

Healthy Beginnings Montessori House Frequently Asked Questions

Protection of the "best" in each child through respect of choice and concentration

The most important discovery that Dr. Montessori has contributed to the field of child development and education is the fostering of the best in each child. She discovered that in an environment where children are allowed to choose their work and to concentrate for as long as needed on that task, that they come out of this period of concentration (or meditation or contemplation) refreshed and full of good will toward others. The teacher must know how to offer work, to link the child to the environment who is the real teacher, and to protect this process. We know now that this natural goodness and compassion are inborn, and do not need to be taught, but to be protected.

Q. Is lunch included in the monthly tuition?

A. There is not an extra charge for meals or snacks. Extended day students receive breakfast, lunch and three snacks. Our school day children receive lunch and two snacks. We believe that healthy and wholesome diets produce a healthy and wholesome child which is why 85% to 90% of what we serve is natural and organic. Our meals are made from scratch in our commercial kitchen.

Allergies & Food Restrictions

You'll have peace of mind, children with food and allergy restrictions, you'll meet with our private chef to discuss menu options. Sensitive to all students, our youngest children occasionally will have food prepared differently, for example, sliced apples would be replaced with steamed apples.

Q. Does Healthy Beginnings Montessori offer Part-Time Programs?

A. Too fulfill our promise of offering the highest quality Montessori education, all Healthy Beginnings Montessori programs run on five-day-a-week schedules.

The five-day schedule supports children's need for consistency, minimizes disruption in their learning and development, and develops a sense of belonging within the classroom community; most importantly, five-day programs support a child's natural learning process. Each classroom is carefully prepared with so many beautiful activities that no child can possibly complete them all by attending two to three days a week; we feel the benefits of a five-day program are immeasurable.

Q. *Is Healthy Beginnings affiliated with any religious group?*

A. Healthy Beginnings Montessori House is a private independent school that has no ties to any religious group. We embrace all religions and model respect and understanding for our students. We encourage parents to share their traditions and holidays that are special to their families so that our students can have a better cultural understanding of their world.

Q. *Why does HBMH not offer computer classes?*

Dr. Montessori's dictum for the young child was "never give more to the mind than you give to the hand"

A. One of the most important aspects in a Montessori classroom is the hands-on learning environment, subsequently computers are not considered hands-on learning for that reason we do not offer computer classes.

The hands are most important in receiving information from the world; preparation of the hands for adult life is absolutely critical, both in terms of large sweeping movements of the arms and in fine muscle control in holding small objects between the thumb and forefinger.

Children who learn through computers are imprisoned by that experience because it does not generalize to the concrete media of the real world. Computers do not aid in the building of deep concentration but instead children enter an almost trance state; when they walk away they tend to be agitated, not calm.

Q. Does Healthy Beginnings Montessori require school uniforms?

A. The students at Healthy Beginnings are developing independence and part of this process is choosing what to wear. We feel that by not enforcing school uniforms we are respecting your child's individuality and freedom. Additionally, the children at Healthy Beginnings will be engaged in numerous hands-on activities that are "messy" such as daily cooking and gardening.

Q. If my child is left to choose his/her own activities, will he or she tend to do the same thing every day or simply do nothing?

A. The teachers at HBMH are trained to observe children's activities. When a child has mastered a skill, the teacher will give the child a lesson that is more challenging, considering the age and interest of each child. Because the environment is so stimulating and exciting, children seldom "do nothing." There are hundreds of prepared lessons for the child to choose from every day.

Q. Does Healthy Beginnings have a Front Door Security system and Cameras?

A. For the safety of our school community we have security cameras in all classrooms including the front lobby and outside near the back and front entrance. The camera system can be viewed in the front lobby anytime during normal business hours. The cameras are also watched in the directors and assistant directors' office.

After careful consideration and consulting with the Department of Family and Protective Services our cameras are not set-up to be viewed online.

Q. How do we prepare our students for Kindergarten?

A. The core of the HBMH Montessori Kindergarten curriculum is language, mathematics, science, geography, practical life, and sensorial. In addition to the core Kindergarten curriculum, the child is also presented with history, music, art, movement and peace education and yoga. Our trained Montessori guides observe the child's interest and readiness for advanced work.

Our kindergarten children have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and responsibility because of the mixed ages in their classroom communities; additionally the children learn tolerance, compassion and social diversity. This is the 'leadership year'. They have friends of all ages. The mixed ages and widely varied achievement levels of the children minimize comparisons and competition.

Another equally important component in preparing our students for kindergarten is the education of character, children learn to take care of themselves, their environment, each other - cooking, cleaning, building, gardening, moving gracefully, speaking politely, being considerate and helpful and doing social work in the community.

Q. *Why does HBMH not offer “paid” extra-curricular afternoon activities?*

A. There's several reasons why we do not solicit outside vendors to teach extra-circular activities such as ballet, soccer, chess or gymnastics classes. One of the most important aspects we promote within our school is communal harmony. We are an All-Day Montessori school therefore the children are engaged in the afternoon work cycle. Inviting outside vendors would cause a disruption to the classroom dynamics. More importantly, our afternoons are staffed with trained Montessori teachers to guide our students in a variety of activities where all children are included such as yoga, music & movement, gardening, cooking, science and art projects.