



Family Handbook 2023-2024

“The secret of success in education is found to lie in the right use of imagination in awakening interest, and the stimulation of seed of interest already sown.”

- Dr. Maria Montessori

Philosophy

Breckenridge Montessori is committed to providing a nurturing, peaceful, and loving educational environment for children. The children are valued and encouraged to develop a natural love of learning and curiosity to guide them throughout life.

Mission Statement

Breckenridge Montessori is committed to providing the highest quality educational experience for children aged 2 ½ to 6 years. We are dedicated to offering Dr. Maria Montessori’s method of education to the children and parents of Summit County. Genuine Montessori lessons and materials, healthy play, nature and science exploration, and the many cultural and recreational opportunities in Breckenridge, further enrich our school environment.

Goals

Our students will realize a life-long love of learning and self-discipline to guide them in the pursuit of their hopes and dreams. We provide a small community school as a unique childcare and preschool to the families of Summit County. Our program is accessible and affordable to children and families of all racial and socio-economic backgrounds.

Location

Breckenridge Montessori is located in a historic Victorian home in downtown Breckenridge, CO.

Curriculum

Dr. Maria Montessori’s method of education forms the basis for the curriculum at Breckenridge Montessori. The children are the central figures in their own development. The prepared environment consists of practical life activities, sensorial materials, mathematics, language, art, music, geography, science, peace education, and cultural extensions. Our outdoor environment offers naturally based play spaces.

Minimal waste

We are committed to using earth-friendly products, reducing, reusing and recycling. We believe we can make a difference for our earth by making such simple choices.

TV/video viewing

Age-appropriate tv/video viewing may be introduced for curriculum-related activities.

Ages

Our community generally serves children ages 2 ½ - 7 years. In Montessori education, each child is viewed as an individual with recognition that the children are ready to expand their learning experiences at different ages.

Staff and staff/student ratios

At Breckenridge Montessori we have a qualified Early Childhood Teacher per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (CDEC) qualification requirements who is guided by a trained Montessori and/or a trained Montessori teacher leading the classroom with an assistant supporting the teacher(s). We maintain a 1:8 to 1:10 staff to student ratio.

Hours of operation, drop-off and pickup

Breckenridge Montessori is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

Drop-off: 8:00am to 8:45am.

To encourage your child's independence, please escort him/her to the school door or playground gate, a teacher will meet you at the door or gate and will walk your child inside the school environment.

If you have a special message to relay to the teachers at drop-off, such as your child did not sleep well or someone (who is authorized to pick-up) other than you will be picking up, please let us know via email or note, or call the school.

We do not offer mid-morning or afternoon drop-offs as our morning classroom interactions are meaningful and we want your child present during this important part of the day. The only exception for missing the morning session is for doctor, dentist, or other medical appointments. Please let the staff know of medical appointments by writing a note or emailing ahead of time.

Texting staff to communicate important information during school hours is not allowed per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood (Licensing or Breckenridge Montessori's policies). Cell phones are not permitted in the classroom. If you have an urgent matter, call the school.

Pick-up: 3:45p – 4:30p full day students

If you plan on picking your child up more than 15 minutes early, let staff know via email, voicemail or note the day of or when you know you'll need an early pick-up.

Please be considerate of our staff and respect the hours of operation. Doors open at 8:00am, children will not be allowed in early. Your child must be picked up and signed out by 4:30pm. If you are going to be late, call the school so we know that you are safe and to know how long we may have to wait. If you are late, a \$5/minute/child fee is applied. After three late pick-ups there is a flat rate fee of \$20 per additional late pick-up, late pick-ups accumulate year to year and will carry over each school year. After five late pickups will be reviewed by the board and could result in loss of enrollment for your child.

The last 15 minutes of the day gets busy with pick-ups, if you'd like to discuss your child's day in-depth, please pick-up before 4:15pm, so the staff has adequate time to communicate with you or communicate with the staff a time, during school hours, that is better for you, such as drop-off the following morning if important information needs to be discussed. Refer to the Communication/Conferences section if you have questions on communication.

Checking in and out

Per state licensing, and to receive Universal Preschool (UPK) and Summit Pre-K Program (SPK) funding, you must check your child in and out each day. Use the Early Learning Ventures app to scan the QR code: <https://elv.earlylearningventures.org/portal/login>. The QR code will be printed each day, please feel free to remind staff if the QR needs to be printed. If you are unable to check in/out, relay that information to staff via an email with date, check in/out time and reason you could not check in/out. After five failures to check in / out, your child's enrollment case will go to the board for review and could result in loss of enrollment for your child.

School Calendar

A school calendar is available at www.breckmontessori.com. During the school year, Breckenridge Montessori follows the Summit School District Calendar for vacations, breaks, closures and delays due to inclement weather. Sign up to receive alerts at <http://www.co.summit.co.us/1149/Summit-County-Alert> and/or check the Summit School District website for notifications. We try not to make changes to the calendar during the school year; however, it is occasionally necessary to alter previously planned dates. Parents and staff will be notified of the new calendar version.

At Breckenridge Montessori, we observe the following days off: Labor Day, two days for fall break, a week for Thanksgiving, two weeks in December/January for the holiday break, one week in February for winter break, two days in March for professional development, one week in April for spring break, Memorial Day, two days over the 4th of July, training/in-service days, and three to four weeks in summer. With the exception of June and July, we follow the Summit School District Calendar for breaks.

The first day of school for the 2023-24 school year is Monday, August 21, 2023. The last day of the 2023-24 school year is TBD per the Summit School District calendar 2024-25 start dates, the last day of school is a half day with pick-up by 12:30pm.

If requested, we will put out a sign-up sheet for families prior to vacations in order to help parents coordinate with each other to cover childcare needs during each of these breaks.

Applicant Pool and Admissions

We compile applications into an applicant pool. This allows us to enroll children per the availability of our mixed-age classroom and staffing. Typically, we are able to confirm whether or not we have a spot by 60 days prior to desired enrollment date. Enrolled children's siblings receive priority in the applicant pool.

Tuition and Fees

Payment is due on the 1st of each month. If you request a reduction or increase in enrollment, speak with the director about availability to do so; one month (30 days) notice for reduction, increase or withdrawal in enrollment is required. Each year tuition will increase by 3% (or more) per Breckenridge Montessori's Provider Agreement with the Town of Breckenridge and Early Childhood Options.

Monthly Tuition Pricing 2023-2024

Full day \$80, Half day \$50

3 full days \$1,040; 3 half days \$650

4 full days \$1,387; 4 half days \$867

Hybrid pricing available upon request.

Contact administration for availability and pricing on half day or hybrid schedules.

Other Fees:

Application Fee: \$50 non-refundable, a one-time fee

Snack Fee: \$150 per year for three full days, \$200 per year for four full days

Late Pick-Up after 4:30pm: \$5 per minute, per child

After three late pick-ups there is a flat rate fee of \$20 per additional late pick-up, late pick-ups accumulate year to year and will carry over each school year.

Withdrawal from the Program

Breckenridge Montessori requires one-month/30 day advance notification if a child will be leaving the program. This will allow for the administration to review applicants, schedule tours, and place children in the program. You will be liable for that month's tuition if you do not give a month notice of withdrawal regardless of circumstance.

Drop-in days

We offer limited drop-in days at Breckenridge Montessori; speak with administration for approval for your child to do a drop-in day. The drop-in fees are \$85/day or \$60/morning half day. Drop-in days are pay as you go. Tuition assistance from the Summit Pre-K Program does not apply to drop-in days. Please bring a check with you the morning of the additional drop-in day. If a family calls frequently for drop-in days, we will ask you to increase your enrollment to ensure consistency for staffing, the classroom and your child.

Financial Assistance

We strive to keep tuition costs low and in keeping with the rest of the Breckenridge community childcare options. Families that encounter special financial circumstances during the school year are encouraged to contact the school director. Every effort will be made to accommodate your specific needs. All families are encouraged to apply for financial aid. We currently offer Summit County Tuition Assistance Programs: Summit First Steps, Summit Pre-K Program (SPK),

Town of Breckenridge and Town of Frisco Tuition Assistance Programs, Universal Preschool Program (UPK) and the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP), as possible sources of financial aid.

Personal Belongings and Jewelry

Please have your child bring a bag or backpack he/she can carry independently. Weather appropriate clothing including waterproof boots, jacket, snow pants, mittens/gloves, hat, and sunglasses. Label all personal items; the school is not responsible for lost items. One change of clothing: pants, a shirt, underwear, and socks should be left at the school. Other items to be left at the school are a pair of inside shoes (easy to get on and off like “croc”) and a labeled water bottle. For nap/rest time we provide a comfortable mat and sheet. Your child may bring a blanket or stuffed animal for nap time, please let the teachers know if these items can stay at the school. Jewelry is not available to wear, per CDEC licensing and Summit County Public Health; if you have questions or need an exemption to the policy, contact the director.

Lunch and Possible Allergies

Please pack a lunch, one morning and one afternoon snack (two snacks total) for your child each day. Per licensing, lunches are required to meet the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program standards. If you wish to send a warm/hot lunch, send it warmed up in a thermos and your child may put it on the counter, instead of the refrigerator, so it is warm for lunch time.

Healthy, well-balanced meals in reusable containers are preferred. Keep sugar to a minimum, candy is not allowed. The staff will help to communicate if your child could use larger portions or more food if they are eating their complete lunch and snacks. Due to the severe nature of food allergies, we will notify parents in writing of restricted foods so safe and appropriate lunches are packed. We will also provide a list of suggestions and acceptable foods, speak with the director if you have questions.

Birthday and Holiday Celebrations

We would like to celebrate your child’s birthday in school. Please bring or email a photo from each year of your child’s life so that he/she may build a timeline at school. We invite parents to join us. If your child would like to bring a gift for the school on his/her birthday, the director or teachers have ideas to share. If you would like to send a birthday snack, we allow fresh fruit or vegetable trays pre-packaged per Summit County Public Health guidelines; we do not allow birthday snack preparation at the school. If all students are invited, we will distribute invitations for birthday parties occurring outside of the classroom. We do not hand out thank you notes. If you have important family holidays based on your culture/heritage, we encourage you to speak with our teachers about incorporating them into a special celebration.

Field Trips and Excursions

Throughout the year educational field trips and excursions will be planned. The children will be transported by car, bus, wagon, or on foot. If traveling by car, age-appropriate car seats are required. For each trip involving transportation by car, there will be a permission slip that must be signed by the parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians may be asked to drive for field trips and must show a valid driver’s license and proof of insurance and current registration for their vehicle. For walking and bus activities, parents/legal guardians will sign a one-time permission slip at the beginning of each school year. For each activity, there will be a list of emergency contact information and a first aid kit traveling with the children. If there is an accident, the vehicle will pull off to the side of the road and put on hazards. Each car will have a cell phone and 911 will be called if necessary. All parents/guardians will be called immediately.

Roll call will be taken before leaving for any field trip, when we reach our destination, before leaving to return to school, and when we arrive back at school. We will also take head counts throughout the day. In the case the child arrives late and the class has left on a field trip, a phone call will be made to see if the parent can meet up with the group and location, and/or the child will stay at the center with the director until the group returns.

Student Supervision and Release

Your child’s safety is our highest priority. Our procedures for identifying where children are at all times include using a sign in/out tablet for daily attendance, adult staff continuously moving through the school spaces to ensure that each child visible and safe; and, children are with staff members at all times.

We will release your child only to those people for whom we have written authorization. All non-parent or non-legal guardians must show a current photo identification if the parent/legal guardian has not previously introduced the staff to them. If parents or another authorized person does not show up to pick up a child within the expected time period,

emergency contacts or authorities will be called. If a person attempts an unauthorized pick-up of a child, parents or other emergency contacts will be immediately notified and the person will be asked to leave school grounds. Police will be called at the discretion of the staff.

We want to encourage a strong sense of community and support at the school; however, we ask that families do not request staff to pick-up their children, unless in an emergency or if the request (such as a one-time pick-up) is approved by the administration. This is requested from the administration because of staffing hours, liability on the staff and/or Breckenridge Montessori's behalf, emergencies that may occur (i.e. other families are late), and to avoid increased stress on staffing responsibilities, since staff has many responsibilities as caregivers for the children throughout the day. We want staff to be able to perform their duties at Breckenridge Montessori in the best and most proficient way possible, and we believe drop-offs or pick-ups by staff interfere with our best performance of job duties.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency Contact pick-up your child, or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in loss of enrollment for your child/children at Breckenridge Montessori.

Professional Behavior

Breckenridge Montessori employees have been trained to treat children and parents with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our parents. Breckenridge Montessori will not tolerate hostile, aggressive, or disrespectful behavior from parents. If this occurs, it may result in loss of enrollment for your child/children at Breckenridge Montessori.

Communication and Conferences

At Breckenridge Montessori we encourage open communication between parents and school staff. We are an advocate for your child and want to work in cooperation with you to provide the most positive experience for your child and your family. If you have a question, concern or would like to check-in with staff about your child in general and would like to set up a time to chat via telephone, leave a note or email to set a time for the conversation. We are here to communicate, but due to the busy nature of the daily schedule, we would like to schedule a time that works for the family and director or teacher, in order to set aside adequate time to communicate.

Keep your cell phone turned on and/or notifications turned on when your child is in school so you can be reached in case of emergency, we recommend adding Breckenridge Montessori's phone number (970) 547-7661 to your phone so you know when we are calling.

If you call the school during the day for an emergency; early pick-up or anything urgent and we do not answer, call back immediately and we will make sure to answer.

Please address daily questions or concerns to staff via email or in writing (give them a note you've written at home or use the family notebook by the sign in tablet) and they will get back to you in a timely manner. Texting staff to communicate important information during school hours is not allowed per the Department of Human Services Colorado State Licensing or Breckenridge Montessori's policies. Cell phones are not permitted in the classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled two times per year (please note- these can be done in person or via Zoom or other computer communication if requested). Parents are welcome to setup an observation in the classroom when it works with the classroom's daily schedule. Conferences can be scheduled at the request of the parents or the teachers. You may also request a 'write-up' that will detail lessons your child does in the classroom.

If you have a concern, we need to address it in a timely manner. If you have a matter that needs attention, please relay that it is urgent in either an email or phone call to the director and the director will follow-up within 24-48 business hours. In addition, please follow-up or ask questions on any question or concern you need addressed to start a dialogue of communication. We aim to provide a high level of family communication.

Primary communication from the director and/or teachers to parents occurs via email.

Throughout the year, we offer Parent Afternoons. These afternoons are for the parents to observe and interact with your child working on lessons. Details on Parent Afternoons will be emailed out a week prior to the afternoon.

Social Media

With social media (Facebook, Instagram, etcetera) we understand our families use these methods of communication and we respect your right to do so. However, please use discretion, be considerate and respectful of Breckenridge Montessori's policies within our small, tightly knit community. If you need to speak with the directors about a topic, issue or other, email, call or leave a note, before posting school sensitive information on social media (see Communication section). Failure to contact the administration or posting about school sensitive information could result in loss of enrollment for your child. It is also important to use discretion when posting photos on social media; contact the school to ask who has signed a photo permission. For example, if you have taken pictures while volunteering (like for field trip) or have pictures from an in-school event.

Volunteers

We welcome and encourage parental support and participation throughout the school year. Parents are welcome to join board meetings or committees, such as the fundraising committee. Fundraising is part of our budget as a non-profit organization and the grants received require fundraising to contribute to the school's budget. We will also request parents to volunteer for field trips and other school events.

Health Policies and Procedures

Children cannot attend school with vomiting, diarrhea, fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (100°F) with a cough or sore throat, fever with behavior changes, illness or rash, chicken pox, pink eye and more. Refer to the "How Sick is Too Sick" link (hard copies available upon request) <https://tinyurl.com/HowSickIsTooSickStateDoc> to determine whether to keep your child at home during a sickness and call the school if you have questions on policy. Children must be well for a full 24 to 48 hours before re-attending school after any illness. If there is a question of when a child can return to care, we will consult the public health nurse for guidance and/or a health care professional if the nurse is not available. If a child becomes ill at school, the parent legal guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child immediately. If the sick child is not picked up within 30 minutes, emergency contacts will be called.

Please notify the school if your child has been exposed to a communicable illness, examples include but not limited to: COVID-19, RSV, strep throat, pink eye, or roseola. All preschool children are required by law to have current immunizations and an annual exam. Breckenridge Montessori accepts children who are not immunized; your child may be in contact with a child who is not immunized. If exempt from immunizations, a parent/legal guardian must provide written reason to the school before enrollment, along with a statement that the child is in good health. Immunization and health forms must be updated annually for our school files. Children with immunization exemptions signed and on file with the school are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

If your child has been diagnosed with a developmental delay including speech, physical, socio-emotional, or sensory integration disorder, there is a section to disclose this information on your application form. We have a referral process for socio-emotional or physical/medical evaluation and services if/when needed. Admission of a child with special needs is in compliance with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood Division of Child Care Rules and Regulations. Children with special needs will be accommodated to the best of our ability.

Staff Illness and School Closure

Due to the small staff size at Breckenridge Montessori and the strict requirements of staffing ratios and Large Center Director qualification requirements per the Colorado Department of Early Childhood for Child Care Licensing, we reserve the right to close due to staff illness because of inadequate staffing (ratios and qualifications) for the classroom/school. Should Breckenridge Montessori have to close for staff illness, we will notify you via text message and e-mail when the closure is needed. Please have back-up childcare arrangements in case of an emergency; many families are also able to help each other in this case. You will be credited tuition on the following month's invoice for any days the school is closed due to staff illness.

Medications

At Breckenridge Montessori, we operate according to the Nurse Practice Act. You must provide written parental/guardian permission along with a written authorization statement for your child's physician if a medication is given at school. All

medication must be in its original, labeled container. It is your responsibility to bring the medication to school ahead of time to allow for paperwork to be completed accurately. Medications will be stored out of reach of children. If you are packing medications (i.e. antibiotics or stool softener), vitamins (for example Emergen-C), or vitamin supplements, there needs to be a written plan from your child's physician or practitioner in place. The director and staff can guide you through this process, so please ask us questions on Medication Administration, nutrition or other medication questions.

Sunscreen and Weather

For outdoor play, the school will administer sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater, unless provided by the family. Parents/legal guardians must sign a permission slip for application of sunscreen. We strongly encourage you to provide sun hats and sunglasses for your child.

In the event of extreme temperatures, either hot or cold, the staff and/or director will make the decision to have the children play inside or outside. The decision will be based on real temperature, temperature with wind-chill and strength of precipitation.

Bathroom Use

Generally, children approaching three years of age should be using the toilet independently, and we do not allow diapers or pullups. By the time of their enrollment date, if a child is not consistently toileting independently, including managing clothes and wiping, consult with the assistant director to set a new start date.

Hand Washing

Students are taught appropriate hand washing practices and wash hands after toileting, outside play, before and after eating, after nose blowing or wiping, before and after art activities, and whenever hands are dirty.

First Aid, CPR and Standard Precautions

Staff members have current First Aid, CPR, and Standard Precautions. This school maintains first aid equipment recommended by the state in an accessible area, out of reach of the children. At least one staff member will be certified in medication administration.

Emergency Responses

Fire: Children practice a routine fire drill on a regular basis. There is a planned evacuation route posted in each room of the school.

Missing Child: Police will be notified immediately and then the parents/legal guardians will be notified. All efforts will be focused on finding the child as soon as possible. A legal report will be submitted to the department of human resources within 48 hours.

Accident/Injury: Breckenridge Montessori strives to prevent injury and accident by appropriate supervision and arrangement of our environment. If, however, at any time a child becomes injured, first aid will be performed and, if necessary, emergency personnel will be called.

Emergency Evacuation: In the event of an emergency, the teachers and students will immediately evacuate the building in order to go to the Breckenridge Red, White and Blue Fire Department at 316 N. Main Street, next door to the school. In the event the Fire Department is not an option, the back-up location is the Summit County Courthouse, 208 Lincoln Avenue.

Incident Reports

Serious accidents and injuries will be written and parents/legal guardians will be notified. Parents and Staff will sign an incident report detailing the incident. A copy of the incident report will remain in the child's school file and a copy will be given to the parent upon request.

Playground

Appropriate resilient surfacing is installed under play equipment allowing for recommended protection from falls in accordance with the Handbook of Playground Safety published by the Consumer Protection Agency. Children are familiar with rules of the play yard before, during and after use of play yard. At Breckenridge Montessori we encourage inclusion

of others in games and friendly cooperative activities, development of fine and gross motor skills through play, sand activities, and use of play equipment. We do not permit pushing, hitting, taking of toys, wrestling, inappropriate language, and/or intimidating behavior of any kind. We work to resolve these issues with our students in the spirit of peace, acceptance, and love.

Redirecting Children

The Montessori classroom is based upon children working spontaneously with materials that are self-teaching and correcting, allowing children to develop inner discipline. When teacher intervention is needed, we will use gentle words in hopes of resolving the situation. We teach children the skills of peaceful conflict resolution appropriate to their developmental stage. We always work to resolve classroom issues in the spirit of peace, acceptance, and love. We do not permit corporal punishment, humiliation, teasing, or threats.

If, on rare occasions, when children cannot be redirected they may need to take a break. If this occurs, they will be invited to find a space where they can calm themselves down and re-focus for as long as they need before rejoining the group. At a neutral time, we will discuss the matter with the child while always stressing to the child that we accept them and love them and that they are welcome in our classroom. We have a referral process for socio-emotional or physical/medical evaluation and services if needed.

Child Abuse Reporting

The staff of Breckenridge Montessori is mandated by law to report to the Department of Human Services any incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect. The phone number for the Summit County Department of Social Services is (970) 668-9160.

Non-discrimination and Reporting

Breckenridge Montessori is in full compliance with federal and state anti-discrimination legislation for enrollment and hiring practices. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. Breckenridge Montessori operates in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and does not discriminate against people with disabilities as defined under the law. Breckenridge Montessori is dedicated to promoting full inclusion of children into all aspects of program services. Every effort is made to provide comprehensive services to all children including those with special needs. We will work with your needs to the best of our ability and make accommodations.

Governance

The Board of Directors and the director govern Breckenridge Montessori. We welcome parent input and attendance at Board of Director meetings.

Family Handbook and Licensing

The Breckenridge Montessori Family Handbook is published annually and must be read by all staff and parents/legal guardians of children attending Breckenridge Montessori. A signature page acknowledging this process (found as the last page of handbook) must be turned into the director annually and before your child can begin school at Breckenridge Montessori. The parent handbook may be changed during the school year; parents and staff will be emailed the new version. Breckenridge Montessori is a state licensed childcare via the Colorado Department of Early Childhood. If, at any time, a parent at our school has a licensing concern regarding this facility, the Colorado Department of Early Childhood can be reached at (303) 866- 5958, or 710 S. Ash St., Denver, CO 80246.

I have read the Breckenridge Montessori Family Handbook and agree to abide by the policies and procedures described therein. I understand that if I do not comply, I may forfeit my child/children’s enrollment privileges.

Child’s/children’s name(s): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____