

HAZEL CREEK MONTESSORI

HANDBOOK

Hazel Creek Montessori
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Preschool and Daycare

Unique to Hazel Creek:

Situated on Bainbridge Island, Hazel Creek encompasses a 10 acre parcel of forest and farmland with a meandering stream, that borders designated wetlands and trails leading to the “Grand Forest” and “Meigs Wetlands” of Bainbridge Island.

First built in 1990 by Ollie and Janice Pedersen, Hazel Creek has been carefully developed into one of the most beautiful preschool settings in the Pacific Northwest. Program facilities include a large barn, covered sports arena, indoor heated swimming pool, playing fields, forested trails and campgrounds, a covered sport court, playground structures, a terraced children’s vegetable garden, extensive manicured lawns, rolling pastures, a serene Japanese touring garden, orchards, all combined together to create a beautiful country landscape for children to explore. Our goal is to create future stewards of the environment by providing meaningful contact with the natural world. The integration of our outdoor spaces into the total atmosphere of Hazel Creek is what sets it apart from any other facility.

HCM maintains certified Montessori teachers and Early Childhood Educators. Our staff also includes language specialists and certified Red Cross Lifeguards along with specialists for the Arts and STEM. The Montessori education at Hazel Creek links the academic studies with direct outdoor experiences in nature. Since inception, the children have participated in daily activities such as hiking, outdoor dining and picnics, gardening, harvesting, cooking, biking, swimming and exploring the natural world in their own “back yard.”

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. By creating this nature based childhood preserve on Bainbridge Island, we remain committed to the natural history of our area and continue to be 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. Maria 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 the environment in the Montessori classrooms, 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 in an on-going process at our school. We conduct parent-teacher conferences every year to assess each child's development.

Hazel Creek Montessori's goal is for each child's need to be met. We, as Montessori teachers, meet the child where they are, socially, emotionally and academically. The following are goals that every staff member strives to achieve with each child. 1.The need for belonging 2.The need for freedom from fear 3.The need for love and affection 4.The need for freedom from guilt 5. The need for sharing 6.The need for understanding, knowledge and security.

What is Montessori?

The Montessori philosophy and method of educating children was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori. She believed that children learn by actively manipulating interrelated materials and through repetition of movement. The incorporation of the hand and the brain is automatic. She believed that the inherent lesson within the materials 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 of 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 of learning. The other areas of the Montessori classroom are sensorial, language, math, geography and botany. The incorporation of Mindfulness and Yoga in our program, help to integrate both the body and mind for all levels of the Montessori studies and experiences. Social justice and racial equality are a part of the fabric of our learning and contemplation.

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 DCYF non-discrimination policy

Hazel Creek Activities Include:

- *Circle Time
- *Montessori Lessons
- *Montessori Work Time
- *Cultural Awareness
- *Social Justice and Racial Equality
- *STEM
- *Environmental Science
- *Music & Dance
- *Art
- *Gardening
- *Cooking
- *Hiking & Forest Bathing
- *Swimming
- *Recess
- *Snacks
- *Indoor/outdoor dining for Lunch
- *Sports & Game
- *Yoga & Mindfulness

Sign-In and Sign-out Procedure

Every parent or guardian is required to sign their child in and out every day.

Enrollment and Tuition

To register your child for enrollment **or to be placed on our waiting list**, a \$170 registration fee is due along with the admissions forms filled out in **COMPLETION**. Admission forms need to be returned to the office via email. If we are able to enroll your child at the time of registration, a one month deposit is also due at that time.

Payment is made using your ACH information, giving us authorization for direct deposit. Your deposit is non-refundable and will be used for the last 30 days your child is in attendance. You are responsible for a 12 month contract. If Hazel Creek remains open and you decide to withdraw your child for any reason, you will remain responsible for the remaining payments due for your 12 month contract. Our 12 month program is for the months of September through August. (You may enroll your child throughout the year, if space is available, as long as your child enrolls through the month of August for the remainder of that year.) The one month deposit pays for the last 30 days of your child's enrollment and is non-refundable. We require a 30 day notice, (by July 1st), to credit your account for the last month of August. There is an annual supplies fee that is due March 1st, for the following school year that starts the following September. The supplies fee guarantees your child's placement for the following year and is non-refundable. (The supplies fee will be prorated for a mid year enrollment.)

Hazel Creek does not discount or make up for missed days due to vacation, weather, pandemics or sickness. Tuition will remain the same regardless of how many days your child has missed. Tuition may increase every year due to the cost of living expense.

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 and supplies fee. If after just having just paid and you choose not to follow the steps provided, you will forfeit that month's tuition along with your deposit, registration fee and supplies fee.

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 office as soon as your information changes.

Reporting 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.

Communication

Please read the daily boards that are posted outside every classroom. Teachers will send out news bulletins to their classes and the office will send out weekly and monthly announcements as needed. Every parent needs to contact their child's teacher directly if the child will be absent or late. We require that parents contact their child's teacher to communicate any concerns or questions. All concerns should be addressed within 24 hours of the event leading to a concern, and done directly with the staff person that was present. All matters regarding tuition, policies and scheduling should be done directly with the office.

Pick-up and Drop-off

Hazel Creek will not release a child at our school, to anyone who does not have written permission and is not written down on the child's emergency form. You may call or write into the office if you need to have someone pick-up your child that is not on the list you have provided to us. Please have an emergency back-up to have someone able to pick-up your child from school if there is an emergency. If you are late picking up your child your account will be charged \$1/per minute. If there is a power outage or if there is an emergency at the school, we require that your child is **picked up within a half hour time period.**

Holidays and Closures

Hazel Creek celebrates all religious holidays that may pertain to our student population and the cultures around the world. Hazel Creek is closed for all Federal Holidays including but not limited to, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after. Hazel Creek does not make up days due to weather. Should the public schools close due to snow and ice, Hazel Creek will also close and follow their protocol. If Hazel Creek remains open during a pandemic, we will continue to charge the monthly tuition to any family that may wish to withdraw their child for a short or undetermined amount of time. We do not make up days due to holidays, vacations or absence during the summer months.

Lunches and Snacks

We are 100% nut free facility. You may send "sun butter" sandwiches but **ALL OTHER NUT BUTTERS are not allowed.** Children need to bring a healthy, well balanced lunch with no more than one small sugary treat included. The lunch box needs to be a solid lunch box. No paper bags please!! Please pack their lunch in containers that will keep their food warm, if need be. We will not be heating up lunches in the microwave. Please include ALL UTENSILS in their lunch box so that we do not have to provide them at lunch time. The lunch box needs to have their first and last name written on the outside of their lunch box in clear letters. All of the containers and utensils also need to have their name written on them. Mark all containers and utensils and make sure they are easily opened by your child. Please provide a water bottle for your child's daily use and mark the bottle with your child's first and last name.

Clothing

Every child is required to bring a backpack, marked on the outside with first and last name, with a COMPLETE change of clothes. Parents need to check the backpack every night to replace clothes that were possibly used. Parents are required to label coats, hats, mittens, etc. Please dress your child for going outside EVERY day regardless of the weather. There is no bad weather, just bad clothes. Please do not let your child choose their clothes if they are not appropriate. For each season, provide the proper layers, **water proof boots and rain jackets with HOODS when rains arrive. No tie shoes, flip flops, fancy or open toed shoes are allowed for any season.** Our school is situated in the country so please expect to pick-up your child with dirty or wet clothes on occasion. We encourage them to enjoy the elements without concern about getting dirty. Please do not ask your child to "stay clean" or send them in new shoes and ask them to not get them dirty. By doing so, it restricts your child's ability to explore.

Naps and Blankets

Both the toddlers and napper class take only one nap a day after lunch time. If your toddler is used to taking 2 naps/day, please start them on a one nap routine before they start coming to HCM a few weeks before. We allow the children to sleep their natural sleep cycle and do not wake them up for a "shorter" nap. We provide a sleep mat and clean sheet to cover the mat. The sheets are stored in a plastic bag with the child's name and will be laundered at the school once a week. Parents provide a clean blanket and take home once a week to launder. Children are welcome to bring a "stuffed" for comfort at nap time.

Hygiene and Hand Washing Policies

Upon arrival at school, children are required to wash their hands. Staff and children will wash their hands in every situation that the state law requires for health and sanitation. We follow the DCYF guidelines for both hand washing and cleaning. HCM uses Seventh Generation products for disinfecting our school. We limit the amounts of chlorine solution that is used in our facility.

Toys from Home

No outside toys from home may be brought to school. Books from home are welcome if they are educational or have a good storyline. Please no Super Hero books!! Depending on our curriculum, we may have students bring in one sharing item for a special day.

Hikes and Field Trips: (both onsite and off property)

HCM teachers go on spontaneous hikes with the children, both on the property and on designated trails off the property, that are nearby. The hikes will traverse our school and private property leading to public and private trails. The children are welcome to explore the Pedersen 10 acre farm for supervised outings. The children have supervised access to the outbuildings on the Pedersen Farm for theatre, yoga, sports, swimming and cooking field trips.

Toddlers

We encourage toddlers to be without a pacifier, bottle, stuffy and blanket throughout the day. Please wean your child off of a bottle before having them attend school. We use sippy cups and water bottles. Please provide either a sippy cup or a water bottle, with first and last name, for use during the day.

Diapers

We only use disposable diapers provided by the parents. We encourage that you only use the most environmentally safe brand. We provide the wipes. We will do our best to support your child at school while they are learning to be independent in using the restroom. We highly recommend the book, "Oh Crap," for potty training. Even though the book highly recommends that you have your child go without a diaper during the potty training period, we can not allow children who are potty training to go without a diaper. This is due to sanitation of our carpets and classrooms.

We require all children to be potty trained before moving to the A-Frame building. We understand that accidents happen, but your child will need to be able to use the restroom without consistent reminders.

Should your child have consistent accidents after transitioning to the A-Frame it will be required for the family to keep their child home until they are fully potty trained. We do not have the diaper changing facilities in the upstairs classroom. Please see the Hazel Creek Montessori 'Potty Training' handout for more information.

Discipline Policy

We are concerned about the safety and appropriate behavior of the students who attend Hazel Creek. 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 & Zero Tolerance Zone for Hatred and Anger

We will encourage all behavior to be positively directed for every child. We use distraction, mindfulness and yoga to help children self regulate. We avoid time out, shaming and use positive language and role modeling to help children acquire self discipline intrinsically.

If any child at Hazel Creek continues to display behavior such as defying, fighting, hitting, biting, running away, or inciting hatred, they will be asked to leave for the benefit of our school community.

We have a **ZERO** tolerance policy for bullying, threatening behavior or inciting hatred. Any indication that your child is repeating false information, racial or religious bias or promoting social injustice by repeating what they have heard or been told to believe at home, which encourages their acquired bias, we will ask for immediate removal from our school.

We will not tolerate the perpetuation of ANY conspiracy theories or intolerance of cultural and racial differences from any member of our families. We will not tolerate the display of hatred on articles of clothing, stickers on cars or a public display of intolerance by any family member that has enrolled their children at our school. If we hear your child repeating any falsehoods, we accept that we are not going to change their home environment, but we will however, be proactive and do everything possible to keep the environment at our school, one of inclusion, love and empathy for all members of our society. If your philosophy does not align with this policy, you need to withdraw your child from our school immediately.

If a child's behavior becomes a problem in school, we will take the following steps:

1. Document the child's behavior
2. Notify the parents immediately
3. Have a meeting with both the teacher and a witness or call for immediate removal
4. Request immediate intervention with professional counselors if it is mutually agreed upon that the circumstance can allow for time to improve the child's behavior.
5. If Hazel Creek decides to continue having the child attend, there will be a re-evaluation at the end of a 2 week period to determine if there has been a significant effort and improvement on the part of the family and child to remedy the situation.

Medication

Hazel Creek does not dispense any medication to children unless it is considered an emergency, such as Benedryl or an Epi pen for allergies. Any medication that is kept at our school for emergency purposes will require pharmacy labels, a doctor's written authorization, and our medication form filled out completely with the parents signature and date. We will return any unused or out of date medications to the child's parents. Hazel Creek asks that if your child is sick and needs medication for colds, etc., we ask that you keep them home until they are symptom free. (See Sick Policy)

Sick Policy

**It is extremely important to monitor your child's health at home before bringing them to school. If they are dropped off and we discover they have symptoms or your child tells us they are sick or threw up the night before, you will be asked to return immediately to pick them up from our care.

Hazel Creek follows the health guidelines set forth by DCYF and the DOH. We will not allow children to attend our school or remain in our care, if they have the following symptoms:

1. Fever of 100 F
2. Diarrhea
3. Sore throat
4. Rash (must be seen by a doctor to determine the cause)
5. Signs of an illness, fatigue, irritability or confusion
6. Vomiting
7. Eye discharge or pink eye (must be seen by a doctor to determine the cause)
8. Oozing sores
9. Lice or Scabies
10. See Covid-19 Policy for further information

Your children need to stay home until they are symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

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

****All children enrolled at Hazel Creek need to have their immunization records on file. The records need to be on our form ONLY that is provided in the admissions packet. All shot records need to be updated when new vaccines are given to the child.**