



Dear New Parents,

Welcome to Belltower Montessori Academy. We want to introduce ourselves and give you a more detailed description of our program. We want to assure you that all of your child's needs will be met.

The Program

One of the important characteristics of our program is an uninterrupted three-hour work period in the morning to promote a love for learning, spontaneous concentration, self-discipline and joy. Please plan to arrive on time with your child to avoid interrupting a class once it starts. Occasionally, if it happens that you arrive later, a Teacher Assistant will receive your child at the door to avoid disrupting the children's work cycle.

Transition

To ease your child throughout the transition process, we invite you to observe in your child's class for 30 minutes after you have enrolled. Prior to your start date, we also offer a two hour classroom visit, wherein we encourage you to leave your child with us. It is perfectly normal if your child is upset during the first few days of school. Sometimes the transition can take several weeks in order for a child to be fully confident and be able to walk through that door without becoming upset. Be assured we will be understanding and patient.

Conferences

There are two conferences per year: in November to set the goals; in May to discuss the child's academic and social growth. Each time a Progress Report will be discussed at the conference.

Open-Door Policy

Parents are invited to schedule a time to come and observe their child. Please allow a new child to adjust to the classroom environment before you do so.

Classroom Materials

Sometimes children become so attached to the Montessori materials in the class that they want to take some of the smaller pieces home. We would appreciate it if you could check

your child's pockets/lunchbox and bring those items back to school, as each of them has an important educational function in the class.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothes and closed-toe shoes. As the children are encouraged to roll up their sleeves when washing their hands and working with water activities, please help your child choose tops with sleeves that are easy to roll up by themselves. Please make sure to label all personal items with a permanent marker or clothing labels. You will need to bring the following items for your child:

- ✓ Water cup with enclosed spout
- ✓ Sunscreen and a Sunhat
- ✓ At least 2 full changes of clothes
- ✓ Diapers, wipes and diaper cream (if needed)

You will be provided with a school bag for your child's nap supplies. Each Monday you will drop off their nap items and take them home every Friday for washing.

- ✓ A fitted crib sheet
- ✓ Small thin throw Blanket

Toys

Toys are not encouraged at the school. They distract from the academic Montessori lessons being presented. However, books are welcomed any day of the week.

Share Day

Fridays are Share Days. Each month our class will be studying a variety of topics. Share Day is a great time for class to discuss our monthly units of study. Our share theme will be posted on the class notice board and we ask that all share items relate to the subject matter. For example... if our unit of study is covering 'The Oceans' your child could bring a book about the sea or a seashell.

Birthdays (Celebration of Life)

We have a special way to celebrate children's birthdays in a Montessori classroom. A candle is placed in the middle of a circle the children have formed (this represents the sun). Your child will walk around a "sun" with a globe in his/her hands to represent each year of the child's life. As the birthday boy or girl walks around the circle, all of the other children sing a special song. We encourage you to make a birthday poster, choosing a photo for each year of your child's life. Next to the picture please provide a small narration detailing the event being shared. The birthday child then blows out the "sun" and all the children sing 'Happy Birthday'.

You are invited to share in your child's birthday celebrations. Please consult with the teacher at least one week before that day as to the time of morning the celebration will occur. You may also bring in a healthy store purchased snack for the class. Please check with the teacher for snack ideas.

Birthday Library Book Program

On your child's birthday you may honor him/her with a permanent placement of a book in the classroom library. Your child will participate in presenting this gift that he/she selected to the class. A photo of your child and a label containing the child's name, age and birth date will be attached to the inside cover of the book recognizing this permanent gift to the class.

Lunch

Mealtime is an essential part of bringing the community together and practicing social skills as well as learning to retain and follow a certain sequence when setting up for lunch. We talk about good nutrition, manners and caring for their environment.

Children eat their lunches family style. They properly set up the tables together and help each other when serving food. They also participate in the clean-up, so we encourage parents to extend it to their home environment to practice these skills and train their memory.

We care about the health of the children under our care, and we are helping them learn to make healthy food choices. The school offers a lunch program, consisting of healthy, balanced and nutritional foods.

We encourage low-sugar items, as high-sugar foods can influence your child's metabolism, giving him/her a sudden burst of energy and then leave him/her with none, which influences the child's day and his/her ability to focus. Include your child into choosing and packing their own lunch and helping them feel responsible for their choices. Let them know what the main entrée is and what their dessert is (fresh or dried fruit). Please avoid packing multiple snack items as it overwhelms children, and they tend to finish the main entrée in a hurry to get to the snack items.

As a part of caring for their environment, we encourage you to pack their lunches in a reusable plastic container rather than plastic bags. It minimizes the waste as well as helps children to better organize their lunch area.

If you have a thermos available at home, you can use it for keeping the child's food warm. It assists in your child's independence as well as helps develop fine motor skills and wrist movement needed for writing when twisting the lid to open and then to close. For cold lunches, please put an ice pack in your child's lunch box if needed.

We have limited refrigerator space and therefore we are unable to accommodate the children's lunches.

Website

Our school's website is: www.belltowermontessori.com. We appreciate your reviews and comments. On our website, you will find a Parent section with a drop-down option listing each classroom. Each class is password protected, please contact the office to access your child's classroom page. Here, you will find lots of information about what activities your child has been doing or what is planned for the coming month. We will also post photos of activities.

In addition to our own website, within your child's class under 'Available Links' you will find a link to a 'Myprocare account'. Use the same email supplied to us when registering and you will be able to access your child's records, run off accounting reports, check their schedule, immunization records etc.

Facebook

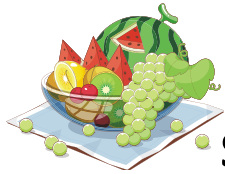
Belltower Montessori Academy has an active Facebook page. It is a forum for current parents to connect to each other and the school, and a way to market ourselves to prospective parents. We want our page to be both vibrant and relevant, and we need your help to accomplish this. You can find us on Facebook once you are logged in under: Belltower Montessori Academy.

If you have a Facebook account, go to our page and "like" us. When you like us or comment on our posts or photos, it helps our page become visible to more people. Once you are on the page, please browse the tabs and links. You'll find up-to-date photos from each class, videos and links about Montessori.

E-mails

Please provide us with your E-mail address for school-parent communication. We are always here to help you with any questions you might have.

We look forward to an exciting year working with your children!



Snack Host Program Suggestions

Being a Snack host is an integral part of the daily Montessori experience for our children. We encourage you to include your child in the planning and purchasing of the snack for the class as part of the child's *Practical Life* experience. For each day's snack, please bring at least **2** of the basic four food groups **unprepared** so that we can assist your child in setting up the snack at school. All food must be **prepackaged and store bought, from a restaurant or bakery.**

Below, we have included suggestions. *Please avoid sugary treats such as cookies, gummies, and cupcakes. They will not be served to the children.*

Dairy	Grains	Protein	Vegetables/Fruits
String Cheese	Flatbread	Turkey slices	Carrots
Cream Cheese spread	Pita bread	Ham slices	Celery
Yogurt	Rice Cakes	Pepperoni	Broccoli
Greek Yogurt	Cereal (nut-free, low sugar)	Salami	Cucumbers
Cheese Slices	Tortilla Chips(Whole grain)	Cheese slices	Cauliflower
Cottage Cheese	Rolls	String cheese	Edamame
Yogurt smoothie drink/low sugar	Pretzels	Prepackage Meat/cheese tray	Bananas
	Bagels	Hummus	Grapes
	Wheat Thins	Guacamole	Strawberries/berries
	English Muffins		Dried Fruit
	Flour tortillas		Applesauce
	Sunflower seeds		Apples
	Pita chips		Cutie Oranges
			Prepackaged fruit or vegetable tray