



Program Statement

Montessori Approach

Brason Academy Montessori School (BAMS) follows the Montessori method of education, which is a child-centered educational approach, based on scientific observations of children from birth to adulthood. It views the child as one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. The Montessori approach values the human spirit and the development of the whole child—physical, social, emotional, cognitive.

The hallmarks of the Montessori education are multiage groupings that foster peer learning, uninterrupted blocks of work time, and guided choice of work activity. In addition, a full complement of specially designed Montessori learning materials is meticulously arranged and available for use in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

Guiding Principles

The program that BAMS offers is consistent with the Minister's policy statement on programming and pedagogy issued under subsection 55 (3) of the CCEYA Act. The framework guiding our program development is based on "How Does Learning Happen?", which focuses on knowledge from research, theory and practice on what's most important for children. The following Program Statement is in keeping with Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) Section 46 of O.Reg 137/2015. "Every licensee shall have a program statement that is consistent with the Minister's Policy Statement on programming and pedagogy issued under subsection 55(3) of the Act" and "shall review the program statement at least annually." All current and new staff, students and volunteers will review the program statement prior to interacting with children and at any time when the program statement is modified

Our view of children

Consistent with the Minister of Education's policy, staff at BAMS view children at all ages to be capable, competent, curious and rich in potential.

We believe that when children are given a stimulating, prepared environment they use their inner drives to explore, investigate and derive conclusions from their understanding. It fosters independence in them and such first hand conclusions give them a very positive learning experience. We

know that children are competent and able to question, examine and investigate a wide variety of topics and areas of interest.

Program Goals

Our program goals are consistent with the key indicators of quality as defined in the CCEYA . These goals lead our approaches to form procedures that staff implements all throughout the curriculum and programming.

(a) To promote the health, safety, nutrition and well being of the children.

Health:

BAMS strives to meet all the requirements and recommendations of the Region of Waterloo Public Health as well as Fire regulations. Teachers record any noticeable change in the child's health in the morning when they are dropped off. All staff at BAMS follows the medical policy that dictates approaches when drugs are to be administered at school. All staff has an up to date first aid including CPR training. We follow the public health guidelines for prevention and spread of illness and sanitization. Visual posters and directions for hand hygiene guide our staff and children. Children's allergies and anaphylactic plans are posted in relevant areas and reviewed by each staff. If a child has a fever + one other symptom, an early pick up is requested. When an infectious illness is confirmed in the centre, a sign is posted to inform families and provide facts about that illness. Regular playground inspection and fire drills are done in accordance with the regulations for emergency preparedness. Monthly newsletters remind parents of any seasonal requirements for children's well being e.g. sunscreen for summer and hats and gloves for winters.

Safety:

Procedures like noting the arrival and pick up times; verifying the pick up person; following the sleep supervision policy and adhering to at least the minimum ratios all ensures that children are safe at BAMS

Nutrition:

Our menus are planned in accordance to Canada's Food Guide. We prepare a 4-week rotation menu for across the seasons and they are posted for families' information. We strive to incorporate diverse fruits and vegetables including super foods. We respect people's preferences due to religious beliefs and/or allergies. All staff handling food are trained in 'Safe Food Handling" and their certificates posted. The portion sizes of various food groups, like protein, carbohydrates and milk are offered in accordance with the recommendations of CFG . Snack and lunch times are made to be a very positive experience for children. They are encouraged to be independent and try new and diverse food.

(b) To support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff

At BAMS, staff fosters healthy relationships with children and families by welcoming them in the morning and making themselves aware of anything of significance in the child's life that might impact their learning experience at the school. Educators make an effort to get to know children and their

families. 'Watch me work' is an opportunity for parents to engage and participate in children's school life. Staff actively engages and listens to children and responds in a positive way. They support the child's need to self-regulate and assist them as they work to develop that skill.

(c) To encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate

Self-regulation is pivotal to the Montessori philosophy followed at our school. The directress (teacher guide) provides children with controlled choices – suited to their level of development fostering their ability to self regulate. The interactions and communication used is always focused on the positive reinforcement. We acknowledge that children have self esteem and should be treated with respect and dignity. Staff always role models high standard of behaviour and communication and through the use of 'Grace and Courtesy' elements of Montessori, inculcate the same in children. Our classes are composed of mixed-ages of children- 18 months to 3 years for Toddler level and 3 to 6 years in our preschool/JK/SK level. Children in preschool generally remain for the JK and SK years and so are with many known peers and the same teachers for three years. There are natural opportunities for the children to interact with others who are older than themselves – or younger. The older children become role models and leaders for the group; they see themselves as helpers. Children of various ages often choose to work in pairs or small groups and so peer teaching happens. Our teachers model respectful ways of communicating and demonstrate problem solving for the children. As often as possible the teachers suggest that a child seeking help ask other children before asking an adult. Children gain confidence in various situations, observe how others solve problems, learn to help one another. They gain experience and learn to self-regulate.

(d) To foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry

Our classrooms are divided into 4 areas of essential learning, namely Practical life, Sensorial, Maths, Language and Culture. All these areas have pre prepared, learning apparatus which are designed based on years of research and observations of how a child's brain functions. These materials are often self-correcting and help the child explore the concept. The concepts are often taken from concrete to abstract and are instigates the child to explore, inquire and make conclusions. Most of the equipment are made with real natural wood to make the environment more authentic. Our outdoor play curriculum also revolves around themes of nature like investigating and exploring flora and fauna, raking up the leaves or gardening. Science exploration includes learning about plants and animals, chemical and physical experiments. Geography is taught through sensorial experiences and history through the passage of time. Exploration of art materials and learning techniques with crayons, coloured pencils, markers, paint, glue, art papers, play dough, clay, scissors etc are always a part of the art shelf. There are ample opportunities to look at books, listen to stories, role-play, singing songs. Our daily schedule is flexible with much time devoted to child-initiated work time.

(e) To provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

At BAMS we follow an inquiry-based learning approach where children initiate an interest in the specific topic. We believe that children have sensitive periods where children are most receptive to learning a particular thing. The children can decide about activities they wish to do, interact with the materials until they choose to put it away, return the materials for others to use. They can choose to work alone or with a friend. They may decide to sit at a table or work on a rug on the floor. Children are introduced to new material by observing other children or by an adult. The adults in a Montessori environment are observers who act as a link between the children and their environment. Teachers support this learning process through scaffolding. In addition to the child led learning environment that we provide in our classrooms we also plan field trips every year to explore the community and also to investigate a specific topic.

(f) To plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported

At BAMS, we believe in 'Every Child Matters'. We view children as being competent and capable. We support the children in their endeavours to take developmentally appropriate risks and be responsible for their own actions with the support and guidance from the teachers. The environment is set up to meet the children's individual needs and allow them to explore, reflect and engage in their own learning. The teachers observe and respond to each individual child's learning needs. Teachers record each child's learning and plan to follow up on interest shown. Teachers often spend time one on one with a child for presenting new material with a scope to develop a new skill. We respect culture, language, traditions and family values of all children in our program. To that end, children are introduced to different languages being spoken, see visual images of diverse people, places, activities and foods through the culture area of our classroom. Staff often create opportunities for children and families to share about their culture or special days.

(g) To incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children receiving child care

The programming at BAMS offers children the opportunity 2 hours of outdoor time (weather permitting). During outdoor play, children are encouraged to participate in activities that help develop gross motor skills and endurance. During inclement weather, indoor gross motor activities are offered. Toddlers are encouraged to sleep (maximum of 2 hours) and CASA children are encouraged to rest during rest times for a minimum of 30 min. The non-sleepers are offered some quiet activities to engage them during that period. Sleep policy is always adhered to during rest times.

(h) To foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

At BAMS, we believe that parent engagement and communication is pivotal in a child's development. Parents are involved and consulted in any decisions involving their child like transitioning in CASA, behaviour management etc. Through monthly newsletters we communicate monthly or seasonal themes to parents. Also included in the newsletters are the current plans of lessons or the key areas that the teachers will be working on. We do parent- teacher appointments twice a year where we answer questions about child development or provide resources to parents and also communicate and share the goals for their children. Report cards are sent out to families twice a year to communicate to them the key learning skills that their child has achieved or is working towards. Curriculum workshops and Meet the Teachers evenings provides families with plenty of opportunities to know the teachers, curriculum and the school environment. Events like Year end "Parents' Appreciation Picnics" and "Mother's Day Tea Party" , gives parents opportunity to mingle with each other.

(i) To involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families and staff

For children who have an individual educational plan , additional staff from outside resource agencies (e.g., KW Habilitation, KidsAbility) are involved who provide 1:1 support . Early Childhood Specialist consultants, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapists are available to meet with parents, observe and assess the child's needs in the classroom and support teachers in providing helpful programming for the children. Teachers often invite special visitors into the program. For example: community helpers (police officer, fire fighter), dental hygienist, humane society, librarian, etc

BAMS has a purchase of service agreement with the Region of Waterloo for child care fee subsidy. We participate in OneList, the central registry for child care. Brason Montessori accepts students pursuing their Early Childhood Diplomas for internships and placement, from Conestoga College and Mohawk College. The school also mentors Student candidates for Montessori Certification.

(j) To support staff in relation to continuous professional learning

BAMS encourages its staff to further develop their practises by going to training /conferences where they could keep abreast of the best practises in their field. The school plans 5 PD days for staff to engage in such opportunities. Information about changes or updates in the field of early years are disseminated and discussed on a regular basis. Every employee has budgeted funds for professional development. BAMS fully reimburses the registration for ECE College fees. We often sponsor teacher candidates to pursue Montessori diplomas from MACTE approved Montessori Teacher Training Institutes. The school participates in "Early Years Engage" which is a quality initiative by the Region of Waterloo Children Services.

(k) To document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses (a) to (j) of subsection 46 (3) on the children and their families.

Staff at BAMS participates in regular team meetings to discuss, plan and evaluate their program and interactions with children. There is a parent feedback box where we receive parent feedback on the impact of such strategies and approaches that we follow. Children's work is displayed inside the school. The Yearbook is a compilation of all the varied activities that the children were engaged in during the year. The teachers make detailed observations of the children progress and well-being, on a regular basis. Based on these observations, they generate a report card, twice a year. Parents are offered this report card and an in-person consult with the teacher.

Annual Review

As per the Ministry's direction, BAMS shall ensure that all new employees, students and volunteers review this Program Statement upon hire or before their placement begins. Additionally, all employees, students and volunteers will review this Program Statement annually, and after any modification