



# **BETH MONTESSORI PARENT HANDBOOK**

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## **Introduction**

Beth Montessori is a Jewish preschool located in the heart of La Jolla. Open to children ages 1 ½ through 6 years, Beth Montessori offers an integrated secular and Judaic curriculum based on Dr. Maria Montessori's proven philosophy and principles. Each child is guided by certified professionals in a self-directed learning environment that fosters independence, responsibility, respect for others, and a love of learning. The Judaic program, rich in Jewish values, culture and traditions, provides the foundation for children to develop their Jewish identity.

In addition to this, Beth Montessori fosters a Bilingual Program in which the children are exposed to both English and Spanish. Each classroom has two trained Montessori Guides, one of which solely speaks in fluent English, while the other solely in fluent Spanish. Since this fluent exposure is separated by the context of each individual Guide, the children learn each language fluently and separately.

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of Beth Montessori is to nurture and guide the immense potential that each child possesses by emphasizing learning through concrete experiences.

## **Our Educational Philosophy**

Dr. Maria Montessori based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. At Beth Montessori, children progress at their own pace, choosing materials from a wide variety of possibilities. By selecting activities according to their natural interest, children experience the joy of learning. Judaic studies are woven into the curriculum through music, holiday celebration and stories, enabling youngsters to form a connection with their Jewish heritage.

The Montessori Method emphasizes learning through all five senses. Care and attention is given to creating a learning environment that reinforces children's independence and intellectual development. Children work in multi-aged groups where children share their knowledge and abilities, strengthening their sense of community.

## **Montessori's History and Educational Philosophy**

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator. Born in 1870, she developed her method of education over a 45-year period of directly observing and working with children. Her life long study of the child's mind revealed its unique ability to absorb perceptions and knowledge. The child's sensitivity to the environment is the basis for the Montessori Method, which places a great deal of emphasis on preparing an environment where the child can follow and fulfill their inner needs through concrete experiences.

Respect is given to the individuality of the child and so each pupil is given responsible freedom to manifest their inner needs and unique personalities. As success builds upon success, the child gains an inner discipline and the security of a strong self-image. Social interaction, guided by the "collective interest" of the multi-age classroom, adds to his joy and growth.

Dr. Montessori recognized that the most valid and effective incentive to learn comes from the child's own intrinsic motivation. The child is naturally drawn towards learning as he

tries to create order and sense out of the impressions he absorbs from the world around him. Slowly but surely, he will gain mastery of himself and his environment. The Montessori prepared environment possesses a definite order and structure which facilitates this process.

The structure of the Montessori learning environment involves the use of many materials with which the child may work independently. These materials were scientifically developed by Dr. Montessori, each with a distinct purposes and defining characteristics. Children can explore and manipulate the materials with their own hands, and through the senses acquire information and knowledge. In the Montessori classroom, children work at their own pace and at there own level of development, in a non-competitive atmosphere where the child is free to choose their own material to work on and is therefore inherently interested in what they are doing. That same interest allows the child to enjoy the process, instilling in them a love of learning.

Furthermore, rather than “teach” a child through the transference of information, the Montessori Directress (also known as the Guide) “guides” the child through their learning process, encouraging them to explore with the materials and reach their own conclusions. The Montessori Guide, prepares the environment and functions as the catalytic agent and exemplar for the child’s development and growth. Emphasis is places on the child’s independence, allowing him to further develop his own physical, intellectual, and social abilities. Dr. Montessori stated that any unnecessary help given to the child hinders his growth.

The basic principle of Montessori is that every child has an immense potential which can only be realized when they are given the freedom to follow and satisfy their inner needs “for it is the child who must develop himself. No one person can do the development of another. The adult can only assist - and cheer from the sidelines. The adult acts as a catalyst, not as a creator, in the child's development of himself.”

The freedom that is given to a child in the Montessori classroom is counterbalanced by the “inner discipline” which develops when the child has acquired from experience both physical and mental order. He becomes aware, not only of his freedom, but of his corresponding responsibility to himself and to others. This is the core of Dr. Montessori's philosophy. The aim of Montessori is to develop the whole child, intellectually, physically, and socially. The teacher strives to encourage and guide the child and to help him realize a balanced, happy, aware personality that will enhance his life as an adult.

## **Faculty and Administration**

**Executive Director:** Cecilia Michan Krongold

**Director:** Lina Wolf

**Assistant Director:** Vanessa Wellman Bergenfeld

**Administrative Assistant:** Gloria Finkelstein

**Faculty** - Our Montessori guides are skilled professionals, trained in child development, Montessori philosophy and the specific uses of the Montessori classroom materials. Beth Montessori adheres to the principles of Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and

is an AMI Recognized school. This recognition acknowledges our dedication and commitment to apply and maintain Maria Montessori's Method and Philosophy, as was originally developed and intended, thus providing the highest standard of Montessori Education. And so it follows that all faculty is trained and certified with AMI Diplomas.

## **Hours of Operation**

### **Primary Program and Toddler Component:**

#### Full Day:

8:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

#### Half Day:

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Toddler Component)

8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. (Primary Program)

#### Drop-off Times:

8:15 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

#### Pick-up Times:

12:00 p.m. SHARP for Toddler Half Day (Upstairs at the Front Gate)

1:00 p.m. SHARP for Primary Half Day (Downstairs Curbside)

2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. for Full Day (Downstairs Curbside)

Half Day Toddlers that have Half Day Siblings in the Primary: Because pick up schedules are at different times for each program, please consult the administration for alternate arrangements.

#### Extended Care:

Morning EC: 7:45 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Afternoon EC: 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

#### School Office:

Hours of operation: Mon-Fri 7:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Telephone: (858) 452-3030

(858) 452-3040

Fax: (858) 777-9199

Email: [admin@bethmontessori.com](mailto:admin@bethmontessori.com)

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

Your questions and concerns are always important to us. The office will be open daily to meet your needs. If you would like to schedule a private meeting to discuss an issue, please call ahead for an appointment. Please feel free to leave a message on the telephone answering machine if no one answers. Messages are monitored several times a day, and your call will be returned promptly.

## Educational Programs

### Toddler Component and Curriculum:

The Toddler Component is open to children ages 18 months to 3 years. Our toddler community focuses on giving the children the opportunity to explore movement, acquire language and develop independence in a specially prepared environment. We promote self-confidence, independence, building of self-esteem, feelings of belonging and caring for their community, social participation and a positive attitude towards learning.

As the children begin school, they are introduced to the rules of the community: respect for others, respect for the work of others and their possessions, taking turns, sharing, listening, etc. The children at this age love to imitate and model appropriate behavior.

This nurturing environment has age appropriate furniture, and beautiful, clean, safe and inviting materials. Activities and materials that require manipulation of the hands and general body coordination promote the children's spontaneous efforts to gain control of movement. Our curriculum provides for both individual and group activities.

In addition to the Montessori Curriculum, the program also includes exposure to the Jewish Culture through different hands-on activities that the children can participate in. Such activities include singing Jewish songs, making dough and baking a Challah (bread), as well as celebrating Shabbat and other Jewish Holidays.

Prenatal Life and the period from birth to three years establish the basis for the human personality. The period from three to six years of age is also of greatest importance, because you can continue the work that has been started, reinforcing and correcting when necessary.

The child-adult ratio in the Toddler Component is no more than 6 children per one adult.

Children in the Toddler Component will continue to the Primary Program based on developmental readiness, which is to be determined by the Toddler's Guide. Parents of Toddler's must sign a consent form in which the Guide's discretion to either move or keep a child in the Toddler Component is respected. Please keep in mind that the child's interest is our main concern and the Guide and Administration will make a decision accordingly.

Some of the guidelines used for determining a child's readiness includes, but is not limited to, the age of the child, whether or not they are Toilet Trained (See the Toilet Training section below for more details), and the way in which they carry themselves in the classroom.

The Beth Montessori Toddler Curriculum is comprised of five distinct areas of concentration:

1. **Practical Life** enhances skills and coordination through gross and fine motor tasks. These activities serve to increase children's attention span, encourage task completion, and increase the child's independence.
2. The **Sensorial** area helps children develop and refine their senses to discriminate, categorize and explore key concepts.

3. **Mathematics** at this age level is comprised of basic exposure to counting through naturally occurring situations in the environment (i.e., counting how many children are sitting in the circle during circle time)
4. **Language Arts** includes enrichment of vocabulary, conversation, and general support of each child's expressive language. Our Bilingual program exposes children to fluently spoken English and Spanish. The Hebrew language program exposes children to the Hebrew vocabulary associated with the Jewish holidays and culture.
5. **Enrichment** activities expose children to music, movement, Jewish culture and traditions, science, art, and geography. Gardening and ecology are also an integral part of our indoor and outdoor environment.

**Daily Schedule – Toddler Component:**

7:45 am – 8:15 am	Extended Care option
8:15 am – 8:30 am	Arrivals/Drop-off (Curbside)
8:30 am – 10:30 am	Morning work cycle (Snack offered throughout morning)
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Variant Schedule comprised of: Outdoor Playtime, Circle Time, Self-Help Skills, Lunch and Clean Up (Each class follows their own schedule)
12:00 pm SHARP	Half Day Pick Up (Upstairs at the Front Gate)
12:00 pm – 2:15 pm	Nap (if the wake up before this, they return to their work)
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Full Day Pick Up (Curbside)
2:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Extended Care

**Toilet Training:**

The Toddler Component supports the parents in Toilet Training their child. However, we are there for support, but the responsibility is still the parents. For successful Toilet Training the most important aspect is consistency between the school and home. We therefore ask that when a child becomes ready to be trained, in order to support the parents, there must be a full commitment on behalf of the parents to uphold communication with the Guides and consistency in the training. When your child is ready to be toilet trained, the administration will provide you with guidelines that should be followed consistently. A meeting is scheduled with the Guides in order to review and coordinate such guidelines.

How do you know when your child is ready for Toilet Training?

1. Do they recognize or bring to your attention when they are wet or soiled?
2. Do they seem interested in the bathroom or toilet?
3. Do they actually go and sit on the toilet?
4. Can they pull their own pants up and down? Do they take off their diaper by themselves when they are wet?
5. Are they staying dry for longer periods of time?

Please keep in mind that a child’s interest and readiness for Training is like a window and if you train your child in that window, the Toilet Training process can be very easy. Use the guidelines above to make sure you don’t miss that window, as training becomes more difficult when that window closes.

Another important point to mention, is that once you have decided to Toilet Train your child, we ask that you use only thick cloth underwear (even if it means changing their clothes more often). **We do not allow Disposable “Pull-Ups”** as they are confusing for a child and only prolong the training period. “Pull-Ups” are no different than a diaper and do not allow the child the chance to feel the discomfort of being wet; therefore the child has less incentive to be trained. Please be respectful of this rule as it is in place for the benefit of your child.

### **Primary Program and Curriculum:**

The Primary Program is open to children ages 3 to 6 years and consists of an integrated secular and Judaic curriculum based on Dr. Maria Montessori’s proven philosophy and principles. Each child is guided by certified professionals in a self-directed learning environment that fosters independence, responsibility, respect for others, and a love of learning. The Judaic program, rich in Jewish values, culture and traditions, provides the foundation for children to develop their Jewish identity.

The child-adult ratio in the Primary Program is no more than 12 children per one adult.

The Beth Montessori Primary Curriculum is comprised of five distinct areas of concentration:

1. **Practical Life** enhances skills and coordination through gross and fine motor tasks. These activities serve to increase children’s attention span, encourage task completion, and increase the child's independence.
2. The **Sensorial** area helps children develop and refine their senses to discriminate, categorize and explore key concepts.
3. **Mathematics** makes use of manipulative materials to enable children to understand abstract concepts of numbers, symbols, the decimal system, mathematical operations, and basic number facts.
4. **Language Arts** includes oral language development, written expression, reading, grammar, creative dramatics, and children’s literature. Our Bilingual program exposes children to fluently spoken English and Spanish. The Hebrew language program exposes children to the Hebrew vocabulary associated with the Jewish holidays and culture.
5. **Enrichment** activities expose children to music, movement, Jewish culture and traditions, science, art, and geography. Gardening and ecology are also an integral part of our indoor and outdoor environment.

### **Daily Schedule – Primary Program:**

7:45 am – 8:15 am                      Extended Care option

8:15 am – 8:30 am                      Arrivals/Drop-off (Curbside)

8:30 am – 11:00 am	Morning work cycle (Snack offered throughout morning)
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Variant Schedule comprised of: Outdoor Playtime, Circle Time, Lunch and Clean Up (Each class follows their own schedule)
1:00 pm <u>SHARP</u>	Departure for Half Day (Curbside)
1:00 pm – 2:15 pm	Afternoon Work Cycle (Nap for those who need it)
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm	Departure/Pick-ups for Full Day
2:30 pm –5:00 pm	Extended Care Option

### **Educational Guidelines**

We remind you, Beth Montessori is a private school dedicated to academic excellence in early childhood education, it is NOT a day care center. In order for children to get the maximum benefit from the Montessori classroom, we ask that you follow the guidelines and policies described in this handbook.

#### **Individual Pace, Attendance, and Punctuality**

We are committed to respecting and protecting your child's individual learning pace. Concentration is extremely important for the child, therefore we protect him/her from interruptions. Without adequate time allowed for full participation and development, your child will not receive all the benefits that Montessori education has to offer. Therefore, your commitment and cooperation is essential in maintaining your child's attendance punctual and consistent.

Punctuality is as equally important as attendance, which is why we ask that you make the best effort in arriving on time every day. It really makes a big difference in your child's day! Please read our policy on Punctuality (pg.17 ), as we expand on the benefits and importance of arriving on time!

#### **Cycles of Learning**

Usually it takes three years for a child to complete a cycle of learning in the Montessori Primary environment and to be well prepared for the next educational experience. After three years, your considered choice may be to change educational environments. When considering a change, please consult your child's Guide. She will assist you in understanding the best time for transitioning your child. She will also assist you in choosing the type of learning environment best suited to your child's needs. Once your choice is made, she will work directly with you and your child to help prepare for your child's next experience.

#### **Primary: The Third Year**

The Third Year in a Primary Classroom can be seen as one of the most important periods of your child's Montessori Experience. This "Third Year" is the Montessori equivalent of "Kindergarten", but due to the very hands-on materials that are found in this rich environment, the curriculum in a Primary Classroom actually goes far beyond the

"Kindergarten" level. But what we would truly like to emphasize, is what happens when you allow your child to follow through with the Third Year. As this is the year in which you see the culmination of the previous years of experience and work; in this last year, everything they have learned up till then comes together, as the child draws connections and becomes aware of the incredible abilities they have acquired through the years. Metaphorically speaking, the first 2 years in a Primary classroom, a child will be laying down the bricks and mortar of their foundation. In the Third Year, that mortar dries and strengthens, creating a permanent base, which gives form and integrity to the individual which is that child.

### **Partners in Education**

Whenever you have a concern about your child's development or school experience, please share it with the Guides. They work directly with your child each day and can offer valuable insights and suggestions. They can also respond immediately by giving any extra attention your child may need at certain moments. Your child is a unique person and is best served when you share your concerns on an individual basis and in a timely manner. Your child will reveal and discover different aspects of him/herself at home and at school. As collaborators with the parents, we can all work together to understand and respect these valuable revelations.

The communication between home and school is essential, and so we provide many means of communication. You may contact the Guides by calling the school, sending a written note, or by emailing the administration (we will gladly relay your message and place you in contact with the guides). However, with today's technological advances, we kindly ask that you do not attempt to contact the guides with school related topics on their personal phones, emails, or Facebook/Social Networks. We would like to respect the guide's personal time and privacy and prefer that all communication go through the school. We appreciate your cooperation with this.

### **Parent Participation**

Parent participation takes many forms: observing your child in the classroom setting, sharing one of your talents or skills with the class, reading articles that are sent home, assisting with materials' preparation, field trips or fund raising activities. We conduct Parent conferences twice per school year in order to keep you updated on your child's progress. Special dates have been scheduled for these conferences. Beyond these, teachers routinely share information with parents about their child's learning and classroom events. Open and ongoing communications with all our families is of the utmost importance to us. (However, please be aware that drop-off and pick-up times are not the appropriate moments to have a short conference with the guide, as it may interfere with the drop-off/pick-up procedure or interrupt children who may still be working in the classroom. A specific appointment should be made with the guide to talk about any questions or concerns. The guides appreciate your cooperation in this.)

### **Parent Education**

Parent Education is an important way of getting involved as a parent, particularly because it facilitates the collaboration between the home and school. We feel it is of utmost importance for you to understand and be aware of the process your child is living, as well

as the Educational Philosophy that Beth Montessori upholds in support of that developmental process. Beth Montessori hosts a variety of Parent Education events during the school year. In order to maximize both you and your child's experience in this Montessori Environment, we kindly ask for your mandatory attendance to these events.

### **The Classroom as the Child's Space**

Though Parent Participation is very important to us, we would like to also share a fundamental aspect of the Montessori Philosophy which limits your physical involvement inside the classroom: **The classroom is the child's space**. And we make every effort to respect and honor that fundamental fact. It is for that reason that we limit the number of adults inside the classroom (as too many adults inadvertently change the unique dynamic which we work so hard to achieve). As a parent, there are opportunities to participate inside the classroom, but please understand that those opportunities are limited out of respect for the children and the environment we have created especially for them.

### **Discipline**

Discipline in a Montessori environment does not refer to the imposition of force by an authority figure. Rather, it refers to the balance, inner discipline and inner control developed by the children engaged in meaningful activity. There are no corporal punishments of any kind nor are there rewards. Specific methods of redirecting behavior consistent with the Montessori philosophy are:

- Prevention of unacceptable behavior by alertness and redirection towards more appropriate behaviors
- Reasoning, explanation, and problem solving through the encouragement to verbalize their angers and their concerns

Though our Guides use a set of reasonable limits to manage their classrooms, their unique training enables them to observe and guide each child to the activities necessary for his/her development. Children whose behavior endangers others will be supervised and evaluated by a professional (the school can suggest a contact specialized in the child's specific needs). Provided with such guidance and the support of the parents, a child grows in self-confidence and self-discipline. No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal or physical abuse by staff or by parents on the premises.

In the Program children develop self-control through a series of exercises that challenge them to perfect their bodily movements. The Guide carefully guides the development of social responsibility by the use of classroom activities. Sometimes a child may have difficulties that require the assistance of a resource outside the school. At that time, the school would recommend such a resource to the parent. The parent, resource and educator would then collaborate to assist the child.

### **What can parents do right now to support your child in this important and sensitive stage of development?**

- Set Limits
- Create a respectful home
- Turn off the TV
- Provide physical order in the environment

- Include your child in real life activities in the home
- See that your children get outside daily
- Let home be home, and school be school
- Support your children's Montessori Education

### **What can you do at home to support your child's Montessori Experience?**

- Having the child's cloths at his level to encourage independence in dressing himself.
- Shelves to hold their toys to encourage putting away carefully and orderly (instead of throwing them into a toy chest). We also suggest that toys and activities be complete and in good condition.
- A child-size table and chair.
- A low shelf or cabinet in the kitchen were the child's plates and cups can be accessible to them (i.e.; so they can help themselves to water or help set their own place on the table, etc.)
- Accessible paper and drawing materials.
- Accessible cleaning materials (sponges, brush and dustpan, paper towels or cloth towels)
- Anticipating the child's needs and planning ahead for his participation and eventual independence.

## **School Policies and Procedures**

### **Attendance and Absence**

The law requires a record of absence and the cause of absence; therefore the school must be notified of absence and cause. If your child will be absent on certain days (i.e. for family vacation), please notify the school in advance. If a child is absent three (3) consecutive days and the office has not been notified, a call will be made to determine the cause of absence.

### **Enrollment Procedure**

The following provides a step-by-step procedure for enrollment into Beth Montessori:

- Tour the school and receive information from the Beth Montessori office
- Familiarize yourself with basic Montessori philosophy, complete application and pay non-refundable application fee
- Receive confirmation of availability from Beth Montessori
- Complete and return all forms and non-refundable deposit needed to secure your child's spot
- Attend orientation meeting and Parent Education Sessions
- One-on-one Individualized Meeting where the child meets his new teachers a few days prior to their first day of school.

### **Admissions**

Beth Montessori admits and welcomes students of all race, color, creed, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the School. Beth Montessori does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other school administered programs.

The following priorities are used in determining admissions and placement:

- Currently enrolled students
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Proportionate balance of ages and gender in each classroom
- Transfers from other Montessori schools
- Date of application (wait-list placement)

### **Applicants 4.5 Years and Older**

We would like to make a note, that even though our Primary Program is intended for children ages 3 to 6, there is some concern in accepting children over the age of 4.5 (if they have not already been in a Montessori Environment). Our experience shows, that the younger a child is when entering a Montessori Environment, the easier it is for them to adjust and develop the necessary foundation for all future experiences within a Montessori context. With that said, we recommend that we get a chance to first meet any applicant over the age of 4.5, before we can confirm if it will be an easy fit and transition for them.

### **Waitlist Policies**

If classes are full, prospective students will be put on a waiting list. Returning students will be given priority over new students on the returning list. The waiting list follows certain priority guidelines **in addition to those mentioned above**. They are as follows:

- Priority is given to siblings of currently enrolled students
- Priority is given to students entering in Fall (September) over Winter (January)
- Priority is given to Full Day students over Half Day students

The Director will make the final decision regarding student enrollment. Families may request a particular placement, but the final decision will be made by the Director with faculty recommendations.

### **New Students**

The first weeks of school are an important time of orientation for our new students. For some it will be the first experiences away from home, parents or caretakers. We find that a gentle introduction makes a positive beginning to the school experience and helps the young child feel supported and secure. To facilitate the child's transition into the school environment, avoid excessive discussion about the school. The child should feel it is a normal part of his growth and an extension of his home life (if you are calm and positive in your approach, your child will sense this and feel going to school is a good thing).

Before school begins, a one-on-one Individualized visit will be scheduled for your child to meet his/her new guides and to become oriented with the new environment. This meeting will be scheduled by the administration a few days prior to your child's first day of school.

### **Arrival Procedure**

**IT IS MANDATORY TO SIGN YOUR CHILD IN WHEN YOU LEAVE HIM/HER AT SCHOOL.**

Arrival time is between 8:15 am and 8:30 am

Arriving late disrupts the child's routine. We kindly ask that you to be on time for the sake of your child's experience.

Arrivals in the morning will have two options: (1) You may park and personally walk your child to their classroom or (2) you may drop them off on the curbside, where a Guide will receive them and walk them to their classroom. However, **curbside drop-off will be limited to the arrival time between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.** Anyone arriving after 8:30 a.m. will no longer have the option to drop off their child at the curb.

### **Curbside Drop-off Procedure**

Please enter the campus through the GILMAN DRIVE ENTRANCE.

You must stop in the turn-around where your child will be received by a guide. Please have your child on the right-side door (closest to the curb) to ensure a safe and timely drop-off. Please be patient as you wait for other cars. Once your child has been dropped off, you can proceed down the hill towards the GILMAN DRIVE exit.

Pick-up time will work the same way as the drop-off.

Please follow all instructions thoroughly to ensure that things run smoothly and safely. Your cooperation in this procedure is highly appreciated.

### **Departure Procedure**

**IT IS MANDATORY TO SIGN YOUR CHILD OUT WHEN YOU REMOVE HIM/HER FROM THE SCHOOL.**

Departure time varies according to your program of choice:

12:00 p.m. SHARP for Toddler Half Day (Upstairs)

1:00 p.m. SHARP for Primary Half Day (Curbside)

2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. for Full Day (Curbside)

Children will only be released to those authorized in the Pick-up Authorization Form (see below for more information).

Curbside Pick-up will work the same way as the morning drop-off. Any child who has not been picked up at the curb by 3:30pm, will be taken back upstairs to the extended care classroom (Extended Care charges apply). In this case, you will need to park and walk up in order to pick-up your child (the same applies to all children being picked up from the afternoon extended care).

### **Early Departures**

If your child must leave class early, please let the office and the guide know before hand and don't forget to sign them out once they are picked up. Unless it is arranged previously, children will not be let out early.

### **Late Departures**

Pick-up after 12:00 p.m. for Toddler Half Day will be considered late.

Pick-up after 1:00 p.m. for Primary Half Day will be considered late.

Pick-up after 2:30 pm for Full Day will be considered late.

Please make sure to be on time when picking up your child.

Late departures will be charged a fee at the extended care hourly rate (see most recent application for current rates), charged in ¼ hour increments.

We remind you once more:

**Drop-off and pick-up times are not the appropriate moments to have a short conference with the guide**, as it may interfere with the drop-off/pick-up procedure or interrupt children who may be working in the classroom. A specific appointment should be made with the guide to talk about any questions or concerns. The guides appreciate your cooperation in this.

### **Extended Care**

Extended Care (EC) programs are offered in the morning and the afternoon:

Morning EC: 7:45 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

Afternoon EC: 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Hourly EC: as needed (with advance notice)

**Please make sure to inform the office ahead of time, if your child will be participating in the Extended Care program (or staying for extended care on a particular day).** This helps to ensure that there are always sufficient staff members available to attend to all the children who may be staying for extended care. We appreciate your cooperation on this.

We would also like to mention that the Extended Care program is NOT A DAY CARE, and should not be treated as such. The Extended Care program is an "extension" of the regular Montessori Classroom routine, offering consistency and engagement for those children who have working parents requiring this schedule. Please use this service respectfully.

### **Car Seats**

It may seem like an obvious statement, but never the less, it must be mentioned: every child getting picked up from our care must be restrained in an age-appropriate car seat/booster (depending on the age). As a school, we will not allow a child to go into a car without one. This is particularly important when carpooling; please plan ahead to make sure you have enough car seats for all the children going home in your vehicle.

### **Pick-up Authorization Form**

Anytime an adult other than a parent, guardian is to pick up your child, send a written note on that day (signed and dated), with a description of the car and driver, to your child's Guide. For the safety of the children, we will request to see the driver's license of the individual picking up the child. **CHILDREN WILL ONLY BE RELEASED TO A**

**DRIVER LISTED ON THE PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION FORMS, UNLESS A SIGNED AND DATED NOTE FROM THE PARENT IS RECEIVED TO AUTHORIZE ANYONE ELSE.**

**Punctuality**

Punctuality is as equally important as attendance, which is why we ask that you make the best effort in arriving on time every day. It really makes a big difference in your child's day!

In the morning, when a child arrives on time, they enter into the daily routine much more smoothly. They enter the classroom together with their peers, and are greeted at the door by their guides, receiving the hearty welcome they deserve. By arriving on time, they have the opportunity to settle in calmly and work with more activities, therefore maximize their learning and development.

However, when a child arrives late, the guides and other children are already busy working and are not readily available to welcome your child in the manner they deserve. A child who walks in late, often interrupts the routine that has already begun, and it will usually take the child longer to settle in. Furthermore, when a child arrives late, they are missing out on valuable time that they can otherwise be using to learn and further develop their skills.

In the case of Toddlers, this consistency in their routine is especially important, as they are more sensitive to changes in their environment and routine. And it is for this reason, that we ask for your cooperation with the following: If your toddler has an morning appointment, or any other situation preventing them from arriving to school by 10:00 am (at the latest), we will kindly ask that they do not come to school on that day. A toddler that arrives to school after 10:00 am, has already missed out on a substantial part of the daily routine, and because they go down for naps at noon, it would defeat the purpose of having your child go through their regular and consistent daily routine.

**Field Trips**

Parents will be notified of intended trips.

**NO CHILD WILL PARTICIPATE IN ANY FIELD TRIP WITHOUT A SIGNED PERMISSION FORM.** The permission slip will clearly state the mode of transportation to and from the field trip destination. If automobiles are used for transportation of school children, we require that every child have a seat belt, booster, or car seat, and that the driving parent will ensure that all seat belts are fastened properly. **CHILDREN WILL ALWAYS WEAR SEAT BELTS.**

We will often ask parents to volunteer as drivers or chaperones for our field trips. We ask that any parents who volunteer to drive give us a copy of their Driver's License and Proof of Insurance. When on field trips we will have a ratio of approximately two children per parent-chaperone.

**Illnesses**

**STATE LAWS REQUIRE**, and in the interest of each child's health and as a courtesy to the other children, that you **PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME** if you notice any sign

off illness such as temperature, sore throat, headache, excessively runny nose, cough, diarrhea, etc. within 24 hours of class time. If your child needs to stay in from outdoor activities, it is best to keep him/her home. It is very difficult to keep one child inside while the others are all outside. In addition,

- Health regulations forbid keeping sick children in school, especially since the school does not have an area for sick children to stay. Ill children must be picked up by a parent as soon as possible.
- If your child is going to miss more than two days of school, please notify the Office.
- Please let us know if your child has any contagious disease, such as chicken pox or measles, so other parents can take necessary action. We are required by law to keep records of contagious diseases.

**CHILDREN DISPLAYING SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS MUST REMAIN AT HOME!!!**

**WE WILL CALL YOU AND ASK TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD IF WE FEEL THEY ARE NOT WELL ENOUGH TO BE AT SCHOOL.**

**WORKING PARENTS MUST MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILD CARE WHEN THEIR CHILD IS ILL!!!**

**DISCHARGE FROM NOSES SHOULD BE CLEAR! ANY YELLOWISH/GREENISH APPEARANCE INDICATES A PROBABLE INFECTION AND YOUR CHILD SHOULD NOT BE AT SCHOOL!!!**

Again, for the health and safety of all the children, we appreciate your cooperation on this.

### **Licensing Rights**

Licensing has the right to inspect the facility any time, to review children's records and to interview children without parent's consent

### **Medication Policy (No Exceptions)**

All medications must be administered by a staff member to the child enrolled at Beth Montessori and must follow the procedures listed below:

- All medications must be brought **TO THE OFFICE** by the parent. (Please do not send medication in lunch boxes.)
- Prescription medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, physician's name, a date and directions.
- A Medication Dispensing Form must be completed. The school must administer the medicine according to the physician directions on prescription medication and label directions on non-prescription (over the counter) medication.
- The first dose of any medicine **MUST BE GIVEN AT HOME** in case of allergic reactions.
- The parent must provide an appropriate measuring spoon or dispenser.

## **Lunch**

Children enjoy preparing their lunches. In the evening you and your child can select his/her food. The secret is to have the child's involvement in the selection and preparation. We advise a healthy balance of the food groups with at least one form of: protein, grain, and fruit/vegetable. Send food of nutritional value, and only as much food as your child will eat. Leftover food will be re-wrapped and sent home to give you feedback as to quantity and to avoid waste. Please pack your child's food in re-useable plastic containers. This helps cut down on throw away trash and encourages recycling. Mealtimes are relaxed times, rich with conversation, classical music and fellowship. The guides join the children for lunch time. Parents need to inform the school of any food allergies or special dietary needs the child may have.

Please be aware that due to some serious Nut-Allergies some classrooms are NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENTS. If this is the case, please be conscious and respectful of other children's safety.

We would also like to remind you that due to the Jewish Dietary Laws (read below for more details), all lunches must be Dairy (no meat allowed) and Kosher.

## **Nutrition Policies**

The school stresses good nutrition, so we want to avoid processed foods, additives, salt and sugar in particular. Any food that we feel is not nutritionally beneficial will be put away to be eaten at home. We provide nutritionally balanced snacks during the morning and afternoon programs. We encourage the children to try a taste of everything. As we limit sugars, we prefer birthday celebrations sent by parents to be raisins, fruits, or other nutritious alternatives to cake and ice cream.

There is a hand out available in which we list many healthy lunch ideas. Please contact the office if you need a copy.

## **Snacks**

Parents will assist in providing snacks for the classroom on a rotating basis. You will be advised shortly before it is your turn to supply the snack for your child's classroom. Fruit, vegetables, crackers, and cheeses are common healthy snacks. The teacher will inform you as to the adequate quantities needed (as indicated on the snack form/checklist they will give you).

## **Kashrut - Jewish Dietary Laws**

Kashrut is the name given to the Jewish Dietary Laws; food found acceptable to eat in accordance with these laws is referred to as "Kosher". Since Beth Montessori is a Jewish School we request that all food brought into the school be Kosher. Even if one does not observe Kashrut at home we have adopted this policy as it is a basic traditional value of the Jewish people. Furthermore, we want to respect those who do keep Kosher by providing an environment where they can comfortably maintain the tradition.

Kosher Guidelines:

- Dairy and Meat may not be cooked or eaten together in the same meal. So to avoid confusion all lunches brought to school must be either dairy or parve

(containing no meat or poultry or their by-products). Cheese, eggs, fish (except for shellfish and other non-kosher fish) are all examples of permitted lunch foods.

- Animal shortening is NOT Kosher, please check labels to ensure the use of butter or “vegetable shortening” only, which is acceptable. Please check labels carefully.
- Staff and parents working as volunteers must also maintain this kashrut policy by bringing only dairy or parve lunches
- Please be mindful of this policy when bringing in food for birthday or holiday celebrations.
- If your child is Lactose Intolerant there are many soy products that can substitute dairy protein options (If you send a soy “meat” product, **please mark it as soy** so that we are aware)

### **Friday Shabbat Celebration**

As a Jewish school it is important that children recognize the importance of Shabbat or the Sabbath, and we therefore try to make Fridays a little bit different than the other days of the week. On Fridays, we invite the children to help us lead the Shabbat celebration, giving them the opportunity to participate at different levels. Every week we will choose one boy and one girl from each class to lead the Friday celebration which will consist of the traditional lighting of the Shabbat candles, as well as the prayer on the wine/grape juice and bread/Challah. In addition to this, all children will be encouraged to bring in Fresh Flowers to beautify our environment with, as well a Tzedaka or charity that will be given to a Jewish Organization such as Karen Kayemetz or Jewish Family Services. We also ask that all children wear a white shirt on Shabbat, so we can all be dressed uniformly as one big family (white is also one of the two colors on the Israeli flag).

Shabbat is a very special and fun day which the children love and look forward to. Especially because every week, the children get to bake their own Challah as part of the Shabbat Celebration!!!

### **Birthday Celebrations**

A child’s birthday is a very important event for them and so we encourage that they share this day with the rest of the class. Parents are welcomed to participate in this important day as well! The child really enjoy sharing this special day with the rest of their class and so a special celebration is customary. Our birthday celebration allows the child an opportunity to share some of his/her life’s more exciting and meaningful events: on the day of your child’s birthday, please send to school a brief biography of each year of your child’s life. For example:

- At birth – Born in San Diego on September 4, 2002, weighed 8 pounds (you may include derivations of the child’s name, what it means, and why you chose it)
- At one year – Took his first steps, flew on airplane to visit grandparents
- At two years – Got a puppy, learned to ride a tricycle

A picture should accompany each year. Please choose pictures in which the birthday child is prominent. Both the pictures and the biography can be organized in a time-line arrangement on poster board or construction paper, or any other creative way you may think of (have fun with it!). The pictures and biography will be kept by the school for a few weeks and displayed in the classroom for the children to see.

On the day of the birthday celebration at school, the children put on a celebration of life. The birthday child takes the globe and walks around a candle (representing the sun), while the rest of the class sings a song. As the birthday child makes a single orbit around the circle, the teacher or parent reads the biography from the first year, etc. Each time the child circles the candle, it represents one year of their life (just as the earth circles the sun). When the biography is completed, the teacher says, "and now he is 4," at which time the class sings Happy Birthday. A healthy treat will be provided by the school in order to celebrate this special day.

To arrange for your child's Birthday Celebration, please contact your child's Guides to set up a convenient time to come in. You will be given a flyer with our Birthday Guidelines giving you more detailed information on how to prepare and enjoy this fun event!

Regarding Toddlers: We kindly ask that if you will be joining your Toddler inside their classroom to celebrate, that you take them home with you afterwards. Our experience shows that at this younger age, most children have a very difficult time separating from their parents after such an exciting break in their routine. Please understand that this request is for the sake of the children.

### **Non-school Functions/Celebrations**

To avoid hurt feelings, distribution of presents, party invitations or forms for any celebration outside of school is **ONLY ALLOWED** on the condition that things are handed out evenly to every single child in the classroom. Otherwise, please do not distribute during school hours, in which case you can mail and/or distribute such items from home.

### **Religion**

As a religious institution, religion is a topic that will be come up in the classroom. Due to the young age of the children, it is a topic that can bring up many questions and must therefore be handled carefully. At Beth Montessori the Jewish religion will be approached emphasizing culture and tradition. Our goal is to give your child a practical experience in the traditions and culture of the Jewish People while instilling in them the values found within the spiritual aspects of the religion. Please feel free to speak with your child's guide if this is a topic that concerns you.

### **Open House/Individualized Meetings**

Usually the week before school starts there are a few important events that take place to prepare both the children and the parents for the start of the school year.

**Open House/Orientation Meeting:** There is usually a meeting (for adults only) in which we review many of the important procedures and logistics of the school. This meeting is particularly important for new families and usually takes place the week before school starts.

**Individualized Meeting:** If your child is new to the school, or is transitioning from a Toddler classroom into a Primary one, the week prior to the first day of school a one-on-one Individualized visit will be scheduled for your child to meet his/her new guides and

to become oriented with the new environment. This is a very important step in your child's transition. This meeting will be scheduled by the administration a few days prior to your child's first day of school.

### **Parents, Visitors or Volunteers**

Guests must sign in at the office anytime they are on the campus other than during drop-off and pick-up. Parents and visitors will NOT be admitted to a classroom without first notifying the office. Visitors who come in to observe the classrooms will be given a form that explains the Visitor's Guidelines so as to minimize disruptions to the class.

The first couple months of the school year are very important period in the adjustment of the children to their classroom environment. A great amount of emphasis is placed on developing classroom management and helping the children become accustomed to the work routine of the Montessori classroom. It is for this reason that we usually do not allow visitors to come and observe during the first of month of the school year.

Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis, but we ask your understanding and cooperation in this matter. As a parent however, the doors are ALWAYS open for you to come and observe (anytime you want). As a matter of fact, we highly recommend that you come and observe as often as you can, and at different points in the day (as you will see different activities and dynamics depending on the time of day).

As mentioned above in our Educational Guidelines, we would like to reiterate that the "classroom is the child's space" and we place a great deal of emphasis on respecting that space by limiting the amount of adults physically present in a classroom. Therefore, we ask for your cooperation and understanding in honoring this important part of our philosophy.

### **Safety**

We ask that parents closely supervise their children in the parking lot and on their way up to the classroom. Sticking together seems to be a reasonable safety request.

### **School Cancellations**

In the case of an emergency where the school will be closed, parents will be contacted by telephone and e-mail (if listed).

### **School Clothes**

Clothing can impede or enhance your child's enjoyment of school. Encourage children to dress independently. Help them choose clothes in which they can paint, use water, garden, run and have fun outdoors. Hard-to-manage and expensive clothing is not appropriate for school. Pants with elastic waists are the easiest type for the young child to handle. Overalls are the most difficult.

The best school shoes are tennis shoes, leather or oxfords, or strappy sandals. Flip-flops, heeled shoes, and cowboy boots are discouraged as they can be a hazard on the playground (children wearing these type of shoes will not be allowed on the Play Structure). Shoe polishing is a favorite exercise, so leather shoes are most welcome.

Please DO NOT send your child with:

- Accessories (i.e. plastic jewelry, rings, watches, purse, etc.)
- Fancy Clothing or High-heels
- Please do not send children with camouflage, Super Hero (i.e. Power Ranger, Batman) or cartoon-logo (i.e. Disney) clothing or lunch boxes. These items distract the child from concentrating on his/her work in the classroom. The television programs from which these cartoon characters are based do not encourage or demonstrate problem solving skills. The staff really discourages letting the children view programs such as Power Rangers because of the use of physical force to solve problems. Please remember to exchange the clothing as appropriate to the change of seasons.

### **Change of Clothes**

Even if your child is potty trained, please send a change of clothes for your child, as accidents do happen. There are also a lot of classroom exercises involving water, if a child gets wet during these activities, the change of clothes is useful. You may send their change of clothes in a disposable bag with your child's name on it. The Guides will place each child's clothes in a box with their name on it. If a change of clothes is used, please make sure to send replacement clothes the following day.

### **Smoking**

SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY AT ANY TIME.

### **Soliciting**

There shall be NO soliciting on the premises except by salespersons previously cleared by the Director. The school roster is for personal use only and may be not used for solicitation unless approved by the Director.

### **Termination Policy**

The school reserves the right to terminate any enrollment contract between the parents and the school in case:

- The parents have not paid the tuition on the specified date.
- If there are disciplinary problems that cannot be resolved with the child or the parents.
- If the school program does not meet the parent's needs or expectations.
- If the director considers that the school is pedagogically inappropriate for the child, that is, if it is not the right place for the child.

### **Things to Bring to School and Things to Leave at Home**

Some children like to bring items from home to school. The following are some guidelines.

#### We Welcome:

- Flowers, small plants and things found in nature
- Books are welcomed. Please consult with the Guide as to the kinds of books that are best suited to our classrooms.
- Educational Activities

Should Remain at Home:

- All toys, jewelry, purses, sunglasses, money and candy need to remain at home
- Hats other than those needed for inclement weather are greatly distracting in the classroom.
- Umbrellas should stay at home. Instead, please dress your child in a raincoat.
- Particularly for the Toddler Component: baby bottles, pacifiers, and sippy cups should be left at home (if you would like to store liquids in a sippy cup you may, but we will provide real cups for children to drink out of during lunch).
- Security blankets or other such objects will only be allowed during naptime. If your child does not stay for naps, please keep these at home.

**Use of Facilities and Equipment**

Use of equipment and facilities is expressly forbidden for any purpose other than approved school business. Requests to use facilities and/or equipment must be in writing and submitted to the Director.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

Please visit our website to view the most Frequently Asked Questions. They are most likely questions you may be asking yourself:

[www.bethmontessori.com](http://www.bethmontessori.com)

**Financial Policies**

**Tuition**

Tuition rates vary according to program:

- Toddler Component - Half Day
- Toddler Component - Full Day
- Primary Program - Half Day
- Primary Program - Full Day

These rates are subject to change from year to year. Please consult the most recent application for current tuition rates.

**Fees**

Application Fee (Only once)	\$175.00
Registration Fee (Yearly)	\$200.00
Deposit: Last Month Tuition (Yearly)	Depends on program of choice
Apron and Sack	\$25.00
Apron Replacement Fee	\$15.00 (Apron Only) \$20.00 (Apron & Sack)
Material Fee (Yearly)	\$200.00 to be waived first year
Insurance Fee (Yearly)	\$100.00 to be waived first year

### **Extended Care**

Extended Care (EC) is available for working parents who can not drop off or pick up their child at the regular programmed hours. Extended Care Rates are also subject to change from year to year. Please consult the most recent application for current Extended Care rates.

For those opting for Extended Care Hourly Rate (versus a monthly fixed rate): Each month we tally the extra hours incurred and charge it on the following month's invoice. Our tally cut-off is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month (since invoices are usually processed the last week of each month). So for example, if you used EC during the month of October, we will tally all hours used between September 21<sup>st</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup>. And this charge will appear on your November invoice. When tallied, all hours are rounded up to the nearest ¼ of an hour.

### **Deposit**

A tuition deposit is required to hold a place for your child. The amount of the deposit depends on the program you choose. The deposit consists of the Registration Fee plus the Last Month's Tuition (amount varies depending on program choice).

This deposit is **non-refundable** but is applied toward the last month of the school year – that is the June Tuition. If a child leaves the school prior to June, the deposit is **non-refundable and will not be returned.** However, if a child follows through with the entire school year, when June comes around, the deposit is applied to that month and no tuition is due.

### **Late Fees and Payment Policies**

1. Beth Montessori reserves the right not to admit the child into the school if payments are not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.
2. Payment by Credit Card incurs a 2.5% additional charge (Amex, Visa and MasterCard accepted; AmEx incurs a 3% charge).
3. There is a \$40.00 late fee for payments received after the 6th of the month.
4. There is a \$35.00 fee for returned checks.

### **Required Forms**

The students file contains forms required by the State Licensing Agency, as well as the Beth Montessori administration. Prior to the first day of school, parents must complete and submit all of the required forms.

**STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ADMITTED UNLESS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED FORMS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED:**

#### **Application or Re-enrollment Form**

The Application form is completed upon initial enrollment into the school. Parents need to update any information that changes from year to year when they submit the Re-Enrollment form. The application fee only applies to the initial Application, from then on, only the registration fee is due, together with the Re-Enrollment form.

The initial Application acts like an enrollment contract. The contract is renewed each year by submitting the Re-Enrollment form.

**Health Record/Physician's Report**

This form includes a current health record, completed and signed by your child's physician, as well as a copy of the child's immunization records. A statement must be completed and signed by a physician as a condition of admission into Beth Montessori.

**Child's Health History/Parent Report**

This form is completed only once, at the initial enrollment of the child.

**Emergency Medical Release/Emergency Contact Form**

The Emergency Medical Release form gives the hospital permission to provide medical treatment for your child in the case of an emergency. A new Emergency Medical Release must be completed at time of re-enrollment.

The Emergency Contract Form gives detailed information as to who to contact in case of an emergency.

**Pick-Up Authorization Form**

This form includes a list of those individuals authorized to transport the child to and from the school. A new Pick-up Authorization form must be completed each year and updated any time there is a change.

**NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON.**

**END OF HANDBOOK**