



**BETH MONTESSORI  
PARENT HANDBOOK:  
Supplemental Infant Community  
Handbook**

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**PLEASE NOTE: This Handbook is to be used as a Supplement to the full-length Beth Montessori Parent Handbook, which contains in greater length and detail the many policies and guidelines of Beth Montessori. This Supplemental Handbook is provided only to those families with an Infant enrolled in our Infant Community Program. Obviously the nature of this age group, requires a slightly different approach to some of the logistics and programming. However, we ask that you also read the full-length Handbook, in order to gain a complete understanding of our programs and our school.**

### **Introduction**

Beth Montessori is a Jewish preschool located in the heart of La Jolla. Open to children ages 9 months 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 creating an environment that emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning, fostering independence, and self-directed discovery. We believe in respecting each child's unique pace of development and tailoring our instruction to meet their individual needs.

### **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 their 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 placed 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**

### **Infant Community "NIDO":**

Full Day (5 days/week):

8:15 am - 2:30 pm

Half Day:

We do not offer a Half Day option for our Infant Community Program.

Drop-off Times:

8:15 am SHARP (at the Classroom Door)

Pick-up Times:

2:30 pm SHARP (at the Classroom Door)

Extended Care:

An Extended Care Program is available, but not guaranteed, for our Infant Community from 2:30-5:00 pm. Extended Care availability is dependent on Staffing Schedules. We may not always be able to offer this aspect of our program.

School Office:

Hours of operation: Mon-Fri 7:45 am - 3:30 pm

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**

### **Infant Community and Curriculum:**

The Infant Community, also known as "Nido" which means "nest", is open to children ages 9 months to 18 months. Our infant 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 exploring and learning.

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.

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 Infant Community is no more than 3 children per one adult.

Children in the Infant Community will continue to the Toddler Component based on their age and developmental readiness.

The Beth Montessori Infant Curriculum is comprised of four distinct areas of concentration:

1. **Practical Life** enhances skills and coordination through gross and fine motor tasks. These activities serve to increase children's motor control, strength, balance, and general independence.
2. The **Sensorial** area exposes children to a variety of sensory activities to help them refine and develop their senses. The purpose of which is to better discriminate, categorize and explore key concepts as they grow and learn about their surroundings.
3. **Language Arts** includes enrichment of vocabulary, constant conversation, and general support of each child's receptive and expressive language. Our Bilingual program exposes children to fluently spoken English and Spanish. In this environment we also expose the children to Baby Signs, to aid in their developing communication skills.
4. **Enrichment** activities expose children to music, stories, and movement.

In addition to the Montessori curriculum, part of Beth Montessori's goal is to also be a resource and support for the parents as well. This is particularly important for first time parents, who may still be adjusting to the everchanging needs of their growing and developing child. Please count on our support and feel open to approach us with any questions you may have in regard to your child's development. We love being part of this journey with you.

### **Daily Schedule – Infant Community:**

In an Infant Community, the schedule is not set in stone in the same way as a Toddler or Primary Classroom, and this is of course for that fact that at this developmental age, each child must follow their own internal schedule (i.e. Not all children nap at the same time; not all children follow the same eating schedule). This does not mean that there is no routine, on the contrary, there is plenty of routine and structure given to help each child establish the individual routine that works best for them as individuals and as a group. However, the routine is established through the individual needs of the children, both as individuals and as a group. That is after all one of the foundations of the Montessori Philosophy: to follow each child and guide them to fulfill their individual needs; while at the same time providing them with order and consistency to allow them to organize themselves and develop their confidence and security.

We do provide a hand out with a Suggested Meal and Sleep Schedule, which delineates the distinct schedules for those children that are still taking 2 naps and those who are down to 1 nap per day. You can use this hand out as a guide to better align the child's routine at home and at school.

### **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 the full length Parent Handbook.

### **School Policies and Procedures**

#### **Arrival/Drop-Off & Dismissal/Pick-Up Procedure**

Though our Toddler and Primary program have their drop-off and pick-up at the front gate, our Infant families are allowed to walk through the courtyard and drop-off/pick-up directly at the door of your child's classroom. We simply ask that you do not enter the classroom itself, out of respect to the other children who are already settling into their routine and environment.

**IT IS MANDATORY TO SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT YOUR CHILD WHEN YOU LEAVE THEM AT SCHOOL AND WHEN YOU PICK THEM UP.**

Drop-off is at 8:15 am SHARP

Departure time is at 2:30 pm SHARP

Children will only be released to those authorized in the Pick-up Authorization Form.

### **Late Departures**

Pick-up after 2:30 pm 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. 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**

An Extended Care (EC) Program is available for our Infant Community from 2:30-5:00 pm. This program is simply an extension of the daily routine the children are already accustomed to. Please inform the administration ahead of time if you require Extended Care as we may not always be able to guarantee its availability.

### **Meals**

Each child will bring their own food from home. This is particularly important since not all children at this age have been introduced to all foods. Parents will also be asked to fill out a "Needs and Service Plan" which will delineate the schedule and needs of each child so that we can ensure that each child is receiving the care and routine they are used to.

Meals will consist of food items your child has already had introduced. 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-packed 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.

All bottles (and/or anything requiring refrigeration) must have your child's name on them.

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 our entire school is a NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT. Please be conscious and respectful of other children's safety.

We would also like to remind you that due to the Jewish Dietary Laws (please refer to the full-length Handbook 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.

**Naps**

Naps are naturally a vital part of the children's routine at this point in development. And so children will obviously be napping here at school as part of the daily routine. Since each child's schedule may vary (some nap twice in a day and some nap once), please make sure to speak with your child's Guides to discuss the best Nap schedule for your child. We try and adjust the nap schedules in a such a way to provide the longest period of uninterrupted quiet time for all children to nap in efficiently.

On your child's first day, you will be asked to bring in a set of crib sheets and blanket to ensure each child has their own clean and hygienic set of beddings. These will be sent back home every Friday (or sooner if needed) to be washed and returned the following school day.

**Communication with the Guides**

At this age, it is of great importance that there is constant communication between the home and the school. Keeping a consistent routine and schedule is of upmost importance at this age. Furthermore, as your child grows and develops, please count on our experience and expertise to help ease and aid you through this process. Please know that we highly encourage constant communication with the guides, so please do not hesitate to contact or approach them with any topic.

Additionally, to facilitate the daily communication that is often necessary at this age (i.e.; what your child ate, how long did they nap for, etc), each child will receive a small spiral notebook for the guides to make useful notes that will be sent back home with you on a daily basis. This can become a useful tool for asking questions and initiating contact when additional support or advice is needed in any area.

**We know that you are trusting us with your greatest treasure! Know that they are in good hands and count on us for anything you need!**

**END OF HANDBOOK**