

Frequently Asked Q & A's

Buena Vista Elementary is a Colorado Springs District 11 public Montessori School. We are now going into our 13th year with the Montessori Program.

What grade levels do you offer?

We currently offer classes for 3 year olds through 5th grade.

What are the daily hours for school?

Our school day is 8:00 – 2:30 for kindergarten through 5th grade. Hours for preschoolers vary based on enrollment program selected.

Is there a cost to the program?

The program is *free for students in kindergarten through 5th grade*. There is a fee for the preschool program. Preschool families have three options for enrollment:

½ day – 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Mon - Fri @ \$325/month based on a 9-month payment plan

Full day – 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Mon – Fri @ \$550/month based on a 9-month payment plan

New: ½ day – 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., Mon, Tues & Wed only @ \$227/month based on a 9-month payment plan (this option is limited to 4 each 3 year old spots)

How do I enroll my child at Buena Vista?

All families must choice into BV. We are a school with no neighborhood boundaries. The process begins during the district's choice open enrollment window, November 1 – February 15, of the year *before* your child would begin school. The choice window technically closes on February 15 but we continue to accept families on our wait list all year and we retain these wait lists throughout the school year in which the permit has been applied for.

Once you have submitted the choice application form to the school directly, the student is automatically placed on a wait list. In February we begin the process of offering enrollment based on the date the permit was submitted. All current students enrolled at BV are guaranteed a place the following year.

What certifications do your teachers have?

All of our teachers are required to have a Colorado State license and also Montessori certification. Our teachers hold Montessori certification in the age group in which they teach. Each classroom has one teacher and one full time educational assistant.

What is the student-teacher ratio?

Class size is designed to be large enough to foster independence and an optimal learning environment, but small enough to allow for appropriate guidance and supervision – 2 adults for 24-28 children. Children in a Montessori classroom choose their own work within guidelines set by the teacher. This framework offers a great deal of freedom, but each freedom has corresponding responsibilities.

Each of our Primary classrooms (combined 3, 4, 5 year olds) has 20 students; this age level provides a 10 to 1 ratio. Each Primary class consists of 10 preschoolers and 10 kindergarteners. Lower Elementary classrooms consist of combined 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. Upper Elementary consists of 4th and 5th graders.

Why do Montessori classes have mixed ages?

Mixed age groups naturally reflect family, neighborhood and work-place environments. In a mixed-age classroom, younger children have the opportunity to learn from older classmates; older children gain confidence from sharing their experience. This interaction fosters independent learning and creates a stimulating classroom atmosphere.

How do the Montessori lessons align with the Colorado Academic Standards?

The staff at Buena Vista undertook a comprehensive alignment process when the Colorado Academic Standards were first released. Montessori lessons either align or exceed the current CAS and, with the advent of performance-based assessment in the standards, the Montessori curriculum matches with the goals for students in each grade level.

How do teachers know if students are learning what they need to know?

Each student has a work plan which includes lessons to be given by the teacher, lessons for the student to practice, and areas of free choice based on individual interest. Teachers conference with students about their work and completes observations on a regular basis. Each student's work throughout the lessons is differentiated to meet individual needs. With the alignment of the state standards to the Montessori lessons, the teacher sees where each student falls on the learning path and adjusts it accordingly as the student masters a particular area of study.

How do you support gifted students at the school?

The school has a new gifted program which follows CDE guidelines for gifted students. Taught through project-based learning to build on the self-directed practice in the Montessori classroom, it has been developed to extend students critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Projects are developed around student interests.

How do students transition to traditional school at the end of the program?

One of the greatest difficulties experienced by many middle and high school students is the need to organize their own time and be responsible for their own learning. Montessori students are able to do this from an early age, which makes the transition to traditional school an easy one.