more than two days due to illness, please call and let us know. If you must take your child out of the class for any other reason, please call us beforehand. **Regular attendance is important to the continuity of each child's development.**

Please have your child arrive between 8:00 and 8:30 AM. Parents should park and walk their child to their classroom. Your child should walk. A child who is walking in on their own is deciding to go to school rather than being 'put' there. This will help to alleviate any anxiety around morning drop off.

It is best when dropping off your child or picking up your child to refrain from going into the classroom since this can be very disruptive to the learning experiences of all the children. If you wish to observe the classroom, please come into the observation office.

Also, keep in mind that this is not a good time for conferring with the teacher. If you need a conference with the teacher, please arrange a meeting as provided in the PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE section of the handbook.

When a child enters late they become disoriented, much like entering a movie after it has started. You don't know what happened before and it takes a while to figure out what's going on. The child also loses part of the work cycle, which is designed to follow a child's natural pattern of learning (orientation, casual involvement, and concentrated involvement).

Every person who enters the class after 8:30 disrupts the class. Children are distracted by the adult and child entrance, the adult/child separation experience, the parent often putting away items for the child, talking louder than the class is used to and talking to the teacher who is busy meeting the needs of the children who arrived on time. Repeated unexcused tardiness is disrespectful of the children's work. For your child to receive the full benefit of the work cycle it is important that they arrive on time.

Our Parent Responsibilities and Parent Code of Conduct declare that the students will arrive on time. This commitment sets a tone of respect for our Teachers and the other students and is an important part of creating a positive environment.

The Board has put in place the following policy:

- **If a child is late arriving or being picked up twice, a letter of warning will be sent to the family reminding them of our policy.**
- **If there is further tardiness, the Board may consider further action addressing the family's commitment to the school.**

Playgroup begins at 3:30 PM. Any child still at school at 3:30 PM will become a part of playgroup and applicable fees will be charged. All playgroup children should be picked up prior to 5:30PM to avoid late fees.

Class	Class Begins	Arrival/Door Duty Times	Class Ends	Departure/ Door Duty Times
Morning	8:15 AM	8:00-8:30	12:15 PM	12:15-12:30
Full Day	8:15 AM	8:00-8:30	3:15 PM	3:00-3:30

If anyone other than a parent will be picking up a child we must be given written permission. In case of a sudden change of plans as to who is picking up your child, please inform the school by phone. However, written permission must be on file.

CONSISTENCY OF SCHEDULE

Consistency and routine are important to every child's development. When a child misses school for whatever reason, there is a period of readjustment. Irregular attendance is disruptive to the child's adjustment and is discouraged. All programs are 5 days per week and children should be enrolled with the intention of attending all week. We depend on our parent's full support in this area.

Our doors open at 7:30 AM where we have a teacher positioned in the playgroup room until **8:00 AM**. Children arriving before 8:00 must be enrolled in our before care program. Please give teachers the time they need to prepare their classrooms by planning your arrival no earlier than 7:30. From **8:00 AM until 8:30 AM** we have a teacher at the classroom door to greet your child and bring them into the environment. Any anxiety is quickly put to ease and your child begins working in the environment.

The morning work cycle lasts until approximately **10:00 AM**. At that time the children have time on the line, snack and recess. If you are arriving after **8:30 AM** your child is missing the benefit of our teacher bringing them into the environment. However, most importantly they are missing valuable classroom time.

At **11:30 AM** we begin lunch with the children. After lunch the children enjoy the playground.

At **12:15 PM** our morning-only children depart for the day and our full day children begin a period of rest. As children wake up they enter the environment and begin working again. The afternoon work cycle ends at approximately **2:15 PM**. At that time the children have time on the line, snack and recess.

At **3:00 PM until 3:30 PM** is afternoon dismissal. Any child still at the school after 3:30 PM will become a part of the playgroup program and will be charged accordingly.

If you are unable to meet the specified morning drop off times, please respect the work going on in the classrooms by not disturbing the children or teacher when entering the class. Repeated unexcused tardiness is a disturbance to the child's prepared environment. **Please plan your schedule to arrive before 8:30 AM.**

We are consistent with our day. Likewise, we ask for your consistency in adhering to the schedule you have chosen for your child. This will give your child a sense of security and order, thereby making them more receptive to the learning environment. Consistency of schedule will help your child achieve the success they deserve in the Montessori program.

PLAYGROUP PHILOSOPHY

Montessori School of Baton Rouge offers a playgroup in conjunction with its classes to provide a service for parents in need of extended childcare. Children may be enrolled in extended childcare before or after their Montessori classes. Extended childcare times are from 7:30 AM to 8:00 AM and 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM.

The Playgroup Program provides a friendly, organized, and supervised meeting place for children. They are involved in creative play and art activities, will have a snack, and will be involved in fun, active recreation both inside and out. While the atmosphere is casual, each child is still expected to maintain considerate behavior as done during the school day. The purpose of each day is to provide a place where children want to go rather than have to go.

Please pick up your child at the side door after 3:30. Go through the gate and ring the doorbell. A teacher will assist you. On rainy days **ONLY**, please plan to pick up your child at the front door. Park under the awning and ring the bell. A teacher will open the door. Please contact the school Director with any questions about Playgroup.

CUSTODY ISSUES

The school must have legal papers of visitation schedules. If there are no legal papers, the office will accept a written agreement signed by both parents. Each parent has a right to receive school mail, speak to teachers, go to conferences,

receive progress reports, go on field trips, observe classrooms by appointment, and leave with their child on their appropriate day and time.* *Unless there is a legal document stating OTHERWISE (restraining order, CPS, etc.).

Only the parent with legal custody may enroll the child, withdraw the child, or sign permission slips and paperwork. It is the staff policy not to side with either parent in the event of a divorce. Staff also may not write letters in your defense for any legal hearing or legal action. Trust that our staff is here to aid your child and give the child the best care possible and the most consistent and nurturing environment.

If the occasion happens when both parents are on campus during a time when the two parents are estranged, we expect both parents to treat each other with respect. No conflicts may occur while on our property.

ILLNESS

Any child who appears to be ill upon arrival at school will not be allowed to attend class. If you notice signs of illness before bringing your child to the school, such as fever, a fresh cold, sore throat, inflammation, fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, etc., please keep your child at home. This is a Louisiana State Department of Health regulation which is enforced not only to protect the ill child, but all children and staff at the school in case of communicable disease. The observation of this policy will lessen your child's risk of illness and allow a faster recovery in the home environment. In the event of communicable disease in the school, ie, chicken pox, strep throat, etc., we will notify all parents of its presence and of the symptoms. A call to the school is expected if your child will be absent.

If your child's illness requires medication, your child cannot return to school until they have been on the medication for a **minimum of 24 hours from the time of the first dosage.**

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will isolate them from the group and a parent will be notified. **A child leaving our school with fever, vomiting or diarrhea will not be allowed back to school until they are symptom free for a full 24 hours. In some cases, a doctor's release may be required.**

The Emergency Information Form, which you completed prior to your child's admission to class, will provide us with information regarding persons who can be reached in this type of emergency, if you are not available. If your child should be injured and require medical attention, you will also be notified immediately. The Emergency Treatment Form, with your signature, gives parental permission for medical and hospital care. If this is not done, emergency treatment cannot be given to a minor child.

Please help us reduce the rate of illnesses at our school by cooperating fully in keeping an ill child at home. Plan ahead for alternative child care in the event of illness.

INJURY

Some minor injuries are to be expected when normal children are allowed to explore their physical environment and their own capabilities. We do our best to maintain the playground and the classroom in a safe condition. Standard first-aid procedures include washing the area with antibacterial soap, applying a band-aid if needed, and providing TLC. Ice, when necessary may be applied to small bumps.

A notice is sent out the day of the injury for parents to be aware of any injury. In the event of a severe injury, a parent will be notified and/or firefighter/paramedic will be called. Students having any severe condition such as asthma will have paramedics called in the event of a severe reaction or difficulty with breathing, etc.

HEALTH HABITS

In keeping with good health habits, we teach children to wash their hands with **soap** every time they use the toilet, before eating, and anytime a child is observed touching personal parts of their body. This should be encouraged at home until it becomes a life-long habit. Teach your child to blow their nose, discard used tissues, and cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze.

We strongly discourage the administration of medication at school for the obvious liability reasons. The State of Louisiana asks that we encourage parents to give their children the necessary dosages before and after school. Medication that is needed 2-3 times a day may be given at home. An antibiotic, for example, may often be given at home before school, a second dose after the child is home, and then a third dose before bedtime.

MEDICATION POLICY

- No medication will be given that is not prescribed by a doctor; over the counter medications must accompany a permission slip and be in the **original container!** If medication must be given, please get a medication authorization form from a staff member. **No medication will be given without this form.**
- No medication will be given without permission from the parent to administer the medication.
- No medication will be accepted that is not in the original prescription bottle. Any over-the-counter medications prescribed by your doctor must be in the original bottle and labeled with the child's first and last name, in pen.
- All medications are to be **personally delivered** by a parent to a staff member. Medications **may not be brought to school by the child, or sent in his lunch container.** Medications sent in without appropriate forms, sent in a lunchbox, or delivered by the child **will not** be administered until contact has been made with the parent and forms filled out completely. This is in consideration of your child's safety!

- If possible, medication should be administered by the parent at home. **We cannot stress this enough.**
- If a child requires antibiotics, they should not return to school until he having been on the medication a **minimum of 24 hours from the time of the first dosage**, in order for the antibiotic to take effect completely.

MEDICAL FORMS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The State of Louisiana requires schools to have on file for each child an immunization record, completed by a physician. We cannot accept your child without an immunization record. Please submit this information by the first day of school.

In case of a medical emergency occurring while your child is attending Montessori School of Baton Rouge, the following procedure will be carried out:

1. Contact parent(s)
2. Contact other specified adult and/or adults, if parents unavailable
3. Contact child's physician
4. Arrange for emergency medical treatment

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

If it becomes necessary to withdraw your child from Montessori School of Baton Rouge before the end of the school year, please notify the Administrator. Deposits will be refunded in accordance with school policy and the tuition agreement signed by all parents.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are a variety of ways in which parents can be involved in the school, all of which will enrich your child's experience in Montessori School of Baton Rouge and your own relationship with and appreciation for your own child.

1. Direct Involvement with the Class - For example, coming to the class for a special interest time and sharing your love for nature, cooking, art, playing an instrument, etc. The children love to have their parents come to class. If you wish to share your special talent with the children, please contact your child's teacher to discuss your ideas.
2. Involvement in Our Parent Teacher Association - The Parent Teacher Association sponsors the seasonal parties for the children along with fundraisers. All parents are encouraged to participate in whatever manner best suits their abilities and/or resources. Tuition costs are kept down due to parents volunteering their time and services.

Annual dues to cover the parties and operating expenses are \$25.00 per child. Please make checks payable to Montessori School of Baton Rouge.

3. Involvement in our Board of Directors. The board meets monthly and helps to assist the administrator in the guidance of the school.

PARENT QUESTIONS

1. Tuition and Fees - Please contact the Administrator.
2. Office Forms - Please contact the Administrator.
3. Conference Scheduling - Please contact the Teacher.
4. Observation of Classrooms - Please contact the Administrator.
5. Classroom Concerns - Please contact the Teacher.
6. School Policies and Philosophy - Please contact the Administrator.
7. Resources or New Ideas - Please contact the Administrator.
8. Tax Id Number - 72-0687511. We are a 501 (c)3 Non-Profit Organization.
8. Other Questions Not Mentioned - Please contact the Administrator.

If you need to talk to a teacher, please call the office and leave a message for her or send her an email. A teacher cannot come to the phone during class time, but they will return their calls or emails after class dismissal. In case of emergency call the office at 766-9942 or our Director at 936-9971. If no one is available, leave a message and a teacher will call you back as soon as possible.

The financial structure of the school allows for an administrator who supports the school in a part-time capacity. If you need to speak to someone immediately, please email or call the school or Director.

Please place all payments in a labeled envelope.

We can also be reached through email. Our email address is montessorischoolofbr@gmail.com.

TERMINATION BY THE SCHOOL

The school reserves the right to terminate any child accepted for enrollment or re-enrollment for any of the following reasons:

1. When the school's professional staff and Board of Directors determine that the best interests of the child or school would be served by the child's withdrawal from the school.
2. When a child accepted for initial enrollment is unable, in the opinion of the school's professional staff and Board of Directors to make a successful adjustment to the Montessori program.
3. Failure to pay tuition.

CHANGES IN HOME ENVIRONMENT

Please let us know about any changes in your routine home environment, as these changes affect children. Our knowing can guide us in helping the child deal with such situations as illness of a parent or grandparent, death of a family member or friend, divorce, new sibling, lengthy absence of parent, etc. Also, if your child's behavior or attitude at home changes dramatically over a long period of time, please inform us of this. All information will be regarded as confidential.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Following the same simple everyday suggestions for Montessori in the home encourages independence, self-confidence, and reasonable freedom of choice, orderliness and responsibility in your child.

1. Arrange bathroom facilities for the child — a stool to reach the sink with own washcloth, towel, hairbrush, toothbrush, clothes basket, etc. in an assigned place.
2. Container of juice or water on a low shelf in the refrigerator, accessible cup or glass for all of those "I want a drink" requests. Simply say, "You may get it."
3. Small pitcher or measuring cup at mealtime for child to serve themselves and later, others.
4. Invite your child to help make the bed, dust, sweep, care for pets, sort laundry, set table, prepare food with parent, etc.
5. Create the possibility of order for child's toys and belongings. Just enough available so that each item can have its place on the shelf. Display only the toys and materials the child can handle and work with successfully.
6. Show the child how to clean up after working with something and where to return it to its proper place. Be firm that this is done before other activities are begun.
7. Put a small trash can in the child's room with a liner. Let them assume responsibility of carrying out their own trash.
8. Set aside an area of the yard where the child can really garden, hoe, rake, plant and water.
9. Reflect on a typical day — were the majority of your encounters with your child of a negating or restraining nature? Build a positive relationship between you and your child — play games with them occasionally. Give them your total attention, if only for a few minutes. Matching games, which stimulate sensory perception, are easily invented and prepared. Example - Present them with a color, and then ask them to

show you objects of that color in the room. Show them a piece of wood, glass, plastic, etc. and ask them to find other objects made of the same material.

10. Observe your child and watch for times when they are particularly interested in color, shape, numbers, textures, etc.

11. When your daily schedule allows for a non-rushed trip to the grocery store - your child can benefit. On this occasion let them walk instead of ride through the aisles with you. Point out, name, count, examine gently, weigh, etc. Example - oranges, we need six - 1,2,3,4,5,6.

12. Excursion to the zoo. The entire zoo need not be covered in one visit. Follow your child and occasionally give an example of what observing something really is. Sit or stand and watch a particular cage or family of animals for some time. Do not simply flit past everything with them in hand.

13. Whenever demonstrating a task to your child, first perform the actions very carefully yourself.

14. Respect and observe your child. An inner guide is directing them. Become sensitive to anticipate and aid them. Read the Montessori philosophy.

15. Introduce the rules and limits of your household gradually. Make them possible for the child to adapt. Be consistent and remember your example is the best teacher. The child is observing you with their entire being.

16. When school starts, these things will be helpful:

- At bedtime, choose and lay out all clothing to be worn the next day to school.
- Awaken the child early enough for unhurried dressing, eating and toileting.

Note: If they resent being wakened, try setting an alarm clock to awaken your child, giving them the responsibility of getting up "all by yourself."

17. Children learn by imitating adults so set a good example of being on time for school and other things involving family.

18. Plan some time each day to be shared with your child alone.