

# **MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

## **PARENT INFORMATION PACKET**

3 Yount Drive  
Bloomington, IL 61704

### **Statement of Purpose**

Montessori Children's Centre is a full day, year-round, private, family-owned facility that offers educational and social opportunities for children between the ages of three and five years old. The goal of MCC is to provide a structured program in a prepared environment that encourages the academic, social, and physical development of the young child.

Montessori Children's Centre will accomplish the following goals:

- enable every child to reach his or her own maximum learning potential
- promote each child's self-esteem and sense of security
- provide a safe, happy, and comfortable environment
- employ a highly qualified, nurturing staff
- stimulate a child's love of learning and discovery
- provide a balance of structured activities and free play within a prepared environment
- develop a foundation for a lifetime of learning

### **Our Teachers**

Our greatest assets are our wonderful teachers at MCC. We take great care in hiring and retaining high-quality educators that interact with and nurture our students each day. The effort and dedication put forth by our staff is evident in our loving and caring environment. Those who have joined the Montessori family have many common traits, including a concern for others, knowledge of child development, and a passion for working with young children. We are proud and honored to have such a high caliber of teachers at Montessori. All teachers at MCC hold bachelor or advanced degrees and receive Montessori classroom training under the guidance of the executive directors. We embrace a co-teaching philosophy where your child will have two highly qualified teachers in the classroom. All full-time teachers receive CPR and First Aid certification each year. MCC is licensed by the Department of Children and Family Services.

### **Our Story**

Montessori Children's Centre is truly a family venture and a labor of love. In 1997, a mother and daughter realized the lifelong dream of opening a Montessori preschool. Barbara Broach and Amy Broach Moser began the family business called the Montessori Children's Centre. Two years later, daughter-in-law Rachel Broach joined the venture. All family members are actively involved with the school and serve on the board of directors. Barbara Broach, Amy Moser, and Rachel Broach serve as MCC's executive directors, overseeing the operation of the preschool, training teachers, and administering direction regarding curriculum and philosophy. Barbara Broach has taught the Montessori Method of Education since 1982. She is an Association Montessori Internationale graduate of the St. Nicholas Montessori College of London, England. Amy Moser graduated from Millikin University with a degree in Elementary Education. She is a graduate of the Montessori St. Nicholas Centre of London, England. Rachel Broach graduated

from Eastern Illinois University with a business marketing degree. She is a graduate of the Montessori Centre Internationale of London, England. All are members of the North American Montessori Teachers' Association and the International Montessori Society. MCC's administrative director is Stacy Hanks. She graduated from Illinois Wesleyan with a degree in educational studies. She joined MCC in 2004 in the capacity of a classroom teacher, has also performed as an assistant director, and now fulfills responsibilities as the administrative director since 2011. Her Montessori training was under the guidance of the executive directors.

### **Philosophy**

Maria Montessori, Italy's first female physician, developed the Montessori Method in the late 1800s. Feeling that the young child had more potential for self-learning than most educators realized, she developed an alternative to traditional teaching methods that emphasizes specially trained teachers and uniquely designed learning materials and apparatuses that stimulate the preschool age child. Dr. Montessori found there are "sensitive periods" during which children acquire certain skills, such as reading, writing, movement, and coordination. She observed that once this sensitive period passed, a child would never again recapture the ability to absorb so much in so short a time frame. Her primary goal was to help children develop a thirst for knowledge and favorable attitudes toward learning.

Recent support of Dr. Montessori's beliefs is contained in a publication by the Carnegie Corporation (September 1996). The article lauded the educational efforts of Montessori schools and cited recent findings showing that children learn easiest and best in the first few years of life, when the brain is growing fastest and making essential and permanent interconnections. Dr. Montessori professed these same tenets over a hundred years earlier.

### **Curriculum**

Montessori Children's Centre offers a varied curriculum, comprised of materials that invite, interest, and challenge the child. MCC gears activities to encourage each child's individual rate of development in all subject areas. MCC supplements core curriculum with special materials designed to progress from simple to complex, aiding in the total development of the child. Classes incorporate a variety of ages, allowing the children to learn from one another, as well as from the teacher.

The five major areas in a Montessori classroom include practical life, sensorial, mathematics, language and culture. MCC also incorporates history, geography, science, music, art, and computer learning into the curriculum. In addition, MCC conducts special units throughout the year. These short-term units introduce subjects, such as foreign languages, planets, presidents, the human body, science experiments, sign language, and nature study. Throughout the year, MCC embraces the opportunity to learn about different heritages, cultures, and religious celebrations. It was Dr. Montessori's philosophy that the more one could learn about the differences of others, the more one would understand, tolerate, and even admire those differences. She felt children who were educated about the differences of a culture or heritage would ultimately be the tool for bringing world peace and unity to the universe. The Montessori academic year runs from September through May.

During the summer months of June, July, and August, MCC takes the opportunity to broaden our

curriculum to the outdoors. During the Montessori Summer Camp program, Montessori incorporates philosophies into the curriculum without the use of the apparatuses on the classroom shelves. Teachers provide and plan an educational curriculum based on developmentally age appropriate activities, incorporating a variety of resources, such as the outside Peace Garden and special visitors from the community: Miller Park Zoo, dentists, musicians, etc.

Montessori Children's Centre also utilizes special projects and activities designed to keep families informed of each child's progress. These include a weekly newsletter, parent orientation nights, annual parent-teacher conferences, semi-annual progress reports, a holiday program, and "Show Your Work" night during which students give their parents lessons and demonstrate their favorite work in the classroom.

### **Our “Sister School” in Ghana, West Africa**

In 2002, we had a special visitor at our school, Mrs. Beatrice Ellis-Kwainoe from the Step by Step Montessori School in Ghana, West Africa. Since then we have maintained a friendship with Mrs. Kwainoe and her family. They own, operate, and teach at The Step by Step Montessori School in Ghana. After communicating with Mrs. Kwainoe, we decided that her school, as well as our Montessori Children’s Centre, would become “sister schools.” The children will communicate regularly with each other, and we can share our cultures and our different experiences with each other. We are very excited about this experience and believe it will enrich the lives of all the children and staff. In the spirit of Dr. Montessori’s vision of achieving peace throughout the world, we feel privileged to join hands in friendship and love with our sister school in West Africa.

### **Tuition and Attendance Policies**

**Tuition** — Montessori Children’s Centre offers a full-day, year-round program for three, four, and five-year-olds. Tuition is broken down into a weekly rate for our all day program. Please check with the director for current tuition rates. MCC will assess a \$50 materials and technology fee annually every October.

Annual tuition may be paid weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or by the semester. Tuition payments may be made via OnCare, Montessori’s online tuition payment system, which is withdrawn from your checking/savings account or credit card (a 2.5% fee is applied for credit card payments). Tuition may also be paid via cash, checks, or through your bank’s on-line payment options. Payments of tuition over two weeks in arrears will be assessed \$10 per week. A fee of \$20 will be charged for bank returned checks. Because the programs at MCC are year-round, tuition is not credited for days missed by your child.

With regard to your tuition payment, should you choose to take a vacation, it is your responsibility to continue tuition payments to MCC. Whether the vacation is a few days or a few weeks, our policy remains. If an extended vacation is to be taken, resulting in four weeks or more of absences, we ask that you pay ½ of the tuition (for the missed weeks) prior to leaving.

**Attendance** — A child enrolled at MCC is expected to be in regular attendance. If a child will be absent, please call the office.

**Hours of Operation** — (7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) For any child that is picked up later than 5:00 p.m., there will be a charge of \$1 per minute. Two staff members are always present; therefore, payment is payable upon arrival to the teachers that stay after 5:00 to care for your child.

**Holidays** — Weekly tuition is not changed or reduced due to school holidays. MCC closes for all major holidays (Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, etc.). In addition, up to two floating holidays may be observed (Good Friday, July 5, etc.). MCC will post an annual calendar on the bulletin board and reminders of upcoming “No School Days” will be given in the weekly newsletter.

### **Admission and Discharge Policies**

**Admission** — Parents are required to submit an application for admission, as required by the Department of Children and Family Services. MCC will place names on a waiting list upon receipt of these forms, and we will notify parents as space becomes available. A “Meet and Greet” will be conducted prior to a child’s entrance to the program.

DCFS licensing regulations and standards (as of 2010) stated that a parent or guardian of a child must provide a *certified copy of the child’s birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child.*

**Waiting List** — When the program is filled to capacity, MCC maintains a current list of names of children desiring enrollment. A completed enrollment form, accompanied by the nonrefundable registration fee is required and will keep a child's eligible status for enrollment as a position becomes available.

**Admission Requirements** — Before starting at MCC, a child must be three years of age and completely potty-trained. Because we are licensed as a preschool by the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), diapers or pull-ups are not allowed to be worn.

**Withdrawal or Dismissal from Program** — MCC requires written notice one month (full four weeks) prior to withdrawal from the program. For example, if a parent notifies us on a Monday that their child is leaving in four weeks, that week is not counted as one of the weeks, as it is a partial week. We only start children at the beginning of the week, never in the middle of the week. Any child who demonstrates the inability to benefit from the type of program offered by our center or whose presence is detrimental to the group shall be dismissed.

## **DAILY SCHEDULE (September-May)**

**7:00 a.m.: Centre Opens**

**7:00-8:00 a.m.: Free Play**

**8:00-11:00 a.m.: Work Time** — Children will work independently or in small groups and receive daily lessons.

**11:00-11:30 a.m.: Morning Opening** — This is a circle time that may include activities such as, weather, date, and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**11:30-12:00 p.m.: Lunch**

**12:00-1:00 p.m.: Clean-up and Prepare for “Siesta”**

**1:00-2:30 p.m.: "Siesta" (rest time)**

**2:30-3:00 p.m.: Snack**

**3:00-3:30 p.m.: Circle Time** — This may include affirmations, news of the day, month and date.

**3:30-5:00 p.m.: Free Play**

**5:00 p.m.: Close of centre**

## **Summer Camp Schedule (June – August)**

Summer Camp is an opportunity for the children to take a small break from the Montessori Academic Year. The children will take advantage of the warm weather by utilizing the outdoor spaces for educational enrichment activities planned by the teachers. Educational activities may include, utilizing and incorporating our outside resources, such as picnic tables and the Peace Garden. In addition, MCC will take the opportunity to invite ‘visitors’ from the community to speak to the children on various topics.

**7:00am** - Centre opens for the arrival of children

**7:00 – 7:45** - Morning free play

**7:45 - 8:45**- Outside time

**8:45 - 11:00** – Montessori indoor and outdoor work time, snack, weekly mini-course themed activities

**11:00 - 11:30** – Outside recess

**11:30 - 12:00** - Lunch

**12:00 - 12:45** Montessori Work Time

**12:45** - Clean up, bathrooms, prepare for Siesta

**1:00 - 2:30** - Siesta

**2:30 – 2:45** - Wake up, bathrooms, put cots away

**2:45 - 3:30** – Circle time (Snack/Sunscreen application also during this time)

**3:30 - 5:00pm** - Outside time (Free play and structured activities) until parent arrival.

## Procedures and Policies

**Arrival and Departure** — Children must be signed in and out of our program daily by a parent or authorized individual. MCC asks people other than parents or guardians to sign their name, along with the time of arrival and departure. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child, we will request identification and check to see that they are authorized on your enrollment form. Please do not be offended if you are questioned because you are not known to a staff member. We are only interested in the safety and welfare of your child.

**First Day** — Your child's first impression of school is the most important imprint that will occur in promoting a positive attitude toward the educational process. When you bring your child, a confident, reassuring, and swift "goodbye" can go a long way in reducing separation anxiety. Clinging and tears are quite normal at first. Once parents are out of sight, the tears usually subside quickly. Remember, a lingering departure only postpones the final separation and draws out the moment making it more traumatic.

**Birth Certificate** – Per DCFS licensing regulations, in addition to the mandatory paperwork that child care centers must receive upon the first day of a child starting in a program, **Parents are also required to bring in a copy of their child's certified birth certificate or equivalent form of documentation.**

*“The day care center shall: Provide a written notice to the parent or guardian of any child to be enrolled for the first time that within 30 days of enrollment the parent or guardian must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. The center shall make a duplicate and return the original certified copy to the parent or guardian no later than the end of the next business day after receipt. If a certified copy of the birth certificate is not available, the parent or guardian must submit a passport, visa or other governmental documentation as proof of the child's identity.”*

**Medical Report/Physical** -- The Day Care Licensing Standards require a complete medical report on all day care children when they are entering a day care and every two years thereafter. Child medical reports (form 600) are the same form that is used by the Illinois Public School System. In order for a day care to be in compliance with the Day Care Standards, the following is required:

1. A medical report must be completely filled out and signed by the child's physician showing the child is healthy and has had a current and complete medical examination.
2. The medical report shall indicate that the child has been immunized, including HIB and is up-to-date with his or her immunizations.
3. The medical report shall indicate a TB test (mantoux) result and date. If the physician does not feel it is necessary, then the doctor must state that on the child's medical report.
4. The medical report shall indicate a lead poisoning screening for those in an area defined as high risk. If the physician does not feel it is necessary, then the doctor must state that on the child's medical report.

**Class Hours** — Please have your child arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. An arrival by this time will ensure that your child will not miss out on the benefits of the Montessori program. Your cooperation in getting our mornings off to a good start can set the tone for the entire day.

**Absences/Vacation** — Please call if your child will be absent or late. This notification is appreciated in helping plan our day's activities. Please note that there is no reduction in tuition due to absence or vacation.

**Illness** — A child should be kept home if exhibiting signs of not feeling well, such as nausea, vomiting, fever, rash, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, or serious upper respiratory infections. Children will be screened upon arrival daily for any obvious signs of illness. Childhood illnesses spread easily and rapidly, so please consider the well being of the other children, as well as your own child. Parents will be notified if a child exhibits any of these symptoms. The **Department of Children and Family Services requires** a child to be **symptom-free** (vomiting or diarrhea) and **fever-free** (without the use of fever-reducing medication) or on an antibiotic for **24 hours** before returning to school.

**Dispensing Medicine** — When a child needs to take medicine at school, (prescription or over-the-counter) the parent or guardian must first sign in on the medicine chart, giving authorization to administer medication. If medications are to be administered, label the medication with your child's name as well as directions for dosage. Medication is administered during lunchtime. The director on site will then initial the chart showing that the medicine has been administered.

**Medical Emergency** — In the event of illness or accident, MCC will notify you immediately. In the event of an emergency, arrangements will be made to obtain immediate medical care for your child, as the medical consent form states.

**Personal Hygiene** — In compliance with DCFS regulations and in an attempt to keep illness and germs at bay, all staff and children will wash their hands upon entering the facility. Hand washing will also occur before and after all snacks and lunch and after all bathroom visits. MCC staff will instruct the children to wash their hands after instances such as sneezing or blowing their nose occur.

**Clothing** — Send your child in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing for the classroom and playground. Attire such as Sunday clothes, pajamas, and boots are inappropriate for many of our school and playground activities. Coats and jackets should be labeled with your child's name. Soft slippers are worn at work time during the academic year. Slippers are more comfortable for work done on the floor and allow for a quieter, more courteous environment.

**Extra Clothing** — Please send a complete change of clothing to be kept at school for your child in case of accidents or spills. Send clothing in a labeled sack, and we will store them. Don't forget to periodically update clothing as your child grows and as the seasons change.

**Personal Belongings/Toys** — Each child will be provided with their own cubby for holding

shoes/slippers, papers to go home, etc. Children are welcome to bring a favorite small pillow, blanket, or stuffed animal for rest time, but it must be left on their cot. Toy weapons such as guns, swords, and knives will not be allowed at school. We also ask that no other toys be brought to school as they can become a distraction to students in their cubbies and in the classroom. We have such a multitude of exciting, productive, and purposeful activities. Keep in mind that if you find something special from nature (a bird's nest, a geode, a stick with fungi on it) or anything that has educational value, please feel free to let your child bring it to school. We will let the students examine and study it.

**Lunch** — A hot, well-balanced lunch will be catered by Custom Catering. Lunch is served between 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. MCC will post monthly menus on the parent bulletin board and on the MCC website.

**Healthy Snacks** — MCC provides snacks twice daily, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Children may bring snacks at anytime, provided enough is brought to serve everyone in the class. DCFS does not allow home-baked goods. Anything prepackaged or bakery bought is allowed. We strive to provide healthy snack options to the children on a regular basis. We feel it is very important for a young, growing body to be provided opportunities for healthy snacks. We have found many children have had allergic reactions to peanut/nut products; therefore, we ask that **NO SNACK CONTAINING PEANUT/NUT PRODUCTS BE SENT TO SCHOOL EITHER FOR CHILDREN OR TEACHERS.** It is also important to note snacks that are produced in plants that also manufacture peanut products.

**Birthdays** — You are welcome to bring a birthday treat for snack time on your child's special day. DCFS mandates that no home baked items are allowed—only bakery or store bought treats can be served. Please remember that no products containing nuts are allowed. Each classroom has twenty students. If your child is having a party outside of school, he or she may put an invitation in the cubby for every child in the classroom. Parents are invited to take part in reading their child's "Birthday Story" during our school celebration.

**Volunteering** — We welcome those having a career, special interest, or talent to share with our class. If you or someone you know could share a special interest, hobby, job, talent, or culture, please let us know. Such resources provide valuable lessons for the children. Parents are also welcome to volunteer for special activities, such as bowling day, teacher appreciation week, holiday celebrations, etc. If you are interested in volunteering, please let one of your child's teachers or the director know.

**Field Trips or Excursions** — Periodically, MCC may take walking field trips. Such excursions will be under the supervision of authorized personnel and all possible precautions will be taken to ensure the health and safety of your child. We do not take field trips that require transportation; however, we occasionally have professionals in the community come to Montessori (such as a dentist, optometrist, Miller Park Zoo, etc.)

**Behavioral Changes** — Changes at home or traumatic experiences can affect a child's behavior and attitude. If you will make us aware of any changes that may occur, we will be able to better meet the needs of your child during this period.

**Weather Policy** — In the winter months, the children will not go outside if the temperature (with wind chill) is below 35 degrees. Likewise, in the summer time the children will not go outside if the temperature is above 95 degrees (factoring in the heat index). We will not go outside if the ground is wet or snow covered.

**Observations** — You are welcome to be an observer at our school at any time. Check with the director for the best times to observe the Montessori lesson and work time.

**Communication** — Never hesitate to call when you have questions or concerns regarding your child. A weekly newsletter will be sent via e-mail or hard copy every Friday. This will inform you of new lessons and activities in the classroom, special projects, and upcoming events. A parent bulletin board in the foyer allows an exchange of information between parents and staff. When needed, verbal communication between teacher and parent will occur; however, notes are not sent home on a daily basis.

**Discipline** — In 2010, the Montessori Children's Centre began implementing a new discipline program called "Conscious Discipline" developed by Dr. Becky Bailey. This loving discipline compliments our Montessori philosophy by allowing children to acknowledge their emotions by giving them helpful tools to handle their feelings in an appropriate manner. It is a comprehensive social and emotional intelligence classroom management program that empowers both students and teachers. We also give our parents monthly information to allow them to learn the same methods and techniques we use at school. We feel it is important for both parents and teachers to work together, providing consistency as a team, to help the children. We hope this will be a positive tool to benefit children both at school and at home.

**Preventative Pest Control** — MCC has preventative pest control applied every Spring and Fall by Bee Line Pest Control. It is applied only outside the building structure and only on days when children are not present.

**Radon Testing** — Effective January 1, 2013, the Illinois DCFS issued a new requirement that all child care centers be tested for radon every three years with results communicated to parents/guardians. We have been tested and passed with satisfactory levels. The certificate is posted on the wall near the restroom along with other required certificates.



# **MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S CENTRE**

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to provide our children with a safe environment, outstanding personal care and love, and exceptional educational development opportunities.

### **Guiding Principles**

Our children will receive:

- a safe and loving environment.
- respect as individuals with unique needs.
- a development of respect for others.
- educational growth and development in the spirit of Montessori principles.

Our employees will receive:

- respect as individuals with unique skills, abilities, and talents to share.
- training to best prepare them in Montessori philosophies, methods, and apparatus use.
- opportunities to learn and develop in their profession.
- fair treatment and good working conditions.
- a voice in the operation of MCC.

Our parents will receive:

- outstanding care and education for their children.
- communication regarding their child's educational and social development.
- consideration and respect.
- a "thank you" for sharing their precious children with us.