



**Bright Water  
Montessori and Bright  
Water Elementary School**

**Parent Handbook  
2010-2011**

2410 Girard Avenue North  
Minneapolis, MN 55411  
(612) 302-3410

## **Bright Water School Parent Handbook**

### **Mission:**

Bright Water inspires passion for learning in an intentionally diverse Montessori community.

**Vision:** Bright Water seeks to be a school without an achievement gap and a model for North Minneapolis. Bright Water School is inspired by the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori and sets high expectations for all children. In partnership with parents we guide children to develop their individual gifts while preparing them for life in a cooperative community and a changing world. We nurture independence, a love of learning, cooperation, creative thinking, and respect for self, others and the environment.

### **Rules of Respect**

The following rules of respect are an expectation of behavior by children, staff and parents in their life at school:

1. Respect for self
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for materials, tools, and equipment
4. Respect for the environment

## Bright Water Commitments

**Bright Water Montessori School (the preschool) and Bright Water Elementary, and the staff, students, and families that make up our community, are committed to a single, unified mission and vision.** Even though the preschool and the elementary school maintain separate governance and financial systems, both organizations work to provide a seamless educational experience to children from the age of 16 months through 12 years.

**Bright Water is committed to joyful learning at each stage of development.** Education begins at birth and every component of a Bright Water education - toddler, preschool, and elementary - is intentionally designed to meet the unique needs of that stage of development.\* These components work together to create learners who internally motivated, who love to learn, and who are able to be active members of a community.

**Bright Water is committed to an authentic implementation of the Montessori methodology and environment.** All the school's lead teachers have completed Montessori training accredited by either the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) or by the American Montessori Association (AMS). We adhere to the Montessori principles of the prepared environment, multi-age classes, and morning and afternoon work periods including at least one three-hour work period for elementary students and a two-hour period for Toddlers.

**Bright Water is committed to working in partnership with parents.** Parents are a child's first and most powerful teachers. We know that education takes place both at home and at school. Children will receive the best possible education only when their parents and their school work together.

**Bright Water is committed to operating on Minneapolis' Northside.** Bright Water is the only Montessori option available to families living in North Minneapolis. We have been a member of the Northside community since the founding of the preschool and we want to be a positive force in the revitalization of North Minneapolis.

**Bright Water is committed to environmental stewardship.** Care of the natural world is a logical extension of the Montessori teaching about care for the environment. As children grow, they move from lessons in the Toddler about sorting recyclables, compost, and garbage to lessons about gardening in the Children's House and to lessons on conservation and energy consumption in the Elementary classes.

**Bright Water is committed to diversity.** A Montessori education prepares children for life. In today's global community, children must learn to live and work with people and ideas drawn from multiple sources, backgrounds and cultures. Bright Water actively recruits families from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. We welcome families with non-traditional structures.

**Bright Water is committed to offering a high-quality preschool program that is financially affordable to families from all income levels.** We know that high-quality early education leads to many individual and community benefits such as less gang and drug activity, fewer teen pregnancies, and higher rates of graduation from both high school and college. To keep its program affordable, Bright Water maintains a scholarship fund that is open to all enrolled families.

**Bright Water's commitment to affordability carries with it a significant requirement for fundraising.** Only 59% of the preschool budget is supported with direct tuition payments. Raising

the remaining 41% requires the implementation of a detailed fundraising plan that depends on the shared efforts and contributions of staff, board members, parents, and other community members.

## **Introduction**

This handbook is designed to help you better understand Bright Water Montessori and Bright Water Elementary School, its philosophy and policies. Please read it thoroughly as it will help answer questions you may have about your child's day. This handbook is divided into three sections:

Family Expectations and contract  
Program Description  
Policies and Procedures

## **Facts about Bright Water**

- **Initially funded by a grant from the Hiawatha Education Foundation.**
- **Started in January 2004 with a Toddler class (16 months to 33 months) and a Primary class (3 to 6 year olds).**
- **We are licensed for 14 toddlers.**
- **We are licensed for 29 children in each Children's House class**
- **We updated our licensing in 2008 to enlarge our Primary classes and to offer Elementary after-school care**
- **We were authorized to open our charter school in 2008**
- **We offer a full day Montessori program five days a week from 7:15 in the morning to 5:30 at night**
- **To contact the school please call (612)302-3410 or in case of emergency, call Ann Luce's cell phone (612)432-6243**

## **Parental Expectations for Families at Bright Water**

- At Bright Water, we are all here for the well-being of the students. **Parents are expected to be involved.** Families are expected to work together with the Bright Water staff to assure that each child is well cared for and is able to reach their full potential within the school. We will ask families to give us all relevant information that will help us in working with children. We want to support the work of the parents or guardians, and we ask to be supported as educators. **The two Parent Teacher conferences are mandatory for each family.** We also invite parents to visit and observe. We will meet with a parent whenever they wish, or respond by phone if needed. Please always call with questions or issues.
- **Students must be here on time in order to start the day with the rest of the class.** School begins at 8:45am. Families who wish for their children to have breakfast should arrive at 8:40. The buses arrive at 8:40 and students may have a quick breakfast before school. Families who arrive after 9:00am should report to the office so their children can be escorted to class.
- **Regular attendance is vital.** Children who miss a lot of school will miss many lessons, and are often behind their peers academically and out of touch with the social environment. Especially in the Elementary, regular attendance is required. If a student

misses more than 5 days, we must report that child as being truant. This information is reported to the MN Department of Education.

- We believe that students do their best when they have an adequate amount of **sleep**. We ask that families make sure elementary children have at least 9 hours of sleep and preschool children have at least 10-11 hours of sleep. Sleep will assure that children retain what they have learned and are able to be their best each day.
- **Read your Parent Handbook** to understand more about your child's education and daily routine. Read the Wednesday Notes to know what is happening at Bright Water. Classrooms will also send home newsletters to inform families. It is very helpful when this information is understood by the family.
- **We ask that you read to your children daily.** Children develop a love of books when they are read to. This is also the best way to develop vocabulary, deepen comprehension, and become critical thinkers. Even if your child is reading fluently, please take the time to read to them each night. It is a wonderful bonding experience.

### **Program Description and Philosophy**

Bright Water Montessori School opened in February 2004 with two classrooms, a Toddler (Infant Community) class and a Primary or Children's House (3 to 6 year olds) class. Bright Water Montessori School was initially funded by a grant from the Hiawatha Education Foundation. The classrooms are authentic Montessori classrooms, inspired by the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori. All head Montessori teachers have had AMI Montessori training. In the Spring of 2007 the school became accredited through Association Montessori International or AMI.

Montessori environments are "prepared environments" meaning that the structure and materials within the environment are developmentally appropriate, structured from within and sequentially presented on the shelf and to the child. The classrooms are beautiful, appealing and logically structured. The natural materials, the neatness, and the lack of plastic, as well as the freedom with which the children move are often striking to the observer. Children are allowed to choose any materials that they have been presented and they may work with that material for as long as they wish. Children are free to interact with each other, work together or be by themselves. Visitors are impressed with the love with which the children choose their work and enjoy their life in the classroom.

Parents who wish to review the child care program are encouraged to read the Program Plan which is available in the Bright Water office. Parents may also observe in the Montessori classroom, view the teacher's albums which have written lessons for all the materials in the classrooms, and borrow books from the school on Montessori education.

### **The Toddler Community**

The Toddler Community or classroom consists of 12 to 14 toddlers, a Montessori trained teacher and one or two assistants. The program is an all day Montessori program with the option of children being there half days. Breakfast and lunch as well as a snack are served. The children have time for free choice of work which includes a practical life area, a small motor area, a language area, science shelf and music shelf. There is also group time with stories, music, songs and finger-plays. The children have time to go outdoors at least once a day, and spend time in large motor areas. For full day children, there is an opportunity to nap in the afternoon.

**The classroom is divided into several areas: Practical life, Eye-hand coordination materials, Language Enrichment, Plants and Science, Music materials, and a quiet reading area. The toddler classroom provides for a variety of activities that use different types of equipment and materials.** Individual activities are set up on trays or baskets, and children choose freely. With toddlers, one of the challenges is to have the children return the work to the shelves and to clean up after themselves. Children are encouraged but not forced to come to group activities. They participate in preparing food for lunches and snacks, setting the tables, clearing the tables, scraping dishes, and washing dishes (These dishes are later sterilized in the dishwasher). These activities, along with other Practical Life activities, help build coordination, concentration, a sense of order, and greater independence.

In the Toddler Community, there is a great emphasis on language development, developing large and small motor coordination, and the development of independence. These are the goals, and all activities contribute to the coordination, independence, and language skills of the child. Part of becoming a more independent person is learning to dress one's self, learning to express one's self, and becoming toilet trained. Toilet training is done in conjunction with the family when the child seems ready, and in a matter of fact manner with no rewards or punishments. The school has a supply of training underwear. The child who urinates or defecates is simply helped to change into clean underwear. Diapers are used for those children who are not yet interested in toileting independently. Diapering procedures are approved by the MVNA health consultant and posted in all diapering areas.

The toddler classroom is joyful and spontaneous. The children are remarkably empathetic with one another. Children may mourn together when one child is upset, but they rejoice together as well. Toddlers are exuberant and inspired and the classroom must be flexible to adapt to the needs of the group.

## **The Children's House**

The Primary classroom is also referred to as the Children's House. It is a special prepared environment for children from the ages of three years to six years. Bright Water's Children's House classrooms have up to 29 children, one Montessori trained teacher and two assistants, or two trained teachers in the classroom with an assistant. The program is an all-day program with the option of children staying for half day. Breakfast is served to early arrivals. Lunch is served and snack is available in the mornings and afternoons. For much of the children's day they may choose work within the classroom. There is also group time for music, stories, movement, and the silence game. Children have time to play outside at least once a day and sometimes more often. There is also the opportunity to use a large motor space.

Children are free to choose work from the beautiful and well-defined areas of the classroom. The classroom teacher guides the children by presenting how to use these concrete materials. Working with the materials not only helps develop coordination, concentration, independence, and a sense of order; it also helps the child become more disciplined and accomplished. Children in a Montessori classroom usually have healthy self-esteem because they are helped to do things themselves. The children have ownership of the environment and take good care of it, returning materials with care.

**In the Montessori Children's House there are a wide variety of activities utilizing varied equipment and materials in five distinct areas which make up the Prepared Environment:**

- The **Practical Life** activities include many of the tasks that children see as part of the daily routine of their culture, such as pouring liquids, preparing foods, washing hands, dusting, sweeping and taking care of the environment. This area enhances the development of hand-eye

coordination, gross motor control, and order through care of self, care of the environment, development of social relations, and coordination of physical movement. The Practical Life materials move the child into the world as well as into their culture. They give the child a great sense of accomplishment to take care of their environment, themselves and others.

- The **Sensorial** materials are specially designed to help children learn accurate information about physical properties of the environment. Each piece of sensorial material isolates one quality such as dimension, color, weight, smell, or sound. This area enables the child to order, classify, and describe sensory impressions in relation to length, width, temperature, mass, color, pitch and tone.
- The **Mathematics** area makes use of concrete manipulative materials to promote the child's innate mathematical ability in its early stages. These materials enable the child to internalize concepts of number, symbol, quantity, sequence, operations and memorization of basic facts.
- The **Language** area includes oral language development, written expression, reading, and the study of grammar, creative dramatics, and children's literature. Basic skills in writing and reading are developed through the use of sandpaper letters, moveable alphabet, and various presentations, allowing children to link sounds with letter symbols and to express their thoughts through writing.
- **Cultural** activities expose the child to basics in geography, history, life sciences, and earth sciences. Music, art, science and geography and movement education are part of the integrated cultural curriculum.
- Development of the **Social community** happens as a part of everyday life in the classroom as children learn how to live well together. Older children are responsive to the needs of the younger children. Children can choose to work alone or with others, honoring the needs of the self while learning to live well together. This balance between the freedom of the individual and the needs of the group is fundamental to all Montessori environments.
- **Physical Education** is offered through playing games and using the play equipment outside as well as inside. Children also refine their large motor skills when doing many of the Practical Life activities.

The preschool environment unifies the social, physical and intellectual functioning of the child. Its important function is to provide children with an early and general foundation that includes a positive attitude toward school, inner security, and a sense of order, pride in the environment, curiosity, concentration, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility for the self and for the group. Thus, through interacting with the Montessori environment, the child constructs him or herself in a positive manner. This benefits the child in school and in life.

### **Elementary curriculum:**

By age seven and through the elementary school years, the child is driven by a natural curiosity and tendency to explore the expansive interconnectedness within and across disciplines such as the arts, math, and social studies. Dr. Montessori used the term "cosmic education" to refer to this stage of education. The Great Lessons are at the center of Montessori elementary education. These Lessons are stories that explore the beginnings of the universe, the formation of the stars and planets, the progress of plant and animal life, the arrival of humans and language, and the origins of mathematics, geometry, and the sciences. From these stories the child develops sensitivity to the way things live, to the interdependence of life, and to the fundamental needs of human beings. Timelines, charts, and research cards of human needs help the child in independent study and inspire more research in geology, sciences,

biology, geography and history. Montessori elementary children use their imagination and reasoning minds to explore all the parts of the universe;. They may be engaged in a variety of learning activities at the same time.

At the center of the Montessori elementary classroom is the well-trained Montessori teacher. This professional is an “enlightened generalists” with knowledge deep enough to know details that add to the Great Lessons and connect the details into a big picture across the disciplines. The teacher’s role is to be the storyteller of our history and our world as we understand it, to inspire the children and then to guide them in acquiring the skills to pursue their interests and to explore the relationships among the different subject matters. This teacher is also trained in areas of child development. Because the Montessori student spends three years in the same classroom, the elementary teacher can be keenly tuned in to the unique personality of each child. This sensitivity permits the teacher to guide each child into areas of natural interest. The teacher or guide is in communication with the child and the family to help the child maximize his or her educational opportunities.

Much of the work of the elementary child is collaborative. The child learns in partnership with others through small group lessons and projects. At different times, each child is both a teacher and a learner. Because each child spends three years in the same classroom environment, the students have the freedom to explore subject areas as they become interested in them. The teachers, through the use of daily observation notes, track each student’s use of the materials and selection of subject matter. The teacher uses the child’s interests to guide him or her to an exploration of all subject areas. The subjects that are covered in the Montessori classroom include mathematics, geometry, language, geography, science, art and music. Bright Water Elementary Charter School will add Spanish through the use of teachers and assistants.

Because the classroom can not always answer all of the child’s questions, the elementary child is involved in “going out” to explore beyond the classroom. The going out of the Montessori classroom is based on individual or small group interest in extensions of study. The Bright Water Elementary Charter School students will extend the classroom into the city by arranging a visit to a museum, library, factory, or other site that can provide them with information that will enhance their studies. Going out usually involves a small group of students with a parent or staff person. Whole classes also take field trips to museums, agencies, or performances to learn more about the environment and city in which they live.

Living in the world for the elementary child also involves working actively to make it a better place. Care of one’s environment is built into the Montessori curriculum. In the classroom children are responsible for keeping the classrooms clean, caring for the animals, and providing for the needs of guests. Bright Water Elementary Charter School students will take responsibility for recycling programs in their classrooms and school. The students will help maintain the grounds and the garden as well as study ways to combat global warming and try to help the school be more energy efficient. Bright Water Elementary will further extend this concept beyond the immediate classroom and into the community and beyond. Students will help maintain the environmental health of the neighborhood through service projects such as litter pick-up or collection of recyclables. Our relationship with the Audubon Center of the North Woods will reinforce the concept of cosmic education by allowing us to directly engage children with the natural world and teach them to understand their interdependence with all living things and with the earth.

The Montessori curriculum is developed and reviewed by an international committee, and not set according to US academic standards. As a consequence, there are elements in the Montessori curriculum, such as finding the cube root of a 9-digit number, that are not part

of our national or state standards; also there are elements of our Minnesota state standards, such as the study of simple machines, that are not covered by the basic Montessori curriculum as such. However, there are specific provisions made in the training of Montessori teachers to ensure that the state standards are met in the Montessori classroom.

One of the guiding principles of Montessori education is the development of the whole person, with particular emphasis of the development of reason and the will, along with a lifelong love of learning. For this reason, children in a Montessori classroom are expected to work at their own pace and have a major role in setting their own work schedule rather than just doing specific assignments given by the teacher. But this vast amount of freedom given to the children is tempered by 3 very important limits: the public school curriculum, the daily work journal used by each child to track his/her progress, and frequent individual meetings between the child and the teacher. The trained Montessori teacher is expected to have the appropriate state public school curriculum available in the classroom for children to refer to in planning their studies. At regular intervals during the year the Montessori teacher reviews with the child which state standards have been met and which still need work. Most of the state standards are covered by the Montessori curriculum; for those that are not, the Montessori teacher develops lessons or guides the student in research that will lead to mastery of the topic. There is also consideration given to the developmental level of the child; that is, more of the responsibility for covering the state curriculum falls on the teacher's shoulders in the early grades with the child taking more direct responsibility as he/she matures.

## **Bright Water School and Montessori Method**

Maria Montessori, Italy's first woman physician and one of the great educators of the twentieth century, was born in Chiaravalle, Italy in 1870. She pioneered the work with children that we carry on today at Bright Water Montessori School. Our philosophy is inspired by the educational vision of Dr. Maria Montessori; the models for the classrooms and for the developmental learning materials were created by her.

Her work became known as the "Montessori Method." In 1929 she founded the Association Montessori Internationale to continue her work. She saw the child as the most legitimate hope for a new world. During World War II her method was regarded as a movement for world peace. By the time of her death in 1952, she had gained an international reputation as an educator and advocate for children.

Montessori fervently believed that children have an inner force that gives them the power and drive to achieve their full potential. When children are given the proper measure of guidance and freedom, this inner force enables them to focus on what they need to know and they learn with wonder, joy, and confidence.

A vital part of the Montessori approach is a carefully prepared environment that is beautiful and orderly. It includes didactic materials designed to meet the needs of each child at his or her particular level of development. The well-trained sensitive and loving adult serves as the key link between the child and the environment. Through skilled observation, the adult is prepared to offer children instruction that will stimulate their interest and activity.

As Montessorians, we believe that each child is born to be an independent learner and that the full potential of each person is realized only through an ordered, challenging, nurturing environment that is physical, intellectual and spiritual.

We believe that the child and his or her needs are the central and commanding focus of the learning process. It is the role of the school to observe, to know and to defend the child as he or she proceeds through the stages of development.

We see in each child the future of our society, of our nation and of our planet. The child in the process of fundamental development has unlimited possibilities and the future rests on our ability to cultivate these potentials.

We believe in cultural and economic diversity and make every effort to recruit families with different ethnic, racial and religious heritages.

We believe that the learning process is governed by certain basic human tendencies or needs:

- The need to communicate, to use language
- The tendency for order, the need to organize, classify, and interpret reality
- The need for independence and activity, the drive to work constructively
- The need for social relationships
- The need to experience reality through imagination.

Like Dr. Montessori we recognize that education requires an ethical environment in which the values of the community are respected and the worth of the individual protected. Our philosophy includes the cultivation of the following values: self-reliance and hard work, respect for other people, respect for the environment, international and interpersonal peace, appreciation of the creative power manifested in the universe. Through out the learning process, the adult assists the child at all ages to become more independent, and answer the request "Help me do it myself."

## Policies and Procedures

### Absences

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the school by 9 AM. We feel it is important for the child to be at school as consistently as possible, so we do not recommend taking the child out of the program for long periods of time, unless the child is ill. Families are expected to honor the contract for services with Bright Water, thus, for preschool families who pay tuition, families are expected to pay for absences due to illness. Families are also expected to pay for days that are national holidays and recognized vacation days.

### Accreditation

Bright Water Montessori School is a quality school and in 2007 became accredited through Association Montessori Internationale.

### Admission procedures

All parents are encouraged to come and visit or observe at the school before applying for admission.

For our elementary Charter School there is an admissions period throughout November for the following school year. If there are more students who apply for Kindergarten than we have spaces for, the school will hold a lottery for admissions. ***There is no preference given to children in the pre-school program who wish to enroll in the elementary charter school. They must participate in the lottery and there is no guarantee of admission.*** We understand that this will be very difficult for pre-school children who do not get a spot in the charter school but we must follow all the laws that apply to charter schools. Enrollment forms for the following year may be submitted anytime during the month of November. The admissions lottery, if necessary will be held on December 1.

**Preschool admission packets may be picked up in the office.** Parents will be notified of admission. Shortly after that, a tuition payment plan and a contract must be signed. In order to qualify for tuition assistance, tax forms or verification of the family's gross income must be available. Bright Water intends to work with families to find funding or tuition assistance for the

program if the family has a need. There is a \$25.00 application charge which will be waived for financial reasons. **An Immunization record and Health form must be submitted by the first day of attendance.**

**There is no tuition charge for students in our Elementary Charter program during the school day. There is a charge for before and after school. Tuition payments are due on the first week of the month.** If you wish to make two payments a month, one may be made the first week and the second by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. If your account becomes more than two months past due, you will be given a notice and your child will be unable to attend unless special arrangements are made.

### **Kindergarten Policy**

A kindergartener is a child age five by September 1 of the school year. If a family submits a kindergarten application for a four-year-old who will be five in the next few months, the family must request an evaluation by the school staff when the child's application is drawn in the lottery. The Bright Water Elementary Board of directors makes the final decision to admit a four-year-old into the kindergarten program.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

When children arrive they are greeted with a smile and a handshake. We encourage the parents to say goodbye and leave the child to independently take off coats and shoes and get ready for the day at school. The children should be signed in and out every day. Location of the sign in sheet will be outside the office door. **All children must arrive at the school by 9:10 am to be there for the core classroom session, and all children must be picked up by 5:30 in the evening.** If you do not pick up your child by 5:40 PM, you will be charged \$1.00 per minute for any time after 5:40 that you are late. You will be asked to sign a late slip for arriving after 5:40 and you will be billed for this time. Please call ahead of time if you anticipate a problem. There will however, still be a charge.

**Staff must be alerted when a person who is not a parent or family member will be picking up the child. Please speak to a staff member or write a note about who will be picking up and make sure that that person has identification they can present to the staff member in charge.**

### **Birthdays**

We love to celebrate birthdays and recognize children, as long as it is done in a manner that does not disrupt the normal flow of the day. Parents may send photos and special information about the child. We will celebrate the child's birthday in the classroom. We ask that parents not send in birthday cakes or sweet snacks, but send in a healthy snack for the classroom. All food that is sent in to share should be commercially prepared.

### **Cell Phone Use**

We ask that cell phones be put away when parents or other adults come into the building. In this way, adults show respect by being available for their children during greeting and parting times. The staff also pledge to use cell phones only when on breaks and away from the children. **Child Abuse: see Maltreatment of minors policy**

## **MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY FOR DHS LICENSED PROGRAMS**

### **Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect**

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

### **Where to Report**

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- All reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed facility should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 297-4123.
- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency at \_\_\_\_\_ or local law enforcement at \_\_\_\_\_.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division at (651) 296-3971.

### **What to Report**

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

### **Failure to Report**

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

### **Retaliation Prohibited**

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

### **Internal Review**

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;
- (iii) there is a need for additional staff training;
- (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

### **Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed**

The internal review will be completed by \_\_\_\_\_ (name or position).  
If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, \_\_\_\_\_  
(name or position) will be responsible for completing the internal review.

### **Documentation of the Internal Review**

The facility must document completion of the internal review and provide documentation of the review to the commissioner upon the commissioner's request.

### **Corrective Action Plan**

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

### **Staff Training**

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

**The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.**

## **Community Guidelines** (discipline)

### **Behavioral Guidance Policies and Procedure**

We find that the children in a Montessori classroom have fewer behavioral problems because they are able to direct their own education. The teacher gives lessons in Grace and Courtesy to model polite and respectful behavior. Role-playing is encouraged; the staff strive to be excellent models of appropriate behavior. Children are treated with respect and in turn are able to be respectful to others.

We expect the children and the adults to observe the four rules of respect in regard to their life at school. These are:

- 1. Respect for self**
- 2. Respect for others**
- 3. Respect for materials, tools, and equipment**
- 4. Respect for the environment**

This means that the children will respect one another and respect the school's property and the property of other children. This also means that children do not use language that is hurtful or inappropriate or touch another child unless the child wants to be touched. If there is a conflict between children that they are unable to resolve, the children will be brought together to talk out the problem and seek conflict resolution.

The staff of Bright Water Montessori School exemplifies appropriate behavior with the children and with each other. In this way a positive model is provided for the children. Staff model respect, kindness, and encouragement. Children are encouraged to be kind and respectful in turn, but they are also acknowledged for who they are. Emotions are named and recognized as a part of who we all are. Appropriate channeling of anger is fostered.

Lessons in Grace and Courtesy are given to children to help them know how to respond in situations. These lessons include greetings, saying thank you, saying "excuse me, this is my work!" telling someone that you don't like their behavior, and so on. These are tailored to the age and developmental level of the child. Toddlers often have aggressive behavior because they do not have language. All inappropriate behavior is identified and gently halted as the child is redirected to constructive behavior. Children are encouraged to avoid rudeness, insults and aggressive behavior. Children are encouraged to use "I" messages to let other children know how they are feeling. **Positive guidance techniques include:**

- **Clear and consistent rules**
- **Allowing children to try and resolve conflicts that are not violent**
- **Redirection from conflicts toward constructive activity**
- **Anticipation of problems before they occur**
- **Offering children alternatives to aggressive behavior, such as walking away, ignoring, or talking through a problem**
- **Encouragement and avoidance of criticism**

Bright Water Montessori staff will provide directly related appropriate and immediate consequences for unacceptable behavior when it occurs in all children in our care. This may range from the positive guidance techniques to having a child separated from the group for a period of time in the prescribed method. The safety of the staff and other children must be ensured.

### **Persistent Unacceptable Behavior**

If there is a child who is repeatedly aggressive and does not respond to the various redirection and discipline methods used, the staff may have a need to provide consequences for documented unacceptable, violent or unmanageable behavior. When staff notes that a certain

child requires increased amount of staff guidance and time this will be documented and, if necessary the parents will be contacted. The staff is committed to trying positive techniques, observing the behavior and recording it, and meeting with the family to gain information in how to encourage positive behavior.

Before a child is separated from a group, less intrusive methods must be proven ineffective. A child who is disrupting or threatening the entire group will be separated until their behavior is no longer threatening. The safety of the staff and other children must be ensured. When a child is separated:

- They must remain within a section of the classroom and be observed.
- The behaviors will be recorded.
- The child will be allowed to return to the group as soon as the unacceptable behavior ceases and they are ready.
- All separations are noted in the separation log. If the child is separated more than five times in one week, a conference with the family will be scheduled to address these issues and to better assist the child.

If the consequences, redirection and separations do not have any effect on persistent unacceptable behavior, the staff will recommend that the family seek help and have the child evaluated. After an outside evaluation, a plan will be made with the family and a specialist for addressing the difficult behaviors. This plan will be put into effect and tried for the next month. The parents and staff will meet again to assess the plan and evaluate the progress.

If the unacceptable behavior is very violent, there is a different procedure. The first time a child is overtly violent with another and the staff deems that act unwarranted, the aggressor will be removed from the environment and his/her parents will be notified. ( Violent behavior is defined as hitting, biting, kicking, spitting, or excessive teasing. ) The second time it happens, the parents will be asked to come pick him/her up immediately. If the parent is not available, the emergency contacts will be called. If this same child commits another aggressive act his/her parents will again be called to come pick him/her up and the child may not re-enter school until his/her parents, Ann Luce, and the involved staff have a conference. If this same child should commit a fourth aggressive act, again his/her parents will be called to come pick him/her up and this time the child will not be able to return to school without enlisting the help of an outside agency to help the child remedy his/her aggressive behavior.

**The staff reserves the right to counsel children who have been documented as having persistent unacceptable behavior out of the school, if it appears that, after utilizing outside assistance and working to try a variety of techniques with the child, the unmanageable behavior persists. With elementary children, suspension is also a possibility if the child is violent and a danger to him or herself and others.** This might only occur in occasions when the school feels we cannot effectively meet the needs of the child or when parents do not follow up on recommendations of the specialists or staff. This may include children who are highly aggressive or have more involved special needs that may be treated more effectively in another program.

### **Pupil Fair Dismissal Act**

Public elementary schools in Minnesota are governed by the Pupil Fair dismissal act which assures that students will not be unfairly asked to leave a school, or be suspended without cause. Information on this law is available on the Minnesota Department of Education website.

### **Clothing/ Diapers**

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that they can easily move around in. Children must have clothing easy to put on and take off, so they can assume responsibility for themselves in toileting and dressing for outdoor play. **All children should have extra clothes that are labeled with their names. Children should have a pair of slippers or indoor shoes for use in the classroom.** We have diaper changing procedures that have been developed in consultation with a health consultant, and those procedures are posted in the diaper changing area.

There is a special location in the Toddler classroom for changing diapers. Hand washing is always a part of the process of using the bathroom or changing diapers or underwear. Toddlers may start in disposable diapers, but are encouraged when they are developmentally ready to use cloth underwear to promote toilet training. **When the staff and the parents feel the child is ready to begin toilet training, a joint effort will be made to help the child achieve this independence. Parents should provide diapers as needed.** Bright Water Montessori School contracts with a diaper service to provide cloth underwear, but parents might send in extra underwear to wear home. Soiled clothing will be sent home in plastic bags when necessary. If school clothes happen to come home, parents should send them back to school promptly.

### **Commitment**

When you enroll your child in Bright Water School, we expect a commitment through the elementary years. We believe that children benefit most when they are in a program for at least three years. The developmental cycle for a child cannot be completed if they leave a Montessori program early, especially in the Children's House (primary) class. Ideally, the longer the child is in the program, the more they benefit.

### **Communications**

Communication with the child's family is essential for the well being of the child. A white board or notebook will be placed outside the door of the classroom so that parents can write down information for the teachers. Parents should feel free to ask a teacher to call them about an issue that they are concerned about. **If parents have any concerns, they should never hesitate to call the school and leave a message for the teacher or administrator.**

Parents are welcome to come and visit the school at any time. We ask that parents use quiet voices when coming into the classroom and that they observe the activity that is going on until they have the attention of the teacher.

Parents can expect a weekly newsletter every *Wednesday: Wednesday Notes*. This will have administrative information and news about what is happening in our school and our community.

Daily written reports to parents of toddlers will also go home about food intake, elimination, sleeping and general behavior. **If there is a communicable illness or disease in your child's classroom, you can expect a note from the school. You will be informed if your child has been exposed to strep, chicken pox, head lice, or other communicable illnesses.**

### **Drug and Alcohol Use**

The use of controlled substances and alcohol is prohibited at Bright Water Montessori School. Alcohol is never served at Bright Water functions. All staff and volunteers are given orientation on the drug and alcohol policy during staff and volunteer orientation. Children will not be released to an individual whose ability is considered impaired by alcohol or controlled substances.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Students have fire drills at least once a month so that they learn how to exit the building in a safe manner. There are maps and exit plans in each room of the school to facilitate the rapid exiting of the building. While taking care to explain the process to the children so they are not alarmed, staff and students treat these emergency drills seriously as if they were real emergencies.

Tornado drills are also held from April through September. Children are instructed in what to do during a tornado.

## **Family Emergencies**

If you have an emergency at home or at work and you need to call the school, we will try and respond as soon as possible. If you receive a phone message, please leave your number and we will call back to resolve the issue as soon as we are able. If there will be a different person picking up your child, please inform the staff. **Please remember to constantly update your phone numbers and emergency contact phone numbers.**

## **Family Issues**

As children move between school and home, each environment affects the behavior of the child in the other place. Today we are all faced with issues that affect our work birth, adoption, death, divorce, depression, marriage, illness, chemical abuse, child abuse, or family violence. If you or members of your family are experiencing any of these situations, we encourage you to share this information with the staff of Bright Water. This will help us support your child and family. The teacher can provide vital support and understanding that might help your child cope during a very difficult time. And, as usual, we will keep your information confidential.

## **Field Trips**

Parents or guardians must sign a permission form when a child is admitted for children to take walks from the school to the park or to nearby locations. If a class is to take a field trip, information and permission slips will go out to families a week before the trip. In general, young children are best served by staying within a routine and not going out. They benefit from walking trips within the neighborhood. However, in special instances, Children's House classes may visit other locations. Elementary students will have "going out" trips that are focused on research or an area of interest. Field trips must always fit into the curriculum and be appropriate for the age of the child. Transportation for a field trip will always be in accordance with state regulations regarding transportation. Children will only go on a city bus or an appropriately equipped vehicle.

## **Financial Assistance for Preschool children and for Extended care**

The mission of Bright Water Montessori is to serve children and families, especially those from low-income families who are in need of excellent care for their children. We are not a day care, but first a quality Montessori school. Our Kindergarten through elementary grades are free public education. We accept preschool children who receive child care assistance or funding from Hennepin County. We try to help parents find funding in whatever way we are able. Bright Water is also committed to offering tuition assistance to families in need. Financial aid/ tuition assistance is based on need. We expect families to keep their financial commitment to the school and pay tuition on time.

**Tuition payments are due on the first week of the month. If you wish to make two payments a month, one may be made the first week and the second by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the**

**month. If your account becomes more than two months past due, you will be given a notice and your child will be unable to attend unless special arrangements are made.**

There is no cost for the school day classes in the elementary program, only for before- and after-school care.

### **Health Consultation Services**

Health Consultation services are provided by Minnesota Visiting Nurses Health Consultation Services, 3433 Broadway NE, Suite 55413, or (612) 617-4600.

### **HIV/AIDS Policy**

Bright Water School has a non-discrimination policy regarding HIV/AIDS. We will not dismiss or refuse to enroll a child, or dismiss or refuse to hire a staff member who is HIV positive or has AIDS.

### **Injury or Illness**

If your child has an emergency at school in which they become sick or injured, we will call you at work or home immediately. All phone numbers of parents are kept on file for such emergencies. If we can not get in touch with parents or guardians, we will call the emergency contact person. A cot for sick children is available in the office and the child will be kept comfortable until the parent arrives. If medical care is immediately required, we will call 911 or take whatever action the situation requires. **Please remember to constantly update your phone numbers and emergency contact phone numbers.**

Every room in the school has a list of emergency procedures that are available. Staff is expected to be familiar with the emergency procedures and have had First Aid Training within six months of being hired. There is a first aid kit in each room.

If your child should become injured, you will be notified immediately by the office. A description of the child's injury will be given to the parent. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, if possible, and bring the child's emergency information making sure to note what allergies the child might have. **The nearest Emergency Medical Center is North Memorial Medical Center at 3300 Oakdale Ave. North in Robbinsdale, (763) 520-5200. Staff will never transport injured children to the hospital.**

We will administer first aid for any emergency, but if the injury requires medical attention our first consideration must be the safety of the child. We will take whatever action is deemed necessary. Please remember to update the emergency contact information if it changes during the year. This is the only way that the school is able to get in touch with parents or guardians during an emergency.

### **Illness**

If your child is not feeling well enough to participate fully in all school programs, has been ill with vomiting or diarrhea, or has had a fever of 100 degrees within the past 24 hours, **please keep your child home from school.** If your child requires a throat culture for strep, he or she should remain home while waiting for the results. If strep is diagnosed, the child must stay home for 24 hours after starting to take the antibiotics.

If your child gets sick at school, we will call you. We will try to keep your child comfortable until you arrive. We are equipped with first aid supplies to give proper care of students who have an accident or become ill in school.

Please let us know if your child has a contagious disease. We are obligated by state law to inform other parents that a contagious illness has been diagnosed in the classroom. Children with the following conditions must be excluded from school:

- Chicken pox, until they have crusted over.
- More than three loose stools in one day, or since admission in the morning.
- Diarrhea that is uncontrolled or infectious.
- Vomiting since admission or within the last 24 hours.
- Contagious conjunctivitis or pus draining from the eye.
- Bacterial infections such as streptococcal pharyngitis (strep) or impetigo until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Lice, ringworm, or scabies that is untreated or contagious to others.
- Significant respiratory distress.
- A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- An undiagnosed rash that seems to be related to contagious illness.
- Unexplained lethargy or failure to be able to participate.

Children should also be excluded if they are not able to participate in the program or if they require more care than the staff can provide.

Most of these conditions require some treatment before return to school. For example, if your child is diagnosed with head lice, please do not send your child to school until you have used prescription shampoo and removed all the nits from the hair.

Parents are required by Minnesota Law to inform the school of any infectious communicable disease within 24 hours, exclusive of holidays or weekends.

At Bright Water Montessori School we do our best to avoid illness by making hand washing an essential part of each day. Children wash hands after they use the bathroom or are changed, before and after meals, before they set the table or prepare food, when their hands look or smell dirty, or after they touch pets. When we know of a contagious illness in our community, we will notify families of any contagious illness that occurs in your child's classroom or in the school by sending home a fact sheet about the illness.

### **Immunization Law/ Health Forms/Special Needs**

**Minnesota's school immunization law requires that all students must be fully immunized by the first day of school or will not be allowed to enroll or remain in school.**

Immunization requirements can be waived for medical reasons or for those who are conscientiously opposed to immunizations. Please obtain the necessary waiver from the school or use the immunization form. Immunization forms should be updated whenever new immunizations are given

Upon admission a Health Care Summary must be filled out that includes the date of the child's most recent physical exam (within six months) and must be signed by the child's health care provider. This form is due within 30 days of admission to the school. The Health Care Summary must be updated whenever a child moves to a new level (Preschool or Kindergarten age). All these forms are only for the safety of your child, and will be kept confidential.

**Please inform us upon admission of any special health needs your child has, such as allergies or asthma.** We want to be able to provide appropriate care and support.

### **Licensure**

Bright Water Montessori School is a licensed child care center, licensed by the state of Minnesota. We are licensed for preschool education and elementary afterschool programs. If a

parent has a question about the licensure they may call the Department of Human Services licensing at (651) 296-3971.

Our elementary charter school is licensed through the state and our sponsor is Audubon Center of the North woods. Our Elementary program is monitored by our sponsor, and the state and federal governments. We are also under the jurisdiction of No Child Left Behind.

### **Maltreatment of Minors policy**

#### **Put in two page from DHS**

Under Minnesota law certain people, such as teachers, medical personnel, and child care staff, are required to report suspected physical and sexual abuse and certain forms of neglect. Neglect may include failure to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or school attendance. Reports must be made to the Hennepin County Child Protection Program or to the police. **A person who is required to report and does not, can be charged with a misdemeanor.** Anyone may report suspected abuse or neglect. The 24-hour Hennepin County Child Protection line is (612) 348-3552. All suspected cases of abuse or neglect at Bright Water Montessori School are immediately reported.

If you have concerns about your parenting and anger management, or think that you need help, one of the following may be helpful: Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery (762)785-9222

### **Meals/Food Service Plan**

Healthy and nutritious food is part of the mission of Bright Water School. Bright Water Montessori School uses Lancer catering for breakfast and lunch. The Bright Water staff will prepare breakfast and snacks. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed as well as proper sanitation procedures. Dishes and utensils will be washed and then sanitized after each use. Teachers handle food in an area approved by the health department.

Lunch is served family style in the lunch room next to the kitchen. Breakfast will usually consist of hot or cold cereal, milk and juice or fruit. Snacks are varied. Elementary families are invited to help bring in snacks for their class. Toddlers have a group snack in the middle of the morning. Food preparation that children might do (with adult supervision) includes banana slicing, bread baking, egg slicing, orange juice making, tortilla making, pickle cutting, and cracker spreading. After each practical life activity is completed, the snack dishes are washed and the activity is set up for the next person.

Both lunch and breakfast provide one-third of the child's daily nutritional needs. There are two snacks served during the day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This provides not only nutrition, but also a chance for children to socialize in an intimate setting. At lunch and breakfast, staff is seated with children. During the day, children also have access to food preparation in the practical life areas, and are welcome to eat the food they have prepared, such as carrot cutting, pickle cutting, tortilla or bread baking. Drinking fountains are available throughout the school at the child's level for frequent water consumption. An information sheet on children's allergies as well as health issues will be posted in places that teachers can see.

### **Medications**

The Bright Water policy on medications, legislated by the state, states school personnel may not administer medication during the school day without the written order of a licensed physician and a written authorization of parent or guardian that can be placed on file in the office. If a child requires medication, parents are encouraged to give the child medication at home. **If a child must have medication administered during school hours, there must be written parent consent or Parent permission to Administer Medication form, as well as written physician**

**approval.** Medications also must be in the original containers with the original label stating the child's name, expiration date, dosage, prescription number, and instructions for use.

The administration of non-prescription medications is limited to those for which the child's physician has indicated through instructions and the parent has filled out the Parent Permission to Administer Medications. Diaper ointments, sunscreens, and insect repellants will be used only with specific written permission from the parent and will be used according to the instructions. These products are stored in a special place so that they are not accessible to the children.

In the event of a poisoning incident, we will call the Poison Control Center.

### **Observation**

We encourage parents to observe their students in the classrooms. Please contact the school if you would like to observe in the classroom. There is a Parent visitation day before Spring conferences in which parents or family members are invited to watch their children work in the classroom. In December there is a Grandparent's Day in which Grandparents or special friends may visit to observe children. Parents may visit the program at any time during enrolled hours. In order to protect the calmness of the classroom, parents are encouraged to call the office to schedule a time to visit.

### **Parent Education**

We recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children, and that the partnership between parents and educators is vital. We want the best for your children. We want to support your commitment to your child by offering as much information as we can about our school and the Montessori approach to education. Parent Education events may include staff demonstrations, sharing information, and parent discussions. **Families are expected to attend at least one parent education event each year and to attend all Parent-Teacher conferences. Families are also expected to do between 5 and 10 hours of volunteer hours a year.**

We encourage you to read all information that comes home from Bright Water School. This is a great way to stay informed. You are also welcome to check out books and materials from our Parenting Library. Please return materials after you have read them.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences and Communication**

The hallmark of the Montessori classroom is observation. The teacher or guide is constantly observing students to determine what they need at any given time. In this manner, lessons are given, children are redirected, and the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional progress of each child can be documented. In many ways teachers in the classroom make assessments of the progress of each child daily.

Conference time is time set aside for conversation between the teacher and parent or guardian. Conferences are essential for the quality of the child's experience at Bright Water School. We schedule parent-teacher conferences twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. At this time the progress of the child is reported which includes physical, intellectual, social and emotional development. If a parent is unable to schedule a conference, a phone conference or a home visit may occur. Written reports go home either in the spring or at the end of the year. For Special needs students, there is also a need for a meeting for a yearly IEP or Individual Educational Plan.

Daily and weekly communication is also essential. There is a white board or notebook outside each classroom for special notes about your child's schedule. We send home a weekly newsletter that has information on the school and on current activities of the classrooms. We

also do an annual report each year. Parents are invited to make an appointment to observe in their child's classroom. We also have a visitation day where parents or special friends can come to watch the child work or work with the children in the classroom.

**Parents and guardians are free to call the school at any time** to talk to a teacher or the director about their concerns and their child's needs. The staff will call back as soon as possible following a call by the parent.

## **Pets**

Bright Water School does have pets in classrooms and they are living as humanely as possible. All classroom pets are in good health and have had shots if required. Children are instructed in how to handle each pet, if it is a pet that can be handled. We try to keep pets that most children do not have allergies to, but parents should inform teachers if their child happens to be allergic to various types of animals.

## **Playground Rules**

Children and adults at Bright Water Montessori School are expected to follow the four Rules of Respect in all places in the school. These rules and how they might be interpreted are as follows:

Respect for Self: Being careful and using the play equipment as it is designed to be used, and wearing appropriate clothing is important, as it is to just have fun!

Respect for Others: Play safely and watch out for others, not throwing things, taking turns, helping others, and including others in your play are all part of respect for others on the playground.

Respect for Materials, Tools, and Equipment: Use all playground equipment and tools for their intended purpose and take care of materials by cleaning them up when the classroom goes inside.

Respect for the Environment: All students and adults must be encouraged to throw trash in proper containers, and take care of plants and trees. Children help plant and maintain the gardens at Bright Water and also water outdoor plants.

## **Prohibited Actions by Adults**

At Bright Water Montessori School the students are treated with the great respect that all children deserve. The actions and language of adults must be respectful. We are aware that to change difficult behavior, children must be around adult models who treat children and other adults with integrity. Therefore, we avoid punishment and try to redirect behavior.

### **Under no circumstance will a staff person ever:**

- Resort to corporal punishment, which includes but is not limited to rough handling, shoving, hair or ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or spanking.
- Subject a child to emotional abuse which includes, but is not limited to, name calling, ostracism, shaming, making derogatory remarks about the child, using language which threatens, humiliates, or frightens the child.
- Yell at a child.
- Punish a child for lapses in toilet training.
- Withhold food, light, warmth, clothing, or care as a punishment for unacceptable behavior.
- Physically restrain or mechanically restrain a child other than to hold a child to protect that child or others from harm.
- Separation from the group except within the rule guidelines.

Any staff person found to be engaging in any of the above mentioned behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action or termination. Other adults are expected to treat children with respect when they are at Bright Water Montessori School.

### **Research and Public Relations Permission**

We will inform parents and ask for permission before a child is involved in any experimental research or public relations activity while at Bright Water Montessori School. At the time of admission the parent will be asked to sign photo permission for so that photos may be taken of your child. If the school desires to use a photo for public relations or advertising, the parent or guardian will again be asked for permission.

### **Safety and Security**

Children are permitted freedom of movement within their classroom, but are not allowed to leave their classroom without being accompanied by an adult. The safety of each child is our concern. We try to make sure that our building is secure and that the children are well protected.

If there is a person who should not be allowed to pick up your child, please inform the school. Systems are in place so that the safety of each child is assured.

### **Sex Education**

Age appropriate information is given to children when they are curious about sexual differences and procreation. Children learn to respect their bodies and their minds. As a school, we discuss appropriate and inappropriate touching of others.

### **Smoking**

Bright Water Montessori School is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises in accordance with a Minneapolis ordinance.

### **Special Needs**

**Please inform us upon admission of any special health needs your child has, such as allergies or asthma.** We want to be able to provide appropriate care and support. If your child has a special need and is (one or more of the following)

- Eligible for case management through the state and has an Individual Service Plan (ISP).
- Receiving services through the local school district and has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Determined by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or consulting psychologist to have a condition related to physical, social, or emotional development.

Families will be asked to share the ISP and/or IEP with us. In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCP) with parents that will assist us to meet your child's needs.

### **Toys**

We ask that students do not bring toys to school, or if they do that they stay in the child's cubby for the day. Children who nap may have small stuffed animals that stay in cubbies.

### **Transferring or Leaving the School**

Bright Water Montessori asks for a minimum of a three year commitment from families to best serve the children. However, if you are leaving or transferring to another school, please let us know at least one month in advance.

### **Weather**

Please make sure that your children are dressed appropriately for the weather. In the winter children should have snow pants and boots so they are able to go outside. We have a few extra snow pants and boots which children may use.

In case of very serious weather conditions, and in the event that the Minneapolis Public School declares a snow day or a late start of two hours or more, we will be closed.

### **Bright Water Bus Policy**

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege for students. Students need to be well behaved and respectful of supervising staff when riding the bus and while waiting for the bus in order to enjoy this privilege.

Bright Water bus service is a service for elementary students. Four year old students of the preschool can ride it only if they have a sibling enrolled in the elementary program. Metropolitan Transportation will not provide doorstop service. Metropolitan Transportation will determine a corner bus stop based on the address provided by the parents. All regular ed students will receive corner stop service. Any concerns about the designated bus stop should be directed to Metropolitan Transportation.

Buses will wait at a stop for two minutes. If no student is present then the bus will leave and the driver will call the dispatcher to record the time. Buses will not return to pick up students who have missed the bus.

Students will be dropped off at their bus stop whether or not an adult is present. It is the parent's responsibility to be at the stop to greet children or to make alternate arrangements. Bright Water recommends that you plan with your child what to do if no adult is home when the child is dropped off.

Parents requesting changes in riding status must submit that request in writing to the office. If a parent does not want their child to take the bus on a given day, the parent must either send his/her child to school with a signed note indicating that the child should not ride the bus or be at school by 3:45 to prevent the child from boarding the bus as usual. Other changes in riding status that are due to family relocation must be submitted to the office in writing a week before the change should occur.

Inappropriate behavior on the bus or while loading the bus, will not be tolerated and will be handled as follows:

First Incident: Student is warned by Bright Water staff to stop misbehaving.

Second Incident: Student's parents are notified.

Third Incident: Students will be suspended from riding the bus for a whole day (morning and afternoon services).

Fourth Incident: Bright Water administration will evaluate the situation and decide on an appropriate consequence which may include a longer suspension or termination of bus privileges for the rest of that period. Bright Water reserves the right to suspend a child from riding the bus if it is determined that it is not in the best interest of the school and its students.

Parents must agree to these policies and give their signature in agreement before bus service may begin. If a parent does not sign and agree to the Bright Water Bus Policy, the student is ineligible to ride the bus. Parent must also sign the attached waiver.

## **Parent Grievance Procedure**

It is the goal of Bright Water Montessori School to provide a quality environment that supports the child as well as works with the family to meet individual needs. It is important to the staff and board to assure that we are following our mission to serve children and families and offering a quality Montessori alternative. Thus, we wish to make it possible for families to let us know when they feel we have not met their needs. To address and resolve grievances regarding the program, the following procedure has been established:

1. Parents with concerns regarding school policies, administration, educational methods, or overall concerns regarding the facility or equipment should address their grievance with the director. The director will schedule a meeting with the parent within a 24-hour period. At the time of the meeting, the group will try to come to a solution to the issue or closure on the topic.
2. Parents who feel their concerns have not been adequately addressed may submit their grievance, in writing to the Bright Water Board of Directors. . The meeting will take place within 5 days of the contact. Two members of the Board and the director of the school will meet with the parents to seek a resolution to the problem, either verbal or written. A written report will be sent to the parents and filed in the school records.
3. Any parent who is dissatisfied with what they feel to be an inadequate or ineffective resolution to the grievance should contact the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Division of Licensing to report their concern regarding the Bright Water School at (651) 296-3571.

It is our hope that we will be able to effectively address any concerns that should arise with parents or families, as you trust us to care for your children. We take all concerns seriously and will work diligently toward resolution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

## Staff

The Bright Water staff seeks to be a model community for the children. Staff are encouraged to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation. Staff value each other's opinion and depend on each other for inspiration and support.

Regular communication facilitates the effective operation of the school and the on-going education of the students. The whole staff meets bi-weekly to discuss business, plan events, and discuss philosophical matters. Three times a year staff education events are planned. The school encourages staff to attend conferences and educational workshops as well as furthering education.

All of our classroom teachers are Montessori trained, under the auspices of Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society. Current staff includes (in alphabetical order) :

Megan Andrews	Elementary Teacher/ Guide
Karen Anway	Elementary Guide
Elizabeth Badillo-Moorman	Development Director/ Assistant Director
Sharon Dunbar	Toddler Assistant and Art Teacher
Beka Hamlett-Leisen	Toddler Guide
Ayodele Henderson	Assistant Teacher
Portlyn Henderson	Elementary Assistant
Annie Hickman	Special Education teacher
Ann Luce	Director of Bright Water
September Luitjens	Montessori Learning Specialist
Maria Matias	Assistant Teacher
Kelly Marchwick	ELL teacher
Ashley Merchant	Office Assistant and CH Assistant
Lorena Mojica	Children's House Guide
Leticia Leon Morales	Children's House Guide
Milissa Link	Elementary Assistant
Sheu Oduniyi	Afterschool Program Teacher
Consuelo Ortiz	Toddler Assistant
Jacquelyn Randleman	Children's House Guide
Samantha Samuelson	Children's House Assistant
Debra Santa Cruz	Assistant Teacher
Sahro Salal	Morning/ Breakfast and lunch Assistant
Tonia Secor	Children's House Guide
Martine Smaller	Charter School Start up coordinator
Maggie Sweeney	Elementary Assistant
Jenny Thompson	Children's House Extended Day Guide
Melissa Udomah	Special Education Teacher
Lisa Waller	Elementary Teacher

## Board of Trustees for the Preschool and Charter School

The Board of Trustees helps manage and advise Bright Water Montessori School, our preschool and original organization, as a non-profit 501c(3) corporation. The Preschool Board has up to 12 members including the director, community members, and parents of children in the school. Board members serve 2-3 years on the board and there is always a mixture of experienced and new members serving on the Board. If a parent has an interest in serving on the Board of Trustees or coming to a board meeting, they are asked to contact the Board Chair or another member of the Board.

Current Bright Water Montessori Board members include:

Kelly Marchwick	Chairman of the Board
Libby Coppo	Parent and Head of Strategic Planning
Jenni Synder	Treasurer
Denny Shapiro	Community Member
Natalie Tourtelotte	Parent
Quanda Arch	Parent
Elizabeth Badillo-Moorman	Parent and staff
Kathleen Coskran	Community Member
Ann Luce	Director of School

**The Charter Board** for Bright Water Elementary is the governing entity for our state and federally funded public school program. All the meetings must be open to the public. We will set the dates of our meetings and assure that they are on our web site and in our lobby. A book containing board meeting minutes is available in the lobby. Board members include teachers, parents and experts from other schools. The director is a non-voting member of the board. Board terms are 2 years. The state specifies that teachers must make up a majority of board members after three years of operation.

Current Bright Water Elementary Board members include:

Anne Scheurger	Board Chair
Ann Luce	Director (non-voting)
September Luitjens	Teacher
Elizabeth Badillo-Moorman	Parent/ Treasurer
JJ Haywood	Parent
DeAnna Cummings	Community Member
Kim Stout	Community Member and Parent
Martine Smaller	Charter School coordinator (non-voting)

**Fall 2010 Class List as of Aug. 24, 2010**

**Toddler Community**

**Childrens House 1**

**Children's House 2**

1	Promise Cox	Murjhana Henderson-K	Valentine Coppo-K
2	Synjata Henderson	Daniel Osmond-K	Yasmin Smaller-K
3	Axel Whittey	Reka Suranyi-K	Olivia Springer-K
4	James Lewis	Winton Haulcy-K	Emily Darling - K
5	Raquel Morrison	Silo Salmela Keobounphang-K	Corbin Johnson-K
6	Amos Kampfe	Emma Messinger Post-K	Flor Rojas Quevedo-K
7	Justus Bryant	Hurie Tyrone Boclair III-K	Martin Owusu Hagen-K
8	William Samuelson Taylor	Gabriel Badillo Moorman-K	Noah Farmer-K
9	Maxwell Peters-Herbert	Jose Vasquez-K	Le Metrius Pendleton-K
10	Gracie Olsen	Aleah Anderson-K	Daniel Rovinsky-K
11	Hyadi Yudhó Sweeney	Joey Peters-Hebert -4	Blythe Tandy Trieber-K
12	Koen Meehta	LaNae Gant-4	Sophia Lacey-K
13	Eleri Peterson	Caleb Eberly-4	Reginald Ponder-4
14	Bridget Rock 2 days	William Lacey-3	Leif Newman-4
15		Maya Farmer-3	Joshua Morales 3
16		Isis Bridewell-3	Greta Bolling-3
17		DaMecca Pendleton-3	Alejandro Vasquez Krogstad- 3
18		Raphael Johnson Nixon- 4	Lauren Samuelson-Taylor-4
19		La Davia Hodges-4	Ezra Mehta-4
20		Ophelia Lindquist Gonzalez-4	Evan Zwicky Lewis-3
21		Olivia Domke- 3	Judah Johnson Nixon -3
22		Elijah Singer-3	Giada Strom-4
23		Raedun Morrison-4	Harper McCandless -4
24		Linden Albert-4	Romana Rhiger-4
25		Nicholas Coppo-4	Maya McDonald-4
26		Stella Eisenbeise-3	Semira Kretz-4
27		Lilija Rhiger-2	Owen Tourtelotte-3
28		Nelson Nogolo-3	Rose Hylton
29		Eleri Peterson-3	Milo Pfahl-3

## Elementary Class List

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### ***Fourth Years/ Karen***

Kei'von Brookins D'Vaughn Rowe Smith Avery Darling  
Sophia Stout Kamia Wilson August Wilfer

**Dolphin Cove/Megan**

**Third Years**

Genieve Parker Bodi Paulson-Sutton Morissa Vazquez  
James Young Tylia Brooks Gloria Davis  
Jonah Briel Marlene Matias  
Forrest Woods Tomi Ijiyode

**Second Years**

Martin Brice Kyla Armour Clement Finney Mandela  
Haulcy  
Jonah McDonald Makayla Powless J'sirus Jones  
Geoffrey Lawrence HeavenLee Henderson Yisela Ortega

**First years**

Nathan Rock Andre Wilson Shauntaya Wilson  
Oscar Nelson Isaac Singer Devonte' Burnett  
Nyreese Smith Anders Wenell

**Eagles Nest/ Lisa**

**Third Years**

Blue Smaller Elsa Osmond  
Isaiah Barth Anayely Diaz-Vazquez  
Brandon Bohanon Samara Valme-Jones  
Mauricio Badillo-Moorman Diana Rojas  
Rubyn Selmon

**Second Years**

Hugh MacLaughlin Siobhan Palmer Charles Delano  
Calista Pappas  
Jasper Hoff Juilian Parker Da Miracle Pendleton  
Noah Abdullahi Lucy Hylton Amontay Williams

**First years**

Elliot Scheller Khallyah Jordan  
Hayden Tourtelotte Sakai Kretz Maria Davis  
Ava Briel Joel Wifler Jackson Malone

**Absorbent Mind**

A mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly. Montessori said the child from birth to six years has an “absorbent mind.”

**Adaptation**

Related to the idea of an absorbent mind, it is a special power of the young child that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child absorbs the culture of her time and place, taking in all the spirit, the customs, the ambitions and attitudes of a society simply by living in that society.

**Analysis of Movement**

A technique used by Montessori teachers. When showing a complex action to a child, the adult breaks it down into parts and shows one step at a time, executing each movement slowly and exactly. The action thus becomes a sequence of simple movements and the child has a greater chance of success when "given the liberty to make use them." (Montessori)

**Children's House**

The English name for Montessori's *Casa dei Bambini*. A place for children from 3-6 years in which to live and grow. Everything necessary for optimal human development is included in a safe and secure environment.

**Classification**

Sorting. Allocating or distributing according to common characteristics. The young child engages in classification activities because the process is essential for the construction of the intellect. The Montessori classroom offers many opportunities for classification.

**Concentration**

The act of concentrating. The young child focuses his or her attention on aspects of the environment essential for development. From a Montessori perspective, concentration is “a consistent activity concentrated on a single work—an exercise on some external object, where the movements of the hands are guided by the mind.” Deep engagement.

**Concrete to Abstract**

A progression both logical and developmentally appropriate. The child is introduced first to a concrete material that embodies an abstract idea such as size or color. Given hands-on experience, the child's mind grasps the idea inherent in the material and forms an abstraction. Only as the child develops is she gradually able to comprehend the same idea in symbolic form.

**Control of Error**

A way of providing instant feedback. Every Montessori activity provides the child with some way of assessing his own progress. This puts the control in the hands of the learner and protects the young child's self-esteem and self-motivation. Control of error is an essential aspect of *auto-education*.

**Coordination of Movement**

One of the major accomplishments of early childhood. Through the child's own activity, she refines her muscular coordination and consequently acquires increasingly higher levels of independent

functioning. Because of this developmental need, children are drawn to activities which involve movement and especially to pastimes which demand a certain level of exactitude and precision.

### **Creativity/Imagination**

Imagination involves the forming of a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses. Creativity is a product of the imagination and results from the mental recombining of imagined ideas in new and inventive ways. Both are dependent on mental imagery formed through sensorial experience.

### **Cycle of Activity**

When engaged in an activity which interests them, little children will repeat it many times and for no apparent reason, stopping suddenly only when the inner need which compelled the child to activity has been satisfied. To allow for the possibility of long and concentrated work cycles, Montessori advocates a 3-hour uninterrupted work period.

### **Development of the Will**

The ability to will, or choose something with conscious intent, develops gradually during the first phase of life and is strengthened through practice. The Montessori environment offers many opportunities for the child to choose. Willpower, or self-control, results from the many little choices of daily life in a Montessori school.

### **Deviations**

Behavior commonly seen in children that is the result of some obstacle to normal development. Such behavior may be commonly understood as negative ( a timid child, a destructive child, etc.) or positive ( a passive, quiet child). Both positive and negative deviations will disappear once the child begins to concentrate on a piece of work freely chosen.

### **Discipline from Within**

Self discipline. The discipline in a well-run Montessori classroom is not a result of the teacher's control or of rewards or punishments. Its source comes from within each individual child, who can control his or her own actions and make positive choices regarding personal behavior. Self discipline is directly related to development of the will.

### **Exercises of Practical Life**

One of the four areas of the Montessori prepared environment. The exercises of practical life resemble the simple work of life in the home: sweeping, dusting, washing dishes, etc. These purposeful activities help the child adapt to her new community, learn self control, and begin to see herself as a contributing party of the social unit. Her intellect grows as she works with her hands; her personality becomes integrated as body and mind function as a unit.

### **False Fatigue**

A phenomenon observed in Children's Houses around the world—often at approximately 10 am. The children seem to appear to lose interest in their work, their behavior becomes disorderly and the noise level rises. It may appear as if the children are tired. However, if the directress understands this is simply *false fatigue*, she will allow the children to return to work on their own, and their work will be at an even higher level than before.

### **Grace and Courtesy**

An aspect of practical life. Little lessons which demonstrate positive social behavior help the young child adapt to life in a group and arm him with knowledge of socially acceptable behavior: practical information, useful in both in and out of the school.

### **Help from Periphery**

The periphery is that part of the child that comes into contact with external reality. The child takes in impressions through the senses and through movement. Help from the periphery means presenting objects and activities in such a way so as to evoke purposeful movement on the part of the child. “We never give to the eye more than we give to the hand.” (Standing.)

### **Human Tendencies**

A central tenet of Montessori philosophy is that human beings exhibit a predisposition towards exploration, orientation, order, abstraction, work, self-perfection, communication and a spiritual life. These tendencies are universal, spanning age, cultural and racial barriers; they have existed since the dawn of the species and are probably evolutionary in origin.

### **Independence**

Not depending on another—“with various shades of meaning” (OED). Normal developmental milestones, such as weaning, walking, and talking, can be seen as a series of events which enable the child to achieve increased individuation, autonomy and self-regulation. Throughout the four planes of development, the child and the young adult continuously seeks to become more independent. It’s as if the child says, *Help me to help myself*.

### **Isolation of a Difficulty**

Before giving a presentation, the Montessori teacher analyzes the activity she wants to show the child. Procedures or movements that might prove troublesome are isolated and taught to the child separately. For example, holding and snipping with scissors, a simple movement, is shown before cutting curved or zigzag lines; folding cloths are shown before table washing, an activity requiring folding. A task should neither be so hard that it is overwhelming, nor so easy that it is boring.

### **Indirect Preparation**

The way nature has of preparing the intelligence. In every action there is a conscious interest. Through this interest the mind is being prepared for something in the future. For example, a young child will enjoy the putting together of various triangular shapes, totally unaware that because of this work his mind will later be more accepting of geometry. Also called *remote preparation*, the deeper educational purpose of many Montessori activities is remote in time.

### **Language Appreciation**

From the very first days in the Montessori classroom, children are given the opportunity to listen to true stories about known subjects, told with great expression. Songs, poems and rhymes are a part of the daily life of the class. The teacher models the art of conversation and respectfully listens to her young students. Looking at beautiful books with lovely, realistic pictures is also a part of language appreciation.

### **Learning Explosions**

Human development is often not slow and steady; acquisitions seem to arrive suddenly, almost overnight, and with explosive impact. Such learning explosions are the sudden outward manifestation of a long process of internal growth. For example, the explosion of spoken language around two years of age is the result of many months of inner preparation and mental development.

### **Mathematical Mind**

All babies are born with mathematical minds. They have a propensity to learn things which enhance their ability to be exact and orderly, to observe, compare and classify. Humans naturally tend to calculate, measure, reason, abstract, imagine and create. But this vital part of intelligence must be given help and direction for it to develop and function. If mathematics is not part of the young child's experience, his subconscious mind will not be accepting of it at a later date.

### **Maximum Effort**

Children seem to enjoy difficult work, work which tests their abilities and provides a sense of their growing power. They exult in giving their maximum effort. For example, a tiny child will struggle to carry a tray with juice glasses or push a heavy wheelbarrow whereas school-age children, if allowed to make up their own problems, will prefer to sink their teeth into a challenging equation  $(1+2+3+4...+10)^2$  rather than drill on  $3+5=$ \_\_ and  $6+2=$ \_\_.

### **Memory Games**

During the 3-6 year-old period, children are building their memory. Sensorial games provide children an opportunity to strengthen their mental muscles. A typical game goes like this: A child picks up a geometric shape from a drawer, lightly traces the shape with her fingers and then sets it back on the table. She then must *carry that shape in her mind* as she walks across a room full of distractions and finds its match among a set of cards at the opposite end of the room. Games like this build visual memory, a key component of reading. Similar games can be played in other sensory modes, such as the auditory and tactile.

### **Mixed Ages**

One of the hallmarks of the Montessori method is that children of mixed ages work together in the same class. Age groupings are based on developmental planes. Children from 3 to 6 years of age are together in the children's House; 6 to 9 year-olds share the lower elementary and the upper elementary is made up of 9 to 12 years old. Because the work is individual, children progress at their own pace; there is cooperation rather than competition between the ages.

### **Normalization**

If young children are repeatedly able to experience periods of spontaneous concentration on a piece of work freely chosen, they will begin to display the characteristics of normal development: a love of work, an attachment to reality, and a love of silence and working alone. Normalized children are happier children—enthusiastic, generous, and helpful to others. They make constructive work choices and their work reflects their level of development.

### **Points of Interest**

Montessori realized that if children spent too long a time on a complex task or failed to master the necessary details, the exercise would cease to interest them. Therefore, she suggested that *points of interest* be interspersed throughout each activity. These *points* guide the child toward his or her goal and stimulate repetition and interest by offering immediate feedback, or what Montessori called

“control of error.” The child’s performance becomes refined through trial and error, the *points of interest* acting as signposts along the path to success.

### **Prepared Environment**

The Montessori classroom is an environment prepared by the adult for children. It contains all the essentials for optimal development but nothing superfluous. Attributes of a prepared environment include order and reality, beauty and simplicity. Everything is child-sized to enhance the children’s independent functioning. A trained adult and a large group of children of mixed ages make up a vital part of the prepared environment.

### **Presentation**

The adult in a Montessori environment does not teach in the traditional sense. Rather she shows the child how to use the various objects and then leaves them free to explore and experiment. This act of showing is called a *presentation*. To be effective, it must be done slowly and exactly, step by step, and with a minimum of words.

### **Psychic Embryo**

The first three years of life is a period of mental creation, just as the nine months *in utero* is a period of physical creation. The brain awaits experience in the environment to flesh out the genetic blueprint. Since so much mental development occurs after birth, Montessori called the human infant a *psychic embryo*.

### **Repetition**

The young child’s work is very different from the adult’s. When an adult works, he sets out to accomplish some goal and stops working when the object has been achieved. A child, however, does not work to accomplish an external goal but rather an internal one. Consequently, they will repeat an activity until the inner goal is accomplished. The unconscious urge to repeat helps the child to coordinate a movement or acquire some ability.

### **Sensitive Periods**

Young children experience transient periods of sensibility and are intrinsically motivated or urged to activity by specific sensitivities. A child in a sensitive period is believed to exhibit spontaneous concentration when engaged in an activity that matches a particular sensitivity. For example, children in a sensitive period for order will be drawn to activities that involve ordering. They will be observed choosing such activities and becoming deeply concentrated, sometimes repeating the activity over and over without external reward or encouragement. Young children are naturally drawn towards those specific aspects of the environment which meet their developmental needs.

### **Sensorial Materials**

The sensorial materials were created to help young children in the process of creating and organizing their intelligence. Each scientifically designed material isolates a quality found in the world, such as color, size, or shape, and the isolation focuses the attention on this one aspect. Through repeated manipulation of these objects, the child comes to form clear ideas or abstractions. In working with the sensorial materials, the child learns through experience what could not be explained only by words.

### **Simple to Complex**

A principle used in the sequence of presentations in a Montessori classroom. Children are first introduced to a concept or idea in its simplest form. As they progress and become capable of making more complex connections, they are eventually able to handle information that is less isolated.

### **Socialization**

The process by which the individual acquires the knowledge and dispositions that enable him to participate as an effective member of a social group and a given social order. (Osterkorn) Optimal social learning takes place when the children are at different ages. (Hellbruge)

### **Sound Games**

Many children know the alphabet but have not analyzed the sounds in words nor are they aware that words are made up of separate sounds (phonemic awareness). From the age of two (or as soon as the child is speaking fluently), *sound games* can make them aware of the sounds in words. The sound of the letter and not the letter name is pronounced.

### **Three Hour Work Cycle**

Through years of observation around the world, Montessori came to understand that children, when left in freedom, displayed a distinct work cycle which was so predictable it could even be graphed. This cycle with two peaks and one valley lasted approximately three hours. In Montessori schools children have three hours of open, uninterrupted time to choose independent work, become deeply engaged, and repeat to their own satisfaction.

### **Three Period Lesson**

The famous three period lesson of Sequin (Standing) is actually quite simple. The first period is NAMING: "This is thick. This is thin." The second period is RECOGNITION: "Give me the thick. Give me the thin." The third period consists of the PRONUNCIATION OF THE WORD: "What is this?" In three simple steps, the entire learning process is brought into play. The three period lesson is used for giving language.

### **Vocabulary Enrichment**

The young child's vocabulary increases exponentially in the years from 3-6. To feed this natural hunger for words, vocabulary is given. The terms in biology, geometry, and geography can be learned as well as the names of qualities found in the sensorial materials. The child's absorbent mind takes in all these new words "rapidly and brilliantly" (Montessori)

### **Work**

From an evolutionary perspective, the long period of childhood exists so children can learn and experiment in a relatively pressure-free environment. Most social scientists refer to this pressure-free experimentation as *play* although Montessori preferred to call this activity the *work* of childhood. Children certainly are serious when engaged in the kind of play that meets developmental needs and given freedom and time will choose purposeful activities over frivolous make believe ones.

### **Writing to Reading**

In a Montessori environment children usually begin writing before they can read. They are keen to create words with a box of loose letters (the moveable alphabet) or write their words with chalk or

pencil. About six months later, they begin to understand what reading means, and they do so only through associating it with writing.