



## Program Statement

### *Montessori Approach*

Brason Academy 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.

### *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:**

Staff makes a mental note of how the child's health is 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.

**(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. 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. 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. 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 may ask 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.

#### **(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 . College and high school students who are completing a placement in our classrooms. 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.

#### **(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

#### **(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.