

be the light

brave the elements

think outside the box

nurture with nature



brightchild

montessori school

2025

Parent Handbook

"Today I have grown taller from walking with the trees" - Karle Wilson Baker

it takes a **village**

Welcome

Welcome to Bright Child Montessori. Whether this is your first child or your fourth, whether your little one is just learning to walk or ready to explore the solar system—we're so happy you're here.

This handbook is your guide to our programs, policies, and philosophy. But more than that, we hope it gives you a feel for what it's like to be part of the Bright Child family. Our school is rooted in love, purpose, and nature—with a focus on child-led learning and community connection. We are also enrolled in Ontario's Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, offering affordable, high-quality care that puts children first.

Philosophy

At Bright Child Montessori, we believe every child is capable, curious, and full of potential. Our program balances structure and freedom—offering both guidance and independence in a thoughtfully prepared environment.

Indoors, we provide structured freedom: calm, orderly spaces where children move purposefully, choose meaningful work, and engage deeply with hands-on materials that build focus, confidence, and self-discipline. Educators observe closely, offering support and introducing new challenges at just the right moment to inspire growth.

Outdoors, we celebrate unstructured wonder: mud kitchens, bug hunts, tree climbing, fort building, and hillside rolling. From organized nature walks to spontaneous puddle jumping, outdoor play is not just scheduled—it's prioritized. Our outdoor spaces are rich with possibility, where children build resilience, explore their senses, and connect with the natural world.

We honour the Montessori philosophy and align with *How Does Learning Happen?*, Ontario's pedagogical framework. Our environments foster belonging, well-being, engagement, and expression—helping children feel safe, capable, and deeply known.

We support development through:

- **Responsive relationships** with children and families
- **Purposeful indoor spaces** that encourage independence and joy
- **Immersive outdoor experiences** that spark creativity and connection
- **Nourishing meals and predictable rhythms** that support emotional regulation
- **Clear routines** that build confidence and autonomy

This is how we raise grounded, resilient, and creative thinkers—children who know themselves, care for others, and thrive in both the classroom and the wild.

 **Mission**

At Bright Child Montessori, our mission is to nurture the curiosity, creativity, and imagination that lives within every child. Through a mindful, supportive learning environment rooted in nature, we empower children to explore their unique potential. Guided by the Montessori philosophy, we foster independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

 **Vision**

To raise resilient, compassionate, and curious children—grounded in nature, empowered by independence, and inspired to make their mark on a changing world.

 **Guiding Values****1. Be the Light**

As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give others permission to do the same.

We lead with kindness, authenticity, and joy—empowering others through our example. When we shine, we make space for children and colleagues to do the same.

2. Brave the Elements

To endure or face unpleasant conditions without showing fear.

Discomfort is not the enemy—it's the teacher. Whether it's a rainy day in the forest, a scraped knee on the playground, or a moment of challenge in the classroom, we embrace it. These are the moments that build resilience, discipline, and courage. We lead children through—not around—challenge, knowing it's essential to their growth.

3. Think Outside the Box

To think differently, unconventionally, or from a new perspective.

We don't follow the herd—we follow the child. Whether it's reimagining a lesson, solving problems creatively, or stepping away from trends that don't align with our values, we think for ourselves. We encourage children and educators to explore freely, question boldly, and trust their own ideas—because great minds don't grow inside boxes.

4. Nurture with Nature

To grow in harmony with the natural world.

Nature is where learning comes alive. From nourishing meals to muddy boots, from fresh air to forest adventures, we help children form a deep and lasting connection to the world around them. Our days follow nature's rhythm, with time to move, rest, explore, and grow. We believe that when children are nurtured by nature, they become calm, curious, healthy, and whole.

5. It Takes a Village

To come together as a community to raise a child.

At Bright Child, every child's journey is shaped by many hands and hearts. From their first steps in our infant room to their final days as confident six-year-olds, they're guided by a team of educators who know them, love them, and help them grow. That care extends beyond the classroom—into homes, onto soccer fields, and through every connection we make in our community. This is more than a school. It's a network of support. It's a village. And it's how children thrive.

About Montessori

At Bright Child Montessori, we follow the principles of the Montessori Method—an educational approach that empowers children to explore, discover, and grow at their own pace. Rooted in respect for the child, the Montessori philosophy encourages independence, inner discipline, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our classrooms are thoughtfully prepared to support key stages of development. Children are free to choose meaningful work, move with purpose, and engage deeply with hands-on materials that build confidence and focus.

Each Montessori environment includes five core areas:

Practical Life

Children develop independence and coordination through real-life activities like pouring, sweeping, and food prep. These tasks build concentration, confidence, and a sense of purpose.

Sensorial

Materials in this area help refine the senses—touch, sight, sound, taste, and smell—laying the groundwork for logical thinking and understanding of the world.

Mathematics

We begin with concrete, hands-on tools that allow children to physically see and feel quantity before moving toward more abstract concepts and written equations.

Language Arts

Our language approach begins with phonetic awareness and progresses toward reading, writing, grammar, and creative expression—always guided by the child’s interest and readiness.

Cultural Studies

This area explores geography, history, science, art, music, and the natural world, nurturing a sense of wonder and global awareness.

We believe every child holds infinite potential. Through the Montessori Method, the *How Does Learning Happen?* framework, and our own examples as guides and role models, we help each child grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Our goal is to inspire curious, compassionate, capable learners who are ready to contribute meaningfully to their communities—and the world.

How Does Learning Happen?

At Bright Child Montessori, our approach is grounded in *How Does Learning Happen?*, Ontario’s pedagogical framework for the early years. It’s built on four foundational conditions that every child needs to grow and thrive: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression**. These aren’t just abstract concepts—they’re the daily experiences we strive to provide for every child.

These foundations are universal and apply across all early learning settings, regardless of age, ability, background, or language. Rooted in the latest research and aligned with Ontario’s Kindergarten Program, they

reflect what children naturally seek in their learning environments: connection, confidence, curiosity, and communication.

The Four Foundations

Belonging

Children thrive when they feel connected—to people, to place, and to purpose. A true sense of belonging means being seen, valued, and able to contribute as part of a community. At Bright Child, every child knows they are a vital part of something bigger.

Well-Being

Well-being is the foundation for all learning. It includes physical health, emotional safety, self-awareness, and the ability to self-regulate. We help children develop healthy habits, a strong sense of self, and the skills to navigate their world with confidence.

Engagement

Engaged learners are curious, motivated, and deeply focused. Whether they're building a tower, exploring the woods, or solving a real-world problem, children learn best when they are active participants in their own discovery. Through rich, hands-on experiences, they develop creativity, critical thinking, and persistence.

Expression

Children express themselves in many ways—through language, movement, art, music, and play. We create environments that support every child's voice and offer diverse opportunities for communication. From storytelling to block-building, children learn to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in ways that are meaningful to them.

“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experience in the environment.”

— Maria Montessori

A Shared View of Children, Families, and Educators

How Does Learning Happen? offers more than a framework—it shapes how we see and support one another as a learning community.

Children

We see children as capable, competent, and full of potential. They are natural explorers, deep thinkers, and creative problem-solvers. Every child brings their own voice, culture, and identity into the learning environment. When we view children this way, we create spaces that empower them to lead, grow, and flourish.

Families

Families are a child's first and most enduring teachers. They bring love, insight, and lived experience into our

school community. We build strong partnerships with families by listening, sharing, and collaborating—because children do best when the people who care for them are connected and aligned.

Educators

Educators at Bright Child are more than teachers—they are researchers, guides, and mentors. They observe carefully, support thoughtfully, and create meaningful learning experiences rooted in the needs of the child. Our team is diverse, skilled, and continually learning. Each educator deserves to feel they belong, make a difference, and are part of something purposeful.

Our Commitment to Quality

Quality is a central component of the Ontario Early Years Policy Framework, and programming will be guided by the principles of the Early Learning Framework:

- Early childhood sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, health, and well-being.
- Play and inquiry are learning approaches that capitalize on children’s natural curiosity and exuberance.
- An intentional, planned program supports learning and smooth transitions.
- Partnerships with families and communities are essential.
- Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion is vital.
- Knowledgeable, responsive, and reflective educators are essential.

Goals for Every Child

We strive to ensure that every child in our care:

- Feels a deep sense of **belonging**—connected to others and confident in their place in the world.
- Builds strong foundations for **health and well-being**, both physical and emotional.
- Is actively **engaged** in learning through play, inquiry, and exploration.
- Develops the ability to **express** themselves in a variety of meaningful ways.

“Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.”

— Maria Montessori

Why Relationships Matter

Strong relationships are at the heart of quality early learning. *How Does Learning Happen?* reminds us that when educators and families build trust, stay connected, and share insights, children benefit.

Daily check-ins, shared observations, open communication—these small moments create a sense of unity between home and school. Families know their children best, and educators offer a complementary perspective. Together, we create a powerful circle of support around each child.

Programs Offered

Bright Child Montessori offers high-quality, licensed care for children from **12 months to 6 years old**, with programming tailored to each stage of development. Our classrooms follow the Montessori approach while aligning with Ontario's early years pedagogy, *How Does Learning Happen?* Each environment is designed to nurture independence, creativity, and a love of learning.

Infant (12–18 months)

A gentle start to the Montessori journey. Our infant program provides a warm, responsive space where the youngest children feel secure and cared for. Educators follow each child's natural rhythm, supporting motor development, language acquisition, and social connection through calm routines, open-ended materials, and loving attention.

Toddler (18 months–2½ years)

Toddlers are curious explorers, eager to try everything themselves. Our toddler classrooms are thoughtfully prepared to support movement, communication, and independence. Children practice dressing, toileting, pouring, and cleaning with real tools—building confidence in themselves and trust in their world.

Casa (2½–4 years)

The Casa program introduces children to the heart of Montessori education during a period of rapid growth and discovery. Designed for children ages 2½ to 4, this environment encourages independence, concentration, and joy in learning.

Children engage with beautifully crafted materials across practical life, sensorial exploration, early language, and mathematics. They learn how to care for themselves, for others, and for their environment—developing confidence and a strong sense of purpose.

Educators guide gently, offering just enough support to spark curiosity and success while allowing children to move freely and work at their own pace. It's in Casa that many children first experience what it means to be part of a community of learners.

Kindergarten (4–6 years)

Our Kindergarten program builds upon the Casa foundation, offering enriched learning for children ages 4 to 6. As part of the CWELCC system, families benefit from reduced fees while their child receives individualized, high-quality care in a Montessori environment.

Kindergarten children take on leadership roles in the classroom, mentor younger peers, and dive deeper into academic exploration. They work with advanced materials in literacy, numeracy, geography, culture, and science—all while continuing to build executive functioning, empathy, and creative thinking.

Highlights of our Kindergarten program:

- A strong academic foundation without pressure or comparison
- Individualized lessons tailored to developmental readiness

- Emphasis on independence, critical thinking, and problem solving
- Daily time outdoors, including nature walks, physical play, and seasonal exploration
- Thoughtful preparation for a smooth transition to Grade 1—whether in public, private, or continued Montessori education

Children graduate from Bright Child Montessori not only school-ready, but life-ready: grounded, confident, and full of possibility.

Curriculum

At Bright Child Montessori, learning is an experience that goes far beyond worksheets and checklists. Our curriculum blends Montessori principles with rich, real-world exploration—nurturing the whole child: mind, body, and spirit.

Children don't just learn to read and count—they learn to question, to create, to lead, and to care.

Our classrooms are alive with curiosity. Children explore the solar system, learn how plants grow, practice empathy through storytelling, and discover the beauty of language and math through hands-on materials. Outdoors, they build forts, ride bikes, dig in gardens, and chase the wind—learning from nature and each other every day.

By graduation, our students are curious, capable, brave, and compassionate—ready for whatever comes next.

All programs include:

- Montessori work periods tailored to each child's stage of development
- Daily outdoor play and forest exploration in all seasons
- Yoga, stretching, and mindful movement
- French language exposure through songs, stories, and conversation
- Scratch-made, organic-inspired meals and snacks prepared on site
- Music, art, and practical life experiences that build creativity and independence

A Day in the Life

Children thrive on rhythm—and at Bright Child, each day follows a gentle, predictable flow filled with **nourishment, movement, creativity, and connection.**

Here's a glimpse of what a typical day might look like:

- **6:30–9:00am – Arrival & Peaceful Play**

Children are welcomed one by one and invited to ease into the day with calm, thoughtful activities.

• 9:00am – Greetings & O Canada

We gather as a class to greet the day with songs, connection, and reflection.

• 9:05am – Breakfast

A wholesome, homemade meal thoughtfully prepared to fuel growing bodies and curious minds.

• 9:30–10:30am or 10:30–11:30am – Montessori Work Period

A carefully crafted circle time sets the tone for the day. From there, children engage in self-directed, hands-on learning with beautifully crafted Montessori materials.

• 9:30–10:30am or 10:30–11:30am – Outdoor Classroom & Gross Motor Play

Children stretch their legs and their imaginations through climbing, running, building, and exploring—strengthening their connection to the natural world.

• 11:30am – Wash Up & Lunch

Lunch is shared together, building community, independence, and practicing **grace and courtesy** through real-life routines.

• 12:00–1:30pm – Rest or Outdoor Enrichment

Younger children rest, while older ones enjoy quiet reading followed by extended time in nature. This midday pause offers space to reset, reflect, and refocus before the afternoon begins.

• 1:30–2:30pm – Montessori Learning Period (Afternoon Cycle)

Following a short meditation, children return to focused work with opportunities for deeper exploration and one-on-one guidance from educators.

• 2:30pm – Snack & Reflection

After washing up, children enjoy a nourishing snack followed by story time, journaling, or a gratitude circle.

• 3:00–5:30pm – Pick-Up & Extended Play

Music, art, outdoor adventures, and open-ended play help children unwind at their own pace.

Meals & Nutrition

Food is love—and at Bright Child, it's also a philosophy.

We believe that nourishing a child's body is just as important as nurturing their mind and spirit. Our meal program has taken years to refine, and we're proud of what it's become. We've seen the difference real food made in our own children's lives—and we're committed to giving yours the same.

We serve three wholesome meals each day, using whole ingredients and making the best choices possible when it comes to sourcing. Some items are always organic; others are organic or pesticide-free when in season. We grow herbs and vegetables in our own gardens, and in the warmer months, children help harvest the food they later see on their plates. Our meats are grass-fed and free-range, sourced from farms that raise animals without artificial hormones or routine antibiotics.

A Taste of What We Serve

Children are encouraged to use proper table etiquette, explore new foods, and participate in cleanup—building independence, confidence, and a healthy relationship with food.

- **Breakfast** might include cinnamon raisin bread baked in-house, parfaits with organic Greek yogurt and berries, scrambled free-range eggs, fluffy pancakes, baked French toast, or warm berry blast muffins.
- **Lunch** could be roasted chicken with root vegetables, homemade meatloaf and garlic buns, sweet potato shepherd's pie, or pasta with veggie-loaded tomato sauce (yes, we hide a lot in there). We also serve hand-stretched pizza with fresh dough and mozzarella, crispy chicken fingers prepared on-site, and hearty chili with warm garlic bread.
- **Afternoon Snacks** feature comfort foods like chocolate avocado brownies, oatmeal chocolate chip cookies, carrot muffins made with Greek yogurt, apple crisp, veggie sticks with tzatziki, and soft, warm naan—all baked fresh and made with real ingredients.

We offer a variety of milk options with lunch, always serve filtered water, and ensure every menu is peanut-free. Dietary substitutions are made with care and compassion, and our four-week rotating menu is available to families on Lillio.

Please note: For children with allergies or dietary restrictions, substitutions may occasionally include packaged or frozen options—such as gluten-free products or dairy alternatives. We do our best to maintain quality and thoughtfulness in every meal we serve.

At Bright Child, food is more than fuel—it's a daily ritual of joy, community, and nourishment.

Birthday Snacks

We love to celebrate birthdays at Bright Child. Each child is honoured with a special Montessori tradition called the **Walk Around the Sun**, where we reflect on their journey and growth year by year—creating a meaningful moment of celebration, community, and pride.

Families are welcome to send in a special snack to help mark the occasion. Just give your child's educators a heads-up a few days in advance so we can help coordinate and make the day feel extra special.

Please keep in mind:

- All snacks must be **peanut-free**
- Choose items made with **simple, wholesome ingredients**
- **Highly processed treats** with long ingredient lists may not be served

Homemade options like muffins or cupcakes are welcome—as long as we can review the ingredients ahead of time. If you're unsure what to bring, we're happy to offer suggestions.

Let's keep birthdays sweet, heartfelt, and aligned with our culture of care.

2025 Tuition Information

Bright Child Montessori offers **full-time enrollment only**, with fees set according to Ministry-approved base rates and reduced through our participation in the **Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC)** system.

Program	Base Fee (Ministry Approved)	CWELCC Reduction	Parent Fee	Monthly Rate
Infant	\$58.50/day	– \$36.50/day	\$22.00/day	\$476.67
Toddler	\$55.80/day	–\$33.80/day	\$22.00/day	\$476.67
Casa	\$51.30/day	–\$29.30/day	\$22.00/day	\$476.67
Kindergarten	\$44.00/day	–\$23.21/day	\$20.79/day	\$450.45

💡 *Monthly fees are based on 260 billable days per year, divided evenly across 12 months. This ensures predictable billing for families and supports consistent budgeting for the school—regardless of how many days are in a given month.*

📄 *CWELCC reductions are provincially regulated and reviewed annually.*

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due **on the 1st of each month**. You'll receive your invoice by email, and payments can be made in one of the following ways:

- **Credit card** – directly through the invoice link
- **E-transfer** – sent to payments@brightchild.ca

It is each family's responsibility to ensure tuition is paid on time. If you're ever having trouble making a payment, please reach out—we're here to help.

Late Fees

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, please reach out to us at office@brightchild.ca to make arrangements.

If payment is not received by the **7th**, a **\$50 late fee** will be applied unless prior arrangements have been made.

Fees, Funding & Financial Support

CWELCC (Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care)

Bright Child Montessori is enrolled in the CWELCC system, which offers reduced fees for families with children under the age of six.

As of January 1, 2025, CWELCC provides substantial fee reductions, with a goal of reaching an average of \$10/day per child by 2026. Currently, the **maximum daily fee for eligible families is capped at \$22/day**, depending on your child's age group and program.

Eligible families pay a percentage of our government-approved base fees, with the remainder covered by CWELCC. Additional charges—such as late fees or field trips—are considered non-base fees and are not subsidized.

If your child turns six during the year, they remain eligible for CWELCC until **June 30** of that calendar year.

Tax Deductions & Credits

💡 Child Care Expense Deduction

You can still claim up to **\$8,000 per child** (under age 7) on your personal tax return. This reduces your taxable income and can significantly lower the amount of tax you owe.

💡 Ontario Child Care Tax Credit (CARE)

Families with household incomes under **\$150,000/year** may also qualify for a **refundable tax credit** based on their child care expenses. The amount is calculated using your federal child care deduction and a provincial rate based on income.

Tax Receipts:

Please keep your emailed invoices—once payment is processed, each invoice is marked "**Paid**" and serves as your official tax receipt. We do **not issue separate year-end receipts**.

Fee Assistance (Subsidy)

Families may qualify for additional **fee subsidy** through the **City of Windsor and the Province of Ontario**.

To be eligible:

- You must be working or attending school
- Your subsidy amount is based on household income and number of children in care

You can complete a “person-to-person” fee subsidy application by calling the **City of Windsor** at **519-255-5312**, or visit their website for a subsidy calculator.

Hours of Operation

Bright Child Montessori is open year-round, Monday to Friday, from **6:30am to 5:30pm**.

If you require extended care outside these hours, please speak with our admin team—we may be able to accommodate.

We are closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day (*may include an extended long weekend*)
- Civic Holiday
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- **Christmas Break** (*typically includes Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day, and may extend up to a full week depending on the calendar*)
- New Year's Eve

In the event of extreme or unsafe weather, we may need to close. We do **not** close when buses are cancelled, but we do follow **county-wide school closures**. Families will be notified of any emergency closure as early as possible.

Age Groupings & Rate Changes

Children move through our age groupings (Infant, Toddler, Casa, Kindergarten) at different times based on their development and availability.

To remain fair and consistent, **tuition rates are based on your child's age, not the classroom they are in**. This allows flexibility in transitions while ensuring clear and predictable billing.

Vacations & Absences

Your child's monthly tuition holds their space in our program, regardless of vacation or absence.

This includes time away during **Christmas Break, March Break, summer travel, or illness**. Because your child's space cannot be offered to another family during that time, fees are not adjusted.

Schedule Changes

Our teaching teams are scheduled based on the hours you provided at registration. If your needs change, please provide **at least two weeks' notice**.

We will do our best to accommodate, but changes depend on availability. If care is extended without prior notice, an **additional fee may apply**.

Arrival, Departure & Communication

Arrival (6:30–9:00am)

Your child will be welcomed at the door by one of our educators. If arriving **after 9:00am**, please use our **text line** to let us know you've arrived—someone will meet you at the door.

Children are gently guided inside, supported through their arrival routine, and brought to class with care. If your child is having a hard time saying goodbye, rest assured—we'll offer comfort and connection to help them ease into the day. In most cases, children settle quickly once they're engaged in the classroom.

A consistent morning routine and arriving on time can make a big difference in helping your child feel calm, confident, and ready for the day.

Departure (3:00–5:30pm)

To keep pick-up smooth and efficient, please use the **text line** to notify us when you're about **5–10 minutes away**. This allows us time to prepare your child and meet you at the door.

While we aim to be prompt, please be patient—educators are often bringing more than one child at a time to the front.

Please ensure anyone picking up your child is listed on their Safe Pick-Up form. If someone is unfamiliar to our team, they will be asked to show ID at the door.

Security & Safety

Our building is equipped with a **secure entry system**—access is granted only to staff via key fob. All other visitors must ring the bell and be greeted by a team member.

We also have a **video surveillance system** monitoring all entrances, exits, and classrooms to ensure a safe environment for all.

Communication

Face-to-Face

Pick-up time is a great opportunity for quick check-ins with your child's teacher. For longer conversations or detailed updates, we're happy to schedule a meeting at any time.

Text line

Use our **text line** for:

- Notifying us of a late arrival or early pick-up
- Confirming your ETA for end-of-day pick-up
- Brief messages about absences or quick updates

Note: Messages sent through the text line are forwarded to the entire team. For private or sensitive matters, please email the office directly.

Our text line number was shared in your welcome email. Feel free to share it with anyone authorized to pick up your child.

Lillio (formerly HiMama)

We use the **Lillio app** to share daily updates on your child's routine—including meals, toileting, naps, and moments of joy. You'll also receive photos and progress notes throughout the day.

Lillio is a fantastic tool for reinforcing learning at home and for direct communication with your child's classroom teacher.

Email

For any administrative matters—like **billing, schedule changes, or enrollment questions**—please email us at:

 office@brightchild.ca

Backpacks & Take-Home Work

Please send a **labeled backpack at the beginning of the week**. It will be used to carry your child's belongings and any finished work, and will come home **at the end of the week**.

Work is sent home weekly to allow time for deeper learning and project completion. Since Montessori learning is hands-on, don't worry if you don't see papers every day—much of your child's growth happens through materials, movement, and conversation.

What to Bring & How to Prepare

Footwear

Children move a lot throughout the day—indoors and out—so proper footwear makes a big difference.

Please send a **pair of properly sized running shoes** that will stay at school for indoor use. Shoes should be comfortable, secure, and easy for your child to put on and take off independently whenever possible.

- Outdoor shoes must be removed in the front lobby to help keep our learning spaces clean.
- Indoor shoes are used daily for active play, gross motor work, and movement-based activities.
- Don't forget to label both shoes—many families buy the same pair, and unlabeled shoes tend to go home on the wrong feet.

Change of Clothes

Please send a **seasonally appropriate spare outfit** in a labeled Ziploc bag. Extra clothing is helpful for spills, outdoor messes, and occasional bathroom accidents.

- Include socks, underwear, shirt, and bottoms.
- All items should be clearly labeled.
- Soiled clothing will be sent home at the end of the day.

Outdoor Play

We spend **a lot of time outdoors**—every day, in every season.

Please dress your child for the weather:

- **Spring/Summer:** Hats, breathable layers, sturdy sandals with back straps (no flip-flops), or running shoes.
- **Fall/Winter:** Snow pants, snow boots, warm jacket, toque, and **waterproof mittens** (cotton mittens get soggy fast).

☀️ Apply **sunscreen and bug spray before school** during warmer months. If needed, we'll reapply in the afternoon.

We don't shy away from a bit of dirt or a light rain—outdoor play is where so much learning happens.

Toileting & Diapering

Toilet Learning

Toileting typically begins in the **toddler classroom around 18 months**. We're ready to start as soon as you are!

To begin, we'll need:

- 4 full changes of clothing
- A commitment to continue the process at home

We're happy to share our **toilet training tips** with you—just ask!

● Please note:

- The **Casa classroom does not have diapering facilities.**
- Children over **30 months** are expected to be fully toilet trained before transitioning to Casa2.

Diapers & Wipes

If your child is still in diapers, please provide a **large supply** of diapers and wipes. These will be stored and used for your child only.

We'll notify you when supplies are running low.

In the **infant room**, please also bring any additional items such as:

- Breast milk or formula
- Bottles
- Diaper cream
- Comfort items

Nap Time

Toddler and Casa children who nap will rest after lunch on their own individual cot with a freshly laundered sheet.

Please send:

- A blanket
- Any comfort item your child may still use (e.g., a small stuffed animal)

Note: Soothers are typically phased out early in the program, so please check with your child's educator if you're unsure whether to send one.

Photos & Media

We like to say childhood is full of wonder—and we do our best to capture it.

Our educators take tons of photos and videos throughout the day. You'll see many of them posted in **Lillio**, giving you a real-time window into your child's world—messy art, big smiles, muddy boots and all.

Sometimes we use those sweet moments for:

- Montessori tutorials and behind-the-scenes peeks
- Social media updates that show what we're all about

- The odd promo video (because yes, we still need to keep the school full!)
- Local news features or community recognition

We keep things respectful and focused on celebrating the joy of learning. And while we're not big on polished marketing, a little buzz now and then goes a long way.

It's tough (and honestly a bit heartbreaking) to crop one child out of every photo—so we ask for media consent at registration. If anything ever comes up or you change your mind, we're always happy to chat.

Outdoor Learning & Community Connection

Forest School

Our Forest School program runs in the **spring and fall** for children aged 3 and up. On Monday mornings, we board a bus and head to **Holiday Beach Conservation Area**, where children explore the natural world with all five senses.

There are no walls—just open meadows and winding trails, where the sky becomes our ceiling and the forest becomes the playground. Children climb trees, dig in the dirt, walk the shoreline, and splash through puddles. They learn to use tools like hand drills and saws, build forts, spot turtles from the bridge, and even climb to the top of the Hawk Tower. Fire safety is introduced in age-appropriate ways, and the entire experience is grounded in **respect, curiosity, and connection**.

Community Walks

We love our community—and we make the most of it. With so many parks, paths, and local gems within walking distance, our students regularly head out to explore.

Outings may include:

- Trips to the park or splash pad
- Food donations to local organizations
- Nature walks and litter cleanups
- Ice cream strolls or seasonal surprises

All community walks follow our internal safety policies and Ministry of Education guidelines. Supervision ratios are maintained at all times.

Health & Medication

Illness Policy

To protect the health of all children and staff, please keep your child home if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing or congestion with flu-like symptoms
- Contagious rash or unexplained skin irritation

! Important:

Children must be **symptom-free for 24 hours** before returning to school, or 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

Please **do not give fever-reducing medication** before drop-off, as we cannot accept children whose symptoms have been masked by medication.

If your child becomes ill during the day, we will contact you to pick them up promptly.

All children must be well enough to participate in outdoor play, as we are unable to provide supervision indoors during these times.

Medication

We are happy to administer **prescription medications** as needed, provided they:

- Are prescribed by a doctor
- Are in the original labelled container
- Are not expired
- Are accompanied by a completed **Medical Authorization Form**

Please hand medication directly to a teacher or supervisor. It will be stored securely and given according to the instructions on the form. Don't forget to collect any remaining medication at the end of the day.

Policies & Expectations**Withdrawal & Discharge Policy**

If you wish to withdraw your child from Bright Child Montessori, we require **four weeks' written notice**. You are responsible for tuition during this notice period, whether or not your child attends.

We work hard to support each child's unique needs, but there may be instances where we are unable to provide the level of care required. In such cases, families will be kept informed through ongoing communication with educators and administration.

Bright Child Montessori reserves the right to discontinue care for any of the following reasons:

- Non-payment of fees
- Inappropriate or disruptive parent conduct

- Inability to meet the individual needs of a child within our program structure
-

Parental Involvement

Your involvement makes a difference! We encourage all families to stay up to date through **Lillio** and our **text line**. If you're not receiving communications, please let us know and we'll get you connected.

We also invite you to attend:

- School concerts and special events
- Parent information nights
- Workshops and classroom showcases

We understand not everyone can attend every event—but when parents are engaged, children thrive.

Volunteers & Co-op Students

Volunteers and co-op students are a valued part of our learning environment. While they support educators and contribute meaningfully to programming, they **do not replace staff** and are **never left alone with children**.

We proudly host **Early Childhood Education (ECE) students from St. Clair College** as part of their hands-on training, as well as **co-op students from General Amherst and other local high schools** who are exploring careers in child development and education.

Key guidelines:

- Volunteers and students are **not counted in staff-to-child ratios**
 - They must be **supervised at all times**
 - A **Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)** must be submitted before beginning placement
-

Smoke-Free Policy

Bright Child Montessori is a **100% smoke-free and vape-free environment**. This includes all indoor and outdoor areas, playgrounds, pathways, and parking lots—whether children are present or not.

Prohibited Practices

Bright Child Montessori upholds a strict standard of care. The following practices are **strictly prohibited** under any circumstance:

- Locking facility exits from the inside

- Using locked rooms or structures to isolate children
- Physical, verbal, or emotional abuse
- Depriving a child of food, shelter, clothing, or comfort
- Corporal punishment
- Harsh or degrading actions that humiliate a child or undermine their self-worth

If a prohibited practice is observed or reported, it will be addressed immediately and in accordance with our **Behaviour Guidance Policy** and staff disciplinary procedures.

Parent Issues & Concerns Policy

Purpose

We believe strong communication and trust between families and staff are essential. This policy outlines a clear, respectful process for addressing any issues or concerns that may arise during your child's time at Bright Child Montessori.

Our Commitment

- We encourage all families to play an active role in our school community.
- Parents are welcome to speak with staff regularly about their child's experiences, development, and well-being.
- All concerns brought forward—whether verbal, written, or via email—will be **taken seriously** and addressed in a timely, respectful manner.

How We Handle Concerns

- You will receive an **initial response within two business days**.
- Concerns will be investigated fairly, respectfully, and without bias.
- We will provide updates throughout the process, and resolutions will be communicated either verbally or in writing (upon request).
- We aim to resolve matters in a way that satisfies all parties and protects the privacy of everyone involved.

Confidentiality

All concerns are handled with discretion. Personal details will only be shared when necessary, such as with:

- The Ministry of Education
- The College of Early Childhood Educators
- Law enforcement
- A Children's Aid Society (as required by law)

Conduct

We are committed to maintaining a safe, respectful environment for all families, children, and staff.

- Harassment, discrimination, or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.
- If a conversation becomes uncomfortable or inappropriate, staff or parents may end the interaction and report it to a supervisor or licensee.

Concerns About Child Safety

All individuals in Ontario are legally required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

If you suspect a child may be at risk:

- You are encouraged to contact the **Children's Aid Society (CAS)** directly.
- Staff members who become aware of such concerns are also required by law to report them, under the **Child, Youth and Family Services Act (Duty to Report)**.

For more information:

www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse

Emergency Management

In the event of a serious incident or emergency, families will be contacted immediately via **email and/or SMS**.

Our full **Emergency Management Policy** is available for viewing online:

 <https://brightchild.ca/policies>

This document includes detailed procedures for:

- Evacuations
- Lockdowns


- Shelter-in-place situations
- Communication plans
- Reunification procedures

Your child's safety is always our top priority. We regularly review and practice emergency procedures with both staff and children to ensure we're ready for any situation.

Licensing & Compliance

Bright Child Montessori is licensed by the **Ministry of Education, Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch** under the **Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)**.

More information can be found at:

 www.ontario.ca/page/licensed-child-care