

**HAZEL CREEK MONTESSORI**  
**HANDBOOK**

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# **HAZEL CREEK MONTESSORI**

## **Preschool and Daycare**

### **Unique to Hazel Creek**

Situated on Bainbridge Island, Hazel Creek encompasses 10 acres of forest and farmland with a meandering stream, bordering designated wetlands and trails leading to “The Grand Forest.”

First built in 1990 by Ollie and Janice Pedersen and their children, Hazel Creek has been carefully developed into one of the most beautiful Pre-school settings in the Northwest. Program facilities include a large barn, covered riding arena, indoor heated swimming pool, playing fields, covered sport court, playground areas, terraced children’s garden, nature trails and a variety of farm animals grazing over the beautiful country landscape. The integration of our outdoor spaces into the total atmosphere of Hazel Creek Montessori sets it apart. Hazel Creek Montessori maintains certified Montessori Trained instructors, Washington State certified life guards, professional equestrian instructors, professionals in the arts, sciences, languages, and Early Childhood Education.

The Montessori education at Hazel Creek Montessori strives to link academic studies with the direct outdoor experiences in nature. Since our inception, the children have participated in weekly 3 mile hikes, daily walks, hands on animal exposure, horseback riding, daily chores, dining outdoors, gardening, harvesting, cooking, swimming and exploring the woods in our own back yard. Our swimming program gives each child the essential benefit of knowing how to swim and be comfortable in and around bodies of water. It is the most important survival skill for human beings and is now proven to allow children ages 3-5 to achieve a wide range of skills earlier than the normal population. The children who were tested scored significantly higher in visual motor skills and in oral expression as well. The children at HCM feel more confident and secure in outdoor settings. Our goal is to create future stewards of the environment by providing meaningful contact with the natural world.

Nature helps to develop a child’s senses, stimulate their imagination and teaches them to take risks and respect the earth. Our method of combining outdoor education along with the indoor academic studies has time and again proven to be a powerful antidote to the many things that ail kids today.

Hazel Creek Montessori has created a beautiful childhood preserve on Bainbridge Island. We are committed to the natural history of our area. Our nature-educational preserve has been at the forefront of a new kind of school reform.

## **Objective**

Hazel Creek Montessori's objective is to develop the whole child. The program offers a variety of daily activities to promote growth in the areas of academic, physical, social and emotional development. Montessori discovered that children have critical learning periods (sensitive periods) for each new level of learning. During these sensitive periods, children absorb the lessons easier and faster than they ever will again. It is imperative that the child not be discouraged during one of these periods. The materials; both traditional, the extensions and contemporary; and environment in a Montessori classroom are designed to promote and nourish the sensitive periods. These periods are what create, in the child, a love of learning and self-confidence that is so essential to a healthy development. To ensure that these objectives are met, continual observation and screening of each child's development is an on-going process.

Hazel Creek Montessori's goal is for each child's needs to be met. We, as Montessori teachers, meet the child where they are, socially, academically, and emotionally. The following are goals that every staff member strives to give each child: The need for belonging, the need for achievement, the need for freedom from fear, The need for love and affection, the need for freedom from guilt, the need for sharing, the need for understanding and knowledge and the need for security.

The Montessori philosophy is integrated into our Toddler Program along with the use of basic Montessori materials. Our Before and After School Program for children ages 5-12 will duplicate the Hazel Creek Montessori classes with a variety of enrichment programs. The before and after school program allows for homework, swimming, art, games and outdoor activities. The children can also sign up for horse lessons during this time.

## **What is Montessori?**

The Montessori philosophy and method of educating children was developed by Maria Montessori. She believed that children learn by actively manipulating the interrelated materials. Through repetition of movement, incorporating the hand and the brain, the inherent lesson within the material becomes a part of the mind. Therefore, the intricate process of the Montessori classroom is successful because of the skillfully developed activities and materials, and a meticulous method for administering them. The foundation of Montessori learning is the practical life section of the classroom. This section is based on everyday activities that help the child develop their small muscle and hand-eye coordination. The activities develop the base for upper level learning. The other areas of a Montessori classroom are sensorial, language, math, geography and botany. (Geared accordingly for the toddler room.)

## **How does Montessori differ from the Standard Classroom?**

The Montessori system differs in order of sequence. The Montessori classroom is set up so the environment and work are what control the child's activity. The child and his or her interests are the next order of priority. The teacher is the facilitator of the

environment. After the teacher has established the scope of readiness for each child, individual lessons will be presented. In this way, every child is meeting his or her own separate potential.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**We conduct our business according to DSHS non-discrimination plan.**

### **Hazel Creek Activities Include:**

- ~ Montessori work time
- ~ Circle time
- ~ Spanish
- ~ ASL
- ~ Art
- ~ Music/ Dance
- ~ Horseback riding
- ~ Swimming
- ~ Sports/ Games
- ~ Hiking
- ~ Recess
- ~ Snacks
- ~ Lunch
- ~ Nap (for children who need one)

### **Sign-In and Sign-Out Sheets**

You are required to sign your child in and out every day per state law. Sign in and sign out sheets are in each classroom and lobby of the school.

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment requires a registration fee of \$75/family (one time fee) plus a deposit of one months' tuition. We require a 30-day notification for withdrawing your child from our program. The one months deposit goes towards your child's last calendar month at Hazel Creek Montessori. If you do not use up your deposit for your child's last month, you forgo your deposit. It can not be applied to another sibling's tuition or for summer camp once they are no longer in our kindergarten program. (SEE PARENT AGREEMENT)

### **90-Day Trial Period**

Hazel Creek Montessori has a 90-day trial period for every student enrolled. For the harmonious interactions between staff, parents and administration, Hazel Creek Montessori retains the right as a private school to ask for the immediate withdrawal of your child due to philosophical differences. We have a zero tolerance for bullying and threatening behavior.

## **Withdrawal**

If a concern develops, you will refer to our Parent Manual and follow the steps outlined for a successful resolution.

If we find a resolution is not possible, after allowing a 30-day trial period from the time you voiced your concern and decide to withdraw your child, then you forfeit your deposit and registration fee. If after having just paid and you chose not to follow the steps provided, you will forfeit that month's tuition along with your deposit and registration fee.

## **Tuition**

Payment is made by ACH debit giving us authorization for direct deposit. If you bring your child an extra day, per ok of the office, you must pay \$75 for a full day, \$45 for a half day. We will debit your account. We do not discount/ make up for missed days, vacations, for a prolonged absence due to emergencies or travel, or for sick days. Tuition will remain the same regardless of how many days your child has missed. We do a tuition increase at the start of every year.

## **Emergency Information**

Please keep all of your emergency information up-to-date at all times. Even if your information is temporary, it should be given to the head teacher and office as soon as you information changes.

## **Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect**

Licensed childcare providers and their staff are required by Washington State law to report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect (RCW 26.44.030(1)). In doing so, they will have civil immunity under the law for good faith reporting. Failure to report can result in a gross misdemeanor charge.

## **Communications**

Please read daily bulletins and other important information from our Parent Message Board. These are located in each classroom as well as in the main lobby. If you have any questions concerning your child or school policy, ask the contact person responsible. If you are unhappy about an issue, talk to the person it involves within 24 hours, not other parents or staff members.

## **Pick-up Policy**

Hazel Creek Montessori will not release any child in our school to anyone, except the parents, without **written** permission from the parents. We will ask for positive identification from those individuals picking up your child, if needed. Anyone who will

be picking your child on a consistent basis needs to be added to the pick-up list in your child's file. Please pick-up on time or you will be charged automatically.

Emergency pick-up is sometimes necessary. It is the responsibility of each parent to be sure that someone other than you can pick-up your child; i.e., power outage, snow storm, late ferryboats, etc. Please have this information available to us at all times.

### **Holidays and Closures**

Hazel Creek Montessori celebrates all religious holidays that pertain to our students. Hazel Creek Montessori is closed for all Federal Holidays including but not limited to, Christmas Eve., Christmas Day, New years Eve., New Years Day, and Thanksgiving weekend. All children enrolled for our half day program follow the Pubic School Schedule- refer to calendar. We close if the Public Schools are closed due to weather. If the Public Schools start late, we start on time. We DO NOT make up days due to weather, even if the Public School does. Listen to your radio stations for closure information. We will post two (2) additional days of closure for maintenance.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

We are a 100% NUT FREE school! Only seed butters or soy butter is allowed. All sandwiches need to be labeled with the type of butter, or we will not give it to your child. Children bring their own lunch in a lunch box, labeled with their name- No brown bags allowed. Lunches need to be well balanced with healthy options for your child. No more than 1 treat/ sugary item per lunch. Each child is to bring a water bottle, labeled with their name, to school to have on hand throughout the day. Hazel Creek Montessori will provide snacks for the children throughout the day. We will not heat up food in plastic container due to toxins from plastic products. Please pack heat ups in glass containers.

### **Clothing**

Each child is required to pack a fresh backpack and bring daily. You're required to label and include a change of clothing, boots, coats and mittens, etc. Dress your child as though we are going outside every day, regardless of weather- raincoats, hats, and extra layers. All children are required to wear rain boots each day during rainy weather. No tie shoes or flip flops at school. Our school is situated in a country farm-like setting; expect to pick up your child with dirty or wet clothing on occasion, as we encourage them to enjoy the elements without fear of getting dirty. If this occurs early in the day, they can change themselves or get help to change. Please do not ask your child to stay clean! That restricts your child's ability to explore.

### **Naps and Blankets**

Hazel Creek Montessori has a nap room for those who need a rest during the day. Children 3 ½ to 5 years old will take a nap at the request of their parents or when a teacher feels they may need a rest. All children under 3 ½ will take a daily nap between

the hours of 12-3. Each child taking a nap will have a mat with a mat sheet to lie on that is labeled with their name. All sheets will be stored in a zip lock bag labeled with the child's name and laundered on Friday. For napping children- please bring a clean blanket from home at the beginning of your child's week, and take home to launder at the end of their week.

### **Hygiene and Hand Washing Policies**

Children will be assisted with washing their own hands, when coming in from outside, after using the toilet, and before handling food. Adults will wash hands and clean surfaces after diapering, toileting and after attending to an ill child. Adults will wear gloves when preparing food for the children. We will use organic 7<sup>th</sup> Generation products, approved by the Washington State Health Department, to disinfect our school. Limited amounts of Clorox solution will be used to disinfect the diaper changing table.

### **Toys**

No outside toys from home may be brought to school. Sharing day should be an item that starts with the letter of the week or is educational. Books from home are always welcome.

### **Hikes and Field trips**

We often go on spontaneous hikes. Please arrive on time so that your child does not miss out on our wonderful hike that day. The hikes will traverse our school and private property leading to public and private trails. The children will be welcome to explore the Pedersen Farm for occasional supervised outings.

### **Toddlers**

We encourage toddlers to be without a pacifier, sippy cup, and blanket throughout the day. Please help establish this for independence. We do not use bottles in the toddler room, just sippy cups or water bottles.

### **Diapers**

All diapers will be provided by the parent. We will provide all wipes. We will help toilet train your toddler with your permission.

### **Discipline Policy**

We are concerned about the safety and appropriate behavior of the students who attend Hazel Creek Montessori. Therefore, we have established rules that encourage a positive environment for everyone. The rules that have been established for the students attending our school will not inhibit their natural creativity and social growth.

## **Dismissal Policy**

We will encourage all behavior to be positively directed in a child. If any child at Hazel Creek Montessori continues to display behavior such as fighting, hitting, and biting beyond a 2 week period, they may be asked to leave for the benefit of everyone. We have a ZERO tolerance policy for bullying or threatening behavior. Such Behavior will result in immediate expulsion.

If a child's behavior becomes a problem in school, we will take the following steps ( e.g. hitting, pushing, resisting discipline, bullying, intimidating, frightening others):

1. Document behavior.
2. Notify the parents in a timely fashion.
3. Meet with the parents.
4. Try to come up with workable solutions for both school and home.
5. Continue to assess, evaluate, and compile information and conference with his/her teachers and specialists.
6. If this is not successful, we may choose to ask for outside help by a professional at the parent's expense.
7. Parents must contact the professional to contact the school within a one-week period.
8. If a child's behavior continues to be a disruption, after implementing the above, HCM will ask for removal of your child. Should complaints continue or new developments occur that put other children at risk, we will require immediate removal of your child and the above does not apply. ( For our summer program, if after one-week we are unable to curtail unacceptable behavior, we will ask the child to be removed for our program.)
9. Should you decide not to follow these guidelines, your withdrawal from our program remains appropriate.
10. The ability to renegotiate is possible if a workable situation can be found for both parties involved.

## **Medication**

Hazel Creek does not dispense medication to children unless it is considered an emergency. Any medication will require pharmacy labels, parent's written permission and physician's authorization. Names, dates, labels and instructions should be clearly marked. We will return any unused portions. Hazel Creek Montessori does not keep bulk medication to be given for general use.

## **Sick Policy**

On the advice of health experts, we will not allow children with any of the following symptoms to be or remain in care:

Fever of 100 F. Auxiliary (under arm) or higher AND who also have one or more of the following:

\*Diarrhea      \*Earache      \*Show signs of irritability or confusion

\*Sore Throat      \*Rash

*A fever up to 100 f, without any of these symptoms, will not automatically result in your child being excluded from care.*

1. Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within a 24-hour period.
2. Diarrhea of 3 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period or 1 bloody stool.
3. Draining rash or sore.
4. Eye discharge or pink eye. Children/staff can be readmitted after:

\*Medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial infection or,

\*24 hours on antibiotic treatment.

5. Fatigue preventing the child from being a part of regular activities.
6. Children/staff with open oozing sores, which cannot be covered, will not be allowed to be at the center until:

\*24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment or,

\*sores are properly covered (e.g., bandage/clothing, staff-gloves) or,

\*sores are healed

8. Lice and scabies. Children/staff may be readmitted after treatment and if no nits are visible.

If childcare staff or the director has concerns about a child's ability to safely return to care, we reserve the right to request a note from the child's healthcare provider.

We ask that ill children, as described above in 1-8, not attend childcare for the following reasons:

\*They are unable to be an active part of our daily program.

\*They expose other children and staff to illnesses, and

\*They are at risk for being exposed to other diseases when their resistance is low

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