

# **INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI PRE-SCHOOL**



## **CURRICULUM 2019-2020**

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## INTRODUCTION

### PRESCHOOL IS A PEDAGOGIC ARENA

Preschool is, in accordance with The Framework for Preschools, an educational institution with a community mandate to safeguard the child's need for care and play, and to promote learning and education as a basis for comprehensive development in cooperation and understanding with the child's home. Preschool shall provide children under school age with a caring and learning environment.

### PRESCHOOLS IN BÆRUM

In Bærum, there is also Barnehagemelding 2015-2025 for all preschools in Bærum. This shall contribute to an equal and uniform offer in preschools in Bærum for all children and parents.

Early intervention, the feeling of achievement, cooperation and interaction should be emphasized in preschools in Bærum. Preschools should be seen as the first step in a child's education and there should be a special focus on play, language and good health.

Quality plans are developed following on from the Barnehagemelding, and these plans shall contribute to an equal and uniform offer in preschools, and ensure early intervention and better learning for children in preschools in Bærum.

From 2019, the quality plan 'Play and learning – the framework for preschools in Bærum' outlines the focus areas as:

- Communication and language
- Psychological health
- Digital competence

### THE CURRICULUM

Preschools must have a yearly curriculum. They should also compose plans for shorter and longer periods of time, and for different groups of children as needed. The curriculum is a work tool for all employees in preschool and documents the preschools choices and reasoning. It can give information on the preschools pedagogic work to the relevant authorities, offices the preschool collaborates with and other interested parties.

The document contains information about the preschool's work with care, education, play and learning to promote the child's comprehensive development. It provides information on how 'barnehagelovens bestemmelser om innhold' (§2) and the child's right to influence (§3) and the framework for preschools is followed, documented and evaluated.

We follow the Norwegian framework for day care (rammenplanen) while incorporating the Montessori philosophy into our curriculum.

## WHO ARE WE?

### HISTORY

The International Montessori Preschool had its humble beginnings in the basement of Folkets Hus. Before 1987, it was a day care centre for English- speaking children, mostly stationed here through NATO.

After hiring a qualified Montessori teacher in 1987, the pre- school took its present name.

Working with a small budget, materials were made by hand by the husband of an assistant teacher. In 1993 the pre-school moved to the ground floor, and slowly acquired additional rooms that were painted and furnished. The outside area was improved and fences were put up.

In 2010, we were approved by Bærum commune to offer a full day programme and to take in children under the age of 3. As a result of this, we also extended our outside play area and added a new member of staff.

We are currently looking for new premises to be able to expand our preschool and include more families into our community.

### ORGANISATION

We have a 3-6 group approved for a maximum of 20 children and an under 3s room with space for 4 children.

As we are a small preschool, we do not see the two departments as separate. They work independently, but in close collaboration with each other. The staff work together across the two departments so that, in the course of a school year, all children become secure with all the adults in the preschool.

School manager: Athina Meek	<a href="mailto:admin@internationalmontessori.no">admin@internationalmontessori.no</a>
Head teacher: Tanesha Sollien	<a href="mailto:headteacher@internationalmontessori.no">headteacher@internationalmontessori.no</a>
<b>Sun and Moon group</b> 20 children born 2014/15/16  Head teacher and Ped. Leader: Tanesha Sollien Ped leader: Elizabeth Gadsby (currently working/studying 50% each) Montessori teacher: Louise Coughlan Teaching assistant: Sarah McEvitt Teaching assistant: Ferah Koral	<b>Stars</b> 4 Children born 2017  Ped. Leader: Kasia Zielonka Teaching assistant: Ferah Koral

## OUR VISIONS AND AIMS AT INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL

### **International**

Embracing the diversity of cultures, and nurturing the individual child whilst also incorporating the local Norwegian culture and society. Preparing the child to meet the international environment and education expectations.

### **Montessori**

Instilling a love of learning within our rich Montessori prepared environment. Montessori believed that grace and courtesy and respect were an essential part of the prepared environment. In our school we encourage the children to solve their problems through communication and to treat everyone with tolerance and respect.

### **Preschool**

Providing a secure, loving environment to focus on nurturing each child as an individual. We want every child to experience a sense of belonging, friendship, community, self-worth and self-esteem. Providing a solid foundation for further education and for life.

## IMS TRADITIONS AND SCHOOL CULTURE

- **Harvest:** the children make soup for the parents to come and eat with us using vegetables that we have grown in our garden. This is a great opportunity for parents, children and staff to get together in an informal atmosphere, especially for the those who cannot always be involved in the daily drop off or pick up routines.
- **End of year show:** the children will put on a show for the parents at the end of the school year. The show will be held in school and parents help provide food that can be shared.
- **'What we've done today' information:** is posted by the outer door. This is written regularly and gives an insight into what has happened in school. Special experiences / happenings are noted here.
- **Advent:** means waiting, and the build up to the Christmas celebration.
- **Nissefest:** the children can dress up as red or blue 'nisse' and we eat the traditional Norwegian rice porridge. All children will be given a small, healthy treat after lunch.
- **Diversity:** We welcome any family with different beliefs to come in and share their beliefs and celebrations with the children.
- **Teddy bears party:** Children bring in their favourite teddy bear and we have a party table set with a miniature tea service.
- **Valentines day:** the children prepare a card to give to one other child which are shared out at circle time. We have a "Valentine" cookie/muffin after normal lunch.
- **Easter:** We have an Easter breakfast in the morning, a party after their normal lunch and an hunt for a small bag of goodies.
- **Farm visit:** for all the children. The date depends on availability, but late April/early May wherever possible.
- **17<sup>th</sup> May:** the children parade with another local Norwegian preschool and sing Norwegian songs.
- **Birthday celebrations:** we have the Montessori birthday walk to signify the passage of each year and the teacher talks about what happened in the child's life. We make a birthday crown, and the child brings in a treat to share.
- **Leavers photo book:** when a child leaves IMS they are presented with a book of photos covering their time and their friends at IMS.
- **Classroom visit:** this happens as near to school start as possible, normally starting in September. The parents of the newly enrolled children are invited in first so that their child can show them their favourite materials /activity. The parents of returning children follow afterwards.
- **Conferences:** provide a forum to discuss and address various aspects of your child's development. Conferences are normally held during the second term.

- **Visit by new children:** this happens in June to give all new children starting in August an opportunity to visit their school, teachers and other children at IMS.
- **Orientation days:** returning children only attend school for the first days of August. This gives the teachers the opportunity to give the returning children their attention and set them up in the classrooms before the new children start. The new children are then given their own plan for their introduction days and times.

## THE MONTESSORI APPROACH

- is based on observing the child and creating new ideas to aid development
- was designed to develop the whole personality of the child at his own natural rate of progress
- basic principles are observation, individual liberty and a prepared environment
- aims at helping the children to help themselves
- ensures that each child is treated with respect and given freedom within carefully prepared limits.
- provides an atmosphere of freedom with clearly defined guidelines and a challenging environment
- will allow the child to gain self-confidence and self-discipline
- will provide the child with powers of discrimination, observation, awareness, control, co-ordination and judgement.

We have some Montessori books aimed at parents which parents are welcome to borrow:

- Montessori and your child
- Montessori Madness
- Understanding Montessori
- At home with Montessori
- What is Montessori preschool?

## EVALUATION OF PRESCHOOL PEDAGOGIC WORK 2018

In 2018/19 we focused on social competence, food and mealtimes and digital technology. Staff, parents and children were involved in the evaluation through questionnaires, meetings and interviews.

Concrete measures within social competence include smaller groups for both play and trips, a raised awareness of bullying behaviour and initiating plans to help the child/ren. We have invested in a programme called 'Green thoughts – happy children' which works with emotions, recognition of emotions and finding alternative methods of dealing with difficult emotions. We will continue to use this programme as a conflict resolution tool with the oldest children.

Within food and mealtimes, we have focused on meals as a social and language development arena. This project will continue next year.

We have invested in ipads and apps for language development. Digital technology is used as a tool with the child for creativity, exploration and research. Our digital technology committee will continue their work this year.

## THE PRESCHOOL'S PEDAGOGIC WORK

### PRESCHOOL VALUES

#### THE CHILD AND CHILDHOOD

Preschools must recognize and protect the intrinsic value of childhood. It is fundamental to help all children who go to preschool to have a good childhood characterized by well-being, friendship and play. Preschool is also a preparation for active participation in society and helps lay the foundation for a good life.

Montessori recognised the intrinsic value of childhood and the child's personality. In terms of the child's development, the adult meets them where they are, not where we wish them to be. We place importance on what is best for the child's healthy development.

Each child is met as an individual, with the adult recognising and putting value on the child's own viewpoints and experiences. The physical environment is prepared in a way that enables the child to develop according to their own desire for learning and development.

#### DEMOCRACY

Through participating in the preschool community, children will have the opportunity to develop an understanding of society and the world they are part of. Preschools must promote democracy and be an inclusive community where everyone is given the opportunity to express themselves, be heard and participate. All children should be able to experience democratic participation by contributing to and influencing the kindergarten content, regardless of communication skills and language skills.

The UN Child Convention states that children have the right to express their opinion on matters that affect them and that their opinions shall be heard. It is important that teachers are aware of both verbal and nonverbal language and help the children to experience a sense of belonging and community and also a feeling of self-determination.

A Montessori preschool is often referred to as 'the child's house'. Children are allowed to move freely in the classroom and choose activities that interest them. With freedom, comes responsibility. Each child must respect the classroom, the materials and the other children.

With the mixed ages group, the children are given opportunities to help each other, to teach other by giving lessons and to show empathy.

Each child is greeted in the morning and is recognised as being an important part of the group. They are given time to share any information about what has happened at home, on the way to preschool or show items that they have with them that day.

Daily conversations give the child the opportunity to be heard and to express their interests, concerns and feelings. We want the children to feel secure with the adults so that they can come to us with any concern they may have and know that they will find support with us.

In conflict situations, we meet the children where they are emotionally and acknowledge their feelings whilst encouraging them to find a common ground and accept that different people have different opinions and beliefs.



Daily circle time gives all the children an opportunity to share information and experiences which may then influence decisions about activities both within and outside of the classrooms. In this way, the children experience living in a democratic environment where their interests are heard and respected.

## **DIVERSITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT**

Preschools shall promote respect for human dignity by highlighting, appreciating and promoting diversity and mutual respect. The children shall find that there are many ways to think, act and live.

As an international preschool, we have a wealth of different cultures, nationalities and religious beliefs both amongst the families and staff members.

We draw upon and reflect the cultural diversity of the enrolled children each year by marking the various different holidays they may have.

We highlight the wealth of languages in preschool by listening to and learning songs in different languages. We encourage the children to use their mother tongue and teach us and the other children simple words. (see section on language and communication)

We mark UN day with flags and food from all nationalities represented in preschool.

## **EQUALITY AND EQUAL WORTH**

Preschools shall promote equality and equal worth regardless of gender, functional ability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expressions, ethnicity, culture, social status, language, religion and philosophy of life. Preschools must counteract all forms of discrimination and promote love for the fellow man.

The preschool shall build its foundations on the principle of equality and non-discrimination and help the children meet and create a society of equal value. Everyone should have equal opportunities to be seen, heard and encouraged to participate in all activities in the kindergarten. The staff must reflect on their own attitudes to best communicate and promote equality and gender equality.

We, as adults, are careful not to make stereotypic generalizations when working with children.

Montessori material and the traditional material available to the children are not gender based. For example, puzzles of various professions depict both genders, both genders are encouraged to engage in practical life activities – pouring, arranging flowers, washing dishes - and in sensorial work - constructing towers and arches.

Both genders are equally encouraged to share their feelings and are given the opportunity through role play to comfort others – displaying and developing empathy for one another.

In conflict situations, we meet the children where they are emotionally and acknowledge their feelings whilst encouraging them to find a common ground and accept that different people have different opinions and beliefs.

When a child wonders about gender roles, families, religions etc, we answer any questions they may have honestly and allow time for discussion and questions.

We are in the process of building up a library of books covering this topic which will be available to the children in the classrooms.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The children shall learn to take care of themselves, each other and nature. The children shall have experiences in nature and become acquainted with nature's diversity, and the preschool shall help the children to experience a feeling of belonging to nature.

Part of the Montessori philosophy is to inspire the child to be curious about the world around them. We encourage the teachers to be knowledgeable about flora and fauna, insect life and land formations so they provide information about nature around us.

Weekly walks in different environments – park, forest, beach, city – provide the children with a variety of experiences. By being in nature, discussing what we can see, where insects or animals are hiding, touching insects and being careful with them we develop a feeling on belonging in nature. In allowing children to observe, wonder and reflect about plants, insects and animals we develop an understanding of our interdependence in the world.

We practice recycling of food, plastics, paper, glass and metal and discuss the negative effects of pollution in our seas and our community. We read books about recycling and had a 'clean our local community' project.

Being involved in our garden project, the children experience the seasonal lifecycle of nature, from planting seeds to harvesting and eating the vegetables and berries.

## **HEALTH AND LIFE COPING SKILLS**

The preschool should have a health promotion and preventative function and help to reduce social inequalities. Children's physical and mental health should be promoted in the preschool. Preschool should contribute to children's well-being, joy of life, coping and sense of self-worth and to prevent insults and bullying. Preschool should be an arena for daily physical activity and promoting children's love of exercise and motor development. Meals and cooking in kindergarten shall give children a foundation for developing a love of food and healthy habits.

We give lessons on how to wash hands, how to cough without spreading germs, how to wipe your nose and clean faces to help promote health. With food preparation, we focus on hand hygiene when preparing morning snack. We have food and health as a theme where we discuss the different food groups and what foods are good for the body. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy foods and snacks.

Warm lunches are served through a catering company who provide a wide variety of healthy, nutritious food. The children help set the tables and each child cleans up after themselves, recycling what we can and rinsing their own plates and cutlery. The adults eat with the children at mealtimes to model table manners and encourage a positive attitude to all different foods.

We provide a variety of physical activities both inside and outside. In the classrooms, the Montessori materials are designed for children to use and develop muscles – both gross and fine – by lifting heavy/light objects and manoeuvring with longer objects. The children move freely throughout the classrooms and can choose materials that meet their physical and mental needs. We have access to a large hall where the children are physically active and can practice a variety of coordination skills. Outside, the children are all active in the playground – climbing, running, cycling, swinging, playing football - and on walks they experience varied terrain where they learn to balance and coordinate

their bodies building confidence in their own bodies. The older children also participate in nature school, ski school and swimming.

Our priority is to provide security for the child, from which they can explore, form friendships, play and learn. Our goal is for the child to feel understood and supported emotionally by the adults so that the child can successfully manage their own emotions and develop a feeling of self-esteem.

The adults are role models, demonstrating to the children how to care for one another. We always acknowledge a child's skills in terms of caring for others. We listen to children who are experiencing negative thoughts about themselves and work towards giving the child positive thoughts about themselves.

We use 'circle of security' to provide a caring, safe and nurturing environment. We aim to be sensitive adults who acknowledge the emotional needs of the child. See link below for more information: [www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/](http://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/)

As mentioned earlier (see evaluation of school year 2018) we use the programme 'Green thoughts – happy children' to help children deal with all different emotions.

We discuss what a friend is and how to be a good friend. We acknowledge that not everyone has to be best friends, but we must always be civil to everyone. We recognise when someone has been a good friend and work to that everyone experiences friendship.

The children are encouraged to express their feelings when solving conflicts. Role-playing provides the language for expressing these feelings for example: "When you do not let me join your game, I feel sad and left out"

We have a separate action plan against bullying which you can find on our website.

## THE PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THE PRESCHOOL

The preschool content must be versatile, varied and adapted to the single child and the group. In preschool, the children get to play, to develop creative enthusiasm, to wonder and develop a desire to explore. Work with care, education, play, learning, social skills, communication and language should be considered collectively and together contribute to the child's all-round development. The preschool shall be a cultural arena where the children are co-creators of their own culture in an atmosphere characterized by humour and joy.

The preschool's physical environment should be safe and challenging and give children varied physical experiences. The staff shall design the physical environment so that all children have the opportunity to participate actively in play and other activities and so that toys and material are available to the children.

## SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD

The International Montessori Preschool is a small, welcoming community which sees each individual child. Our priority is to provide security for the child, from which they can explore, form friendships, play and learn.

The Montessori method is a holistic approach to child care and development. All aspects of the development of the child are considered when planning the environment and the curriculum. In this way the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social developmental needs are being met.

Our classroom environment is set up in a way that promotes respect for and cooperation with others. The child learns about social skills thus learning the acceptable behaviour of his own and other cultures. Montessori practical life activities, give the child the opportunity to care for the environment around them and be a part of a community.

These lessons give the children the means to be the master of their own actions and help the children learn to cultivate a sense of respect and independence so they can feel confident in their environment.

Children aged 3-6 work together. The older children work with the younger children and provide a positive role model for them. The teachers use positive language in encouraging and motivating the children, which the children, in turn, learn to use towards each other.

We have a reading corner with comfy chairs and books where the children can sit and relax whenever they wish. We have beds for any child who needs a rest. We give the children the opportunity to go to a quiet room whenever needed.

The adults are role models, and role act various social scenarios, demonstrating to the children how to care for one another. We always acknowledge a child's skills in terms of caring for others.

**Our motto is "help the child help themselves"**

## **PLAY**

Montessori believed that “play is the work of the child”.

Play is essential to the healthy development for children. Play is spontaneous and fun, and has an intrinsic value in itself. Playful learning spans both free play and guided play.

The Montessori classroom provides the opportunity for role play and drama activities, group play and individual play.

Group play can often spring from shared experiences, games and stories and creates a sense of community and belonging. In addition, trips outside of school give the children a different arena to play in.

Discussion amongst the children about their own activities and interests can inspire an idea, a game and fun imaginative experiences for many. We encourage children to use their imaginations both inside and outside of the classroom, using objects as they imagine, and engage them in discussions about, for example, dinosaurs and trolls. We help them build and expand their imagination through art and construction.

The adults’ role is to activate the children, be active participants and to ensure the inclusion of all children. If there is a child who struggles to play, we work in smaller groups to practice play skills and take those skills into larger groups.

When observing children at play, we look at social competence, inclusion skills, problem solving skills and leadership skills amongst other things. We use this information to analyze the social environment, to give positive feedback, to guide and lift social status as necessary and to ensure a healthy play experience for everyone. This leads to further discussion within the group about, for example, play experiences, taking turns, including everyone and showing empathy.

## **THE FORMATION OF THE CHILD (DANNING)**

The formation of the child is a lifelong process where the individual is formed through interactions with the environment and other people.

According to Maria Montessori, freedom of choice is the key to developing the child’s personality. The child must decide for himself what is relevant and necessary for his intellectual growth.

Activities, discussions and choices made in the Montessori classroom provided children with the real-life occurrences that help children develop physically, mentally and emotionally. As the child forms himself, he will learn from consequences, lessons and conversations that appeal to his intellect.

Teachers, in our school, also model acceptable behaviors, speak about the norms and customs that are relevant to society and provide social situations for the children to practice behaviors.

## LEARNING

Our preschool provides a stimulating environment for play, exploration, learning and mastering. Since the key to building the child's personality is freedom, we want to assist the child in gaining his independence. One cannot be free, without being independent. Once a child has obtained independence, he is able to make a choice. (Discovery of the child 56)

There are a range of materials available to choose from in the prepared environment. The Montessori classroom is filled with practical life activities such as sweeping, pouring, watering plants, and spreading snack, sensorial activities (games that appeal to the senses), geography and history, mathematical, reading and writing materials, cutting strips, and painting.

Because we know that preschool children learn through their senses, it is important that our children look, touch, taste and smell items in and out of the classroom. Montessori materials have a color shape and form which catches the child's attention. As he plays with geometrical shape, he learns that each shape has a name and looks for the shapes outside of the classroom.

We feel that it is necessary to connect the classroom with the outside world. Although we have many materials (puzzles, number, and stories), it means nothing to the child, if it does not have a relationship to the outside world. Weekly walks and planned trips give meaning to classroom activities. We have, for example, taken children on a treasure hunt to Vigeland park. Before going to the park, the children were told stories about Gustav Vigeland and his statues. After the excursion, pictures were made to encourage further discussion and learn more about the artist.

It is also important to us that teachers are knowledgeable. That is why we encourage teacher to read, be curious and learn more about culture, nature and everyday life. Our teachers give short and concise lessons that meet the individual needs of the child. Children are also allowed to repeat lessons and activities as many times as they want.

Mixed aged group is essential to the Montessori philosophy. In our classroom, not only are the teacher role models for the younger children, but also the older children. The older children are considered the leaders of the classrooms. They lead by example, help the younger children, and give lessons whenever they want to. When the older child takes responsibility for the younger child, it builds both character and self-esteem. If a child chooses to give a child a lesson on what he has learned in the classroom, it only reinforces what he already knows and gives him the feeling of achievement

The younger child actively observes and mimics the older child. Since younger children see the older child as a role model, they look to him to learn acceptable social behaviors, and knowledge about the world.

The children are occasionally divided into smaller groups. We have planned excursions for both the younger and the older children. When groups are divided by age, children have positive learning experiences.

## **FRIENDSHIP AND COMMUNITY**

We focus on the similarity of people rather than the differences. However, we recognize the differences, and use that as a way to ask questions and explore other cultures, religions and identities. We want the children to feel secure in their own culture and identity to be curious about the world around them. Discussions in smaller groups focus on books/languages/traditions/religions so all feel represented.

As an international preschool the children are exposed to different cultures and religions and festivals are marked throughout the year reflecting the children enrolled.

The mixed age groups mean the older children take care of the younger and act as role models. Boys and girls play freely together across all age groups. We focus on friendship, what it means to be a friend, how to be a good friend and actively recognize acts of friendship.

We take the children in smaller groups to work on friendship and bonding within that group. The aim is to create an inclusive environment where all children feel seen, acknowledged and experience friendship and belonging.

An important part of work in preschool is observing the child and their social interaction. Should any negative situations arise, each teacher has an individual responsibility to act and report any concerns. We discuss acceptable and unacceptable behaviours with the children and have an open dialogue with the parents/guardians so that we can work together to guide the child to the appropriate behaviour. We have an action plan that we complete and any measures and followed up with the teachers and parents/guardians. (See our website for separate action plan against bullying)

## **LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION**

The sensitive period for learning to speak is from 7 months to 2.5-3 years of age.

Long before the child expresses herself clearly in language she has been listening and absorbing everything she hears. That's why it's important we talk to the child, not in baby talk, but with respect and with a precise vocabulary.

Our classrooms provide an opportunity for introducing and reinforcing a wealth of language and vocabulary through both the materials, games and activities. We stimulate language through work, play, songs, rhymes and by social interaction.

When working in the classroom, children are encouraged to use a variety of tools; such as a coffee grinder, hammer, sieve, a funnel etc. vocabulary is enriched by having objects available for use by the children in the classroom. Our teachers name the items in the classroom such that the child becomes familiar with them.

As he grows so does his experiences, knowledge about the outside world and vocabulary. The child learns to articulate speech and express thoughts and feelings. Language learned in childhood is the only speech that is perfected. Therefore, we believe that it is essential to expose the child to both oral and written language in the Montessori classroom

We wish our teachers to be knowledgeable about the world around us. We believe that it is equally important that teachers are curious and interested in classroom topics. The role of our teachers is to engage the child in activities and discussions that provide necessary vocabulary and an understanding of concepts. Our teachers take time to listen to each individual child and to have daily conversations in everyday situations and activities.

As we are an international pre-school, with English instruction, some of the children who attend our school have English as a second language. We take the time to recognize and talk about different mother tongues, for example putting up a poster with a specific word and inviting families to write the word in their own language. We encourage the children to use their mother tongue and share words and songs with the group.

For those children who need extra language stimulation, we have language groups (grop om begrep) to help develop English language and understanding. The group focuses on one book over a number of weeks and thus reinforces the understanding of concepts and words. We also give one-to-one attention where we play games centered around language and concepts. If there is reason for concern, we will map the child's language development, in close cooperation with the parents.

'The association between the two languages – spoken and written - is of the utmost importance. Writing becomes a second form of language which is associated with speech....' Maria Montessori.

According to Montessori children are naturally curious about written language and begin to explore letters, sounds and grammar.

All words are composed from 26 letters with phonetic sounds which form both the written and spoken language.

Bærum commune has developed a standard for language work that all preschools are obliged to follow. This requires that we work systematically to develop our language environment. The focus is upon raising competence of the staff, mapping and developing the language environment. We have one teacher who is responsible to ensure that this work is carried out.



## CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

The preschool shall ensure the children's right to participate by facilitating and encouraging the children to express their views on the day care activities of the preschool. The children will regularly be allowed to participate actively in the planning and assessment of the preschool activities. All children should experience influencing what is happening in the preschool.

Children' participation in planning and influencing the preschool day must be in line with their age and maturity. It is always the adults' responsibility to set the limits.

Children in our classrooms influence their own learning as they are free to move about as they please, work independently or in groups, and choose relevant and appropriate work, in doing so they learn to set limits and respect the limits of others. It is important for us to follow the child's interest and wonder with them with whatever fascinates them.

In daily discussions and at circle time the children can contribute and share ideas about that theme and influence any related activity. Children talk about experiences that they have had outside of preschool such as a trip to the museum, a train ride or to a park and we use these experiences to help plan school excursions.

The children influence the songs we sing and the songs that they perform for their parents at the end of term show.

Child interviews are held once a year focusing on how the child has experienced his or her time in preschool, likes and dislikes, and whether he/she feels that she has friends.

## COLLABORATION BETWEEN HOME AND PRESCHOOL

The preschool shall facilitate good parental cooperation and dialogue and ensure the parents' right to participate. Preschool shall, in collaboration and close understanding with the home, safeguard the children's need for care and play, and promote learning and formation as a basis for an all-round development.

Parents and preschool staff have a shared responsibility for the child's well-being and development. The cooperation between the home and the nursery should always have the best interests of the child.

A good working relationship based on trust, between preschool and home, is paramount for the wellbeing of the child. Parents know their own child better than anyone else. When a child first starts with us we have a parent teacher meetings to share information about the child and preschool.

We value the day to day conversations we have with parents at the door as it helps build a relationship. Once this bond is established, it is easy to discuss and share information relevant to the child and the child's development.

Parent conferences are held once a year, or whenever necessary, either at the instigation of the parent or the teacher.

We have a monthly calendar, quarterly newsletters, and communicate frequently by e-mail, text or whatsapp. Parents help with field trips, parties and are encouraged to come in and share their culture, traditions, an experience, craft or other items of interest to the children.

We offer both classrooms visit and observations. The classroom visit is an opportunity for the parent and child to be in the classroom alone with the teacher, so the child can show what they like doing, and the parent can observe the child-teacher interaction. Before parent-teacher conferences, observations are offered so the parent can observe their own child functioning of the classroom.

Parents are active on both the School Board and the Coordination Committee. Coordination Committee provides a channel for home-school communication and is involved in parental evaluation of the preschool.

## **TRANSITIONS**

### **WHEN THE CHILD BEGINS IN THE PRESCHOOL – SETTLING PERIOD**

The preschool, in cooperation with the parents, will arrange for the child to have a safe and good start in the preschool. The preschool will adapt routines and organize time and space so that the child is given time to get acquainted, establish relationships and get to know the staff and other children. When the child first begins in the preschool, the staff shall ensure close follow-up so that the child experiences a feeling of belonging and safety to play, explore and learn.

Prior to starting in preschool, the child is invited to visit with one or both parents both in June and again in August. The child is welcomed into the classroom by two of the teachers so that the classrooms and teacher are familiar before the child starts preschool.

The day following the visit in August, the child starts by themselves for a 1-2 hours, depending on age. The length of time is extended daily as the child becomes more settled and confident in their new environment.

We believe that having a clear routine of saying goodbye at the door defines the preschool as being the child's environment, shows trust between parents and teachers and helps the child feel secure. Wherever possible, the same teacher opens the door and welcomes the child into preschool every day. For the first weeks, as necessary, we ensure that the child meets the same teacher who helps settle them in the classroom.

If a family wishes to accompany their child for more than one day, we are happy to work with the family to ensure the best for their child.

Daily communication between preschool and home is essential during the settling period.

## TRANSITION WITHIN THE PRESCHOOL AND BETWEEN PRESCHOOLS

The staff shall ensure that children and parents are given the time and space to get to know the new children and the staff when they change within preschool or change preschools.

As we are a small preschool, parents quickly become familiar with all members of staff. The under 3s room initially has a different daily routine to the 3-6 classrooms, but quickly come together for outside play.

Late autumn the 2 and 3 year olds enjoy walks to the park and the library together, giving them the opportunity to become acquainted with each other in a smaller group.

In the spring, the under 3s are invited to visit the 3-6 classrooms and start slowly transitioning into the routines. Closer to summer, all the children are in the 3-6 rooms together.

When a child transitions to another preschool in Norway, we write a report to accompany them to the new preschool. When a child transitions to a preschool overseas, we complete whatever form they require.

## FROM PRESCHOOL TO SCHOOL

The preschool shall, in cooperation with parents and the school, facilitate a good and smooth transition from preschool to school and, if appropriate, after school care, for the child.

We provide the older children with the opportunity to be leaders of the classrooms with responsibilities such as giving presentations to the younger children, helping the teacher with practical tasks and being role models.

Bærum commune has set routines for when a child moves from preschool to Norwegian school - <https://www.baerum.kommune.no/globalassets/tjenester/barnehage/info-til-ansatte/overgangsrutiner-april-2015.pdf>

- Completion of the forms provided by Bærum commune for the transition between preschool and school
- Communication with other schools as appropriate
- Invited to meetings with Norwegian schools as appropriate
- Introducing the child to the transitional tools used both in preschools and schools in Norway – the board game 'vildkatten', the book 'Geitekyllingen som kunne telle til 10' and the game 'rødt lys, grønt lys'
- Exposing the child to Norwegian language by attending story time in the local library, songs, collaboration with other Norwegian preschools

## PLANNING, EVALUATION AND DOCUMENTATION

### PLANNING

Planning provides the basis for long term and systematic thinking and acting in the educational work. The planning will contribute to continuity and progression for each child and the group. The planning is the basis for reflection and development of the preschool's pedagogical practice. The planning is based on knowledge of the child's well-being and development, and is based on observation, documentation, reflection, systematic assessment and conversations with children and parents.

The teacher has the responsibility to evaluate and set the classroom up to appeal to the child, they are responsible for ensuring that the materials are available and ready to use and that the materials reflect the themes in the classrooms. The teacher must also be flexible and follow and reflect the child's interest in the classroom.

We have both a yearly and monthly calendar which shows themes, outings and events that we plan for the year. Themes follow the child's interest and can extend into the following month, some themes overlap, and some are seasonal.

Parental involvement is appreciated to ensure we reflect the cultures and festivals in our monthly calendar.

Teachers are encouraged to take time to observe the classrooms. Observations can be of the classroom in general, group interaction, teacher-child interaction, behaviours and interests. Observations are then shared with all staff members in a monthly meeting and provide valuable information from which any necessary measures can be taken.

Monthly meetings have a set format which includes planning the month ahead and evaluating the month gone. It also has an academic theme that is relevant to our children, staff members and our preschool.

Planning days provide a forum for more in depth discussions and work on the Rammeplan, curriculum and Internal Control.

## EVALUATION

The preschool shall regularly assess the educational work. This means that the educational work must be described, analyzed and evaluated in relationship to the curriculum, the Child care Act and the framework plan.

We follow the commune focus areas as set out in their quality plans. In doing this, we raise awareness and explore the reasons for, and our methods of working with these areas. This gives all teachers a chance for reflection and evaluation and to further develop their understanding and competence within that field. This will be documented for future reference.

Evaluations are made at staff meetings. Parents are invited to share their experience of our work at parents' meetings and through evaluations done by the Coordination Committee. The children are asked about their thoughts and experiences of the school content through child interviews.

At the end of the year, staff evaluate the year we have had and any additional activities that may have been added throughout the year. In this way we decide what should be carried forward into the next years curriculum.

## DOCUMENTATION

Documentation shows how the preschool works to comply with the requirements of the Child Care Act and the framework plan.

Documentation happens on many different levels. The children's work shows what they have been doing, the photographs show what they are busy with during their day, the books we make show the activities they are involved in, the white board gives the parents a summary of the day.

Documentation of the planned themes for the month are sent to the parents in advance of each month. The month is evaluated at the next staff meeting, and information is sent to all parents in an IMS newsletter.

Documentation relating to the individual child's happiness and development includes written observations, evaluations, actions plans, 'tras' and 'alle med' forms, along with child interviews, teacher-parents conferences and any paperwork with external parties.

Documentation is shared with teachers as staff meetings, individual parents in private meetings and with external parties as appropriate.

All papers are kept on the child's file and locked in the office. The file is kept for one year after the child leaves in case their new school has any queries and is then shredded.

Documentation and evaluation of the curriculum is done both by the staff, the parents at parents meetings, and the children during their interviews. This information is kept on file to help develop the following years curriculum.

## **PRESCHOOL WORKING METHODS**

The working methods must safeguard the children's need for care and play, promote learning and education and give children the opportunity for participation. Staff should adopt varied ways of working, and they must be adapted to the individual child, group of children and the local community. Selection of working methods provides opportunities to make the preschool's content interesting and varied.

The Montessori philosophy invites the children to learn through all their senses – seeing, touching, tasting and smelling – both inside and outside of the classroom. This is an integral part of our preschool.

Teachers work with the individual child, children in smaller groups, and the entire group together. When divided into smaller groups, the children work on a chosen theme or project such as the garden, the body, recycling rubbish in the local community.

Children and families are encouraged to share ideas regarding their own interests and experiences, and to contribute towards classroom themes.

## **PROGRESSION**

We want the children to experience progression socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

By working together in small and large groups the children share experiences which enables social bonding. This includes circle time, lunch and trips outside of school. Teachers model appropriate behaviours throughout the day.

As adults, we must be emotionally open and available to the children. We help them with conflict resolution and support their emotions by helping them recognise what they are feeling, acknowledging their feelings and recognising the feelings of others. We recognise success when the child learns to deal with their emotions appropriately.

Physically the children are challenged through walks in the forest, the local community, outside play and climbing, and games/activities in the gym.

The Montessori classroom is designed to provide the child with an environment which caters to their current development and provides challenges for a natural progression. The material in the Montessori classroom allows the child to explore their own interests, self correct (it's ok to make mistakes) and see their own development. It allows them to engage with the material, build self confidence, provides a feeling of accomplishment and ownership and develops a love of learning.

## **DIGITAL PRACTICE**

We have used digital technology as a tool for research in the classrooms, for language enrichment and for creativity. Ipads are always used with a teacher in 1-1 lessons or small group lessons. This is an ongoing focus area.

## PRESCHOOL SUBJECT AREAS

These areas reflect the areas that have interest and value to children in preschool age, and should help to promote well-being, all-round development and health. The preschool shall see the subject areas as interlinked, and all disciplines shall be an integral part of the kindergarten content. The children will develop knowledge and skills in all disciplines through wonder, exploration and creative activities.

### COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND TEXT – see language and communication above

Working individually, in small and large groups we stimulate the child's interest, expand their knowledge and vocabulary and wonder with them. We make materials which will pique curiosity and then provide supporting books and information so the child can wonder and learn.

We have a variety of books available to the children in the classrooms throughout the day. We choose a book which we read daily for two weeks in circle time so the child knows the book, can ask questions and can create games and role play around that book.

### BODY, MOVEMENT, FOOD AND HEALTH

The children are outside in the play area for 2 hours every day, and have regular walks in the local community. We also offer swimming, skiing and nature school.

We have access to the gym when it is available, and work on developing core muscles, balance and coordination while working in small groups.

**Health:** the children are introduced to the "care of self" exercises including how to wash hands; wash faces after eating (using a mirror) and how to use a tissue and dispose of it in the toilet, washing hands afterwards.

**Food:** we use meal times as an opportunity to sit as a group, practice table manner, and have social interaction. We work to give the child a positive experience of mealtimes and relationship to food. Children are introduced to the basic food groups and the importance of eating a balanced diet. Health and food is a theme we take each year where we focus on what is healthy and why it is important for our diet.

Mid morning snacks are the healthy option of fresh fruits, raw vegetables, egg and crisp bread. The children are involved in the preparation of their own snack.

We introduce the children to where our food comes from through our garden project – growing fruit and vegetables – and trips to the farm.

### ART, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY

Maria Montessori stated when a child is endowed with an artistic ability that takes possession of him it makes him an artist. Children naturally create with their hand that is why colored pencils, scissors, paints, water colours and colored paper are always available in our classrooms. Art in the pre-school environment strives to maintain the great joy the child finds in creating something of his or her own.

The children have the freedom to explore their imaginations in a variety of mediums used for expression. **We realise that the process is important, and not the end product.**

We currently have an art teacher who comes in every week and introduces the children to various different forms of art media.

## MUSIC

Maria Montessori 'His environment is such that it can arouse in him a feeling for, and an understanding of music.' The Discovery of the Child p 286.

We have singing during circle time and have song cards and objects available to the children in the classrooms. We have a basket of various musical instruments that the children are able to explore.

We currently have an agreement with Oslo Rock School who come in once a week so the children can explore music, rhythm and songs. They are introduced to musical staves and notes.

## NATURE, ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

**PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY** - We draw upon our experience of our local environment through our walks and trips and incorporate this into the classroom discussions. We stop and observe the natural landscape around us which creates wonder and excitement within the children. In the classrooms, we have large wooden puzzle maps of each continent and the common land formations such as islands and lakes.

**HISTORY** - As an introduction to the idea of history, children have a time line of their own lives, starting with their baby pictures. Each child does the "birthday walk" on its birthday during circle time. The child holds the globe and walks around the "sun" – one circuit represents one year- whilst we talk about the special events that happened in that year in that child's life.

We are developing factual stories on known Norwegian historical figures which inspire the children to learn more about that topic and ask questions.

**SCIENCE AND NATURE** - In science the children's natural curiosity is stimulated through discovery projects and experiments, helping the children draw their own conclusions. Seasons are followed in the classroom. The plant and animal kingdom are studied to foster a love and appreciation for living things and the environment, including activities such as sorting trash and conserving natural resources.

**SCHOOL GARDEN** - Children play an active role in our gardening project. We have two separate sections, one for vegetables and one for flowers. Children take an active role in the process of digging, preparing the area, and planting seeds and plants. We choose seasonal vegetables and plants. Children are also actively involved in watering, looking after and maintaining the garden. The first-hand experience of working in the garden gives the children a link between the lesson in the classroom and the real practice and experience of gardening. Through this project, children learn



how to appreciate, use and look after nature and the environment. It also gives the children an experience of how plants, insect life and humans are interdependent.

**NATURE SCHOOL** - This is an activity offered by a Norwegian organization where the oldest children are outside in the forest learning about nature, flora and fauna, and the changes in the seasons. They also challenge themselves physically by doing an obstacle course, orienteering, climbing and playing games in the forest.

## **MATHEMATICS**

‘Teaching arithmetic starts with the sense perceptions and is based on knowledge of concrete objects.’ Maria Montessori. The sensorial materials in the Montessori classroom help the children to distinguish, categorise and to relate new information to what they already know. The children are introduced to sensorial equipment that isolates a specific quality such as size (length and width), shape, volume and weight. They are given the correct and comparative language – small, smaller, smallest etc. They are invited to explore, test and measure which helps develop and refine their sensory organs. The material helps the child to see more clearly the details of the world around them. The child develops an ability to judge similarities and differences, as well as an acute sense of discrimination. In addition, the child develops fine co-ordination of movement in working with the equipment.

Dr. Montessori designed concrete materials to represent all types of quantities. She observed that children became interested in counting and enjoyed touching or moving the items as they counted them. By combining this equipment, separating it, sharing it, counting it and comparing it, they can demonstrate to themselves the basic operations of mathematics. Dr. Montessori demonstrated that if children have access to mathematical equipment in their early years they can easily assimilate many facts and skills of arithmetic. “When playing with the material, a child forms a visual image of the arrangements of the objects and can thus remember their quantity and order” discovery of the child pg.27

The mathematics equipment goes from simple to complex. We start with basic exercises including sandpaper numerals and materials that introduce the concept of quantity – for example ‘zero’. We then go on to learn about the decimal system using the golden beads. The materials cover addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and fractions which are introduced when a child shows that they are interested and ready.

It is also important for teachers to be aware that maths is all around us in nature. We can use mathematical language and comparisons when looking at, for example, stones and trees.

## **ETHICS, RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY**

The Montessori approach encompasses morals and ethics that are represented in many different religions, such as treating others with respect, kindness and love, and resolving differences through communication.

The children gain an awareness of the world around them by exploring other countries, their customs, food, music, religion, climate, language, and animals. This helps to raise their consciousness about other people. They gain an understanding, tolerance and compassion for all the people in the world.

As we are an international school, we are lucky to have families from various parts of the world. Parents are invited in to talk about their country of birth and often bring in examples of clothing, food and photographs.

We draw on the cultural mix of the enrolled children each year, and have, for example, talked about Hanukkah, Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year, and Christmas etc.

## **LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY**

We have walks in the local community and experience the diversity of Norwegian nature

We focus on and participate in Norwegian traditions and culture, for example 17<sup>th</sup> May, advent, skiing, the Christmas walk, Norwegian language and Sami culture.

UN day is marked in preschool, and we plan to make this a bigger event and incorporate human rights and the child convention. The Child Convention is the first international human rights convention that gives children special legal status. It reaffirms that children have human rights and the right to protection. This is a topic that will be discussed with the oldest children.

## **TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Bærum commune is aiming to be a 'traffic safe commune' and we are therefore focusing on traffic safety in our preschool. Our goal is to raise awareness and stress the importance of following traffic safety rules.

Before going on walks at the beginning of the school year, we discuss with the children what the rules of traffic safety are and why they are so important.

Parents are informed of our traffic rules at parents meeting and information is hung in the hallway for all parent to read.

## **TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Through various developmental measures, employees can strengthen their competence and pedagogic work in line with the framework plan

We currently have one teacher studying part time to become a preschool teacher in Norway, and one teacher following a leadership course, both due to finish in summer 2020.

Courses through the commune and through the Montessori society are open to all employees. Anyone attending a course must then share the information at the next staff meeting.

Professional development in house is given through guidance and training in the classrooms and can be on Montessori materials, themes for the month, topics within the framework for daycare.