



## **Transitioning Your Child from BCMS to Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

Moving from preschool to Kindergarten marks an exciting new chapter in your child's life. We know that you may have questions about the process and we want you to know that we are available to answer your questions and provide assistance as we plan together for your child's transition.

Moving from preschool to Kindergarten is one of the biggest milestones in a child's life. Transition is movement or change without interruption; it should be a smooth flow from one place or condition to another. This letter is designed to support you and provide you with information and tips for this time of change, all while taking into consideration your young child's on-going social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being.

### **Preparing for change/transition:**

As the parent of a young child you may feel uneasy or anxious about the move from BCMS to Kindergarten /1<sup>st</sup> grade. You and your child have developed relationships with us and feel comfortable and relaxed here. We have shared some amazing experiences and have developed a special relationship with you and your child. The thought of someone else taking our place may be nerve-racking. However, the transition needs to be treated as a great adventure—for you and your child. This can be done by making the most of your child's remaining time in our program, communicating with us and working with him/her at home to prepare. These last months are the pinnacle of all our work together! Please be assured that BCMS has provided the foundation for your child's development, self-confidence, social skills and a passion for learning. They can face new challenges and are equipped to solve problems as they move into a more complex world.

## What can parents do to help transition from preschool to elementary school?

There are some basic things that parents can do to help your child move smoothly from the comfort of the preschool setting to the newness of the Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> grade setting:

1. **Make an appointment with your child's BCMS teacher** to "check in" on where they currently are in their development and get their opinion on your child's readiness socially, emotionally, and cognitively for elementary school. Talk about goals you and the teacher want your child to reach by the end of this school year. With everyone working together as a team, those goals can be realized. Please note: at BCMS, you are welcome to schedule as many meetings as you want as this transition to elementary school approaches!
2. **Talk about the transition with your child – BUT NOT TOO EARLY!!** The biggest mistake parents make is talking about moving on too far in advance. As adults, it is natural to be excited, and to try and digest/plan/prepare your child. But, please remember, young children live "in the moment." Talking about this change too soon can create:
  - **Unnecessary anxiety:** Parents sometimes don't realize how special a bond children form with their preschool teachers. For many kids their preschool teachers are the first adults that cared for them and taught them - other than mommy and daddy. The thought of leaving this loving/nurturing environment can be scary for some children.
  - **Young children do not yet have a sense of time:** Even though you think you are "preparing ahead" by telling your child they will be moving on "soon" or in September, they may think they are moving on "tomorrow". They still have 4-5 months to go before this transition will take place, and it is best to talk about it / create excitement closer to the time it is most relevant – in the month before it happens. This keeps your child focused on continuing their learning over the next few months, without the buildup of anticipation/anxiety that the change may happen "any moment."
  - **Detaching too soon:** Sometimes when a child knows they are "big" and moving on to "big school" they will begin to detach from us too early and start to think they no longer have to listen to us, follow our rules, and can stop working on skills that are critical to their preparation for "big school."

3. **Prepare yourself:** Ultimately, the best thing you can do to help your child is to get *yourself* prepared, and then you can concentrate on your child's needs. When talking with your child (despite whatever anxiety *you* may have) keep your comments positive and enthusiastic so your child will feel the same way. It is important to remind your child that this is going to be an exciting new adventure, and you know they are up to the challenge. **Again, it is important to not begin this conversation too early, but about a month or so before hand.** At this time you can also build enthusiasm/excitement by taking your child shopping for a backpack, lunchbox, and school supplies! It will be fun for both of you. Most elementary schools will provide you with a "school supplies" list at orientation - which is closer to your child's start date.
  
4. **Make sure to attend any elementary school-sponsored events and orientations** to get up-to-date information about your child's Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> grade program. You and your child should plan to participate in these activities to help both of you get acquainted with the environment and staff.

While you are there it is good to:

- Meet the Principal and some teachers – it's a good idea to let them know you and your child are coming to their school and that you want to stay in touch with them.
- Visit the Kindergarten/1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom, school library, lunch room – things won't look so strange to your child on the first day if you can visit ahead of time.
- If possible, use the playground so your child becomes familiar with the environment and playground equipment.
- Be sure to call the school to see what events they offer, or to schedule an appointment.
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5. **Practice independence, responsibility, and self-care skills at home:**

- **Independence/Responsibility:** It will help the Kindergarten teacher, and build your child's self-esteem, if he/she practices getting dressed on their own, putting on and tying their shoes, and keeping track of/taking responsibility for their personal belongings at home (i.e. hanging up their jacket, cleaning up their toys, clearing their place at the table, creating a workspace for homework and school supplies, etc.)

- **Toileting:** The Kindergarten staff will be sure your child knows where the bathroom is, but will not likely accompany them when they need to go. Your child may not yet be proficient at wiping themselves properly. It is important to guide them and give plenty of opportunity to practice wiping properly at home.
- **Scheduling:** Begin moving towards your new “school day” schedule of bedtime and wake-up time a few weeks before school starts. If your child will be starting elementary school at an earlier time, you can incrementally move bedtime up 15 min./wake up time 15 min. on a daily basis - over the course of a few of weeks.

**Please calendar these events NOW!**

## **How we celebrate and say farewell to you:**

### **1. Graduate Picture Day – Monday, 05/18/15:**

- Graduate picture day is scheduled for **Monday, 05/18/15**. The photographer from Lifetouch will be here to take your child’s portrait wearing a cap and gown. Participation is not mandatory, nor is it mandatory to purchase any portraits. It is merely offered for those who may want a memento of this moment in time.
- The photographer will be at BCMS at approximately **10:00 to 11:00 AM**. We will have each child photographed, at random, as they arrive.
- **There is no payment or order form required prior to picture day.** Once processed, the picture packages will be sent to us for you to pick up in the office (approximately two weeks after picture day). You keep which pictures you want (or none at all) and return to us any unwanted pictures, plus payment for prints you keep (if any).
- We’ll send out an e-mail when picture packages are available for you to view/pick up.

**2. Individual “Goodbye Graduate” Montessori Journey Ceremony – (on your child’s last day of attendance):**

- It is important that we celebrate your child’s accomplishment and allow him/her some sense of *personal* closure from his/her pre-school teachers and classmates at BCMS. **On your child’s last day of attendance** we will do a **“Goodbye Graduate” ceremony with their teachers and classmates ONLY** (similar to the Montessori Birthday ceremony) at morning circle time. We will make a poster with a selection of pictures of your child’s journey at BCMS so they can share it with classmates and see how far they have come. Your child will be recognized by the teachers/class and receive a “proud graduate” ribbon, a gift book, and a diploma certificate. We will take pictures of the ceremony, and with their classmates, and share them with you on our Shutterfly site.

**The last day of school at BCMS is Thursday, 08/20/15.**

**Be sure and let us know, as soon as possible, what your child’s last day of attendance will be (if other than 08/20/15) so we can prepare for their special day.**

**3. Family Graduate Party and Slideshow - Saturday, 08/08/15:  
(one for each classroom)**

Miss Evelyn’s Class: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Mr. Sanath’s Class: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Miss Soumya’s Class: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

- We are having a "Goodbye Graduates" Party and Slideshow Celebration on Saturday, August 8, 2015! There will be a short presentation of graduates, a slide show featuring all the graduate children over the time they have been with us at Big City on their Montessori Journey (**YOU DON’T WANT TO MISS IT!**), a graduation cake and punch to share, and fun playtime on the playground.
- Parents, family members, friends and classmates are invited to come and share in the fun and say goodbye to Big City.
- **Please RSVP by July 31, 2015** - let us know how many adults and how many children will be coming. We look forward to seeing you all there!

\*\*If your child is leaving Big City before 08/20/15, please do come back on Saturday, 08/08 and join the party!!

### **Business together – closing your account:**

Because you have signed a 12 month school year contract with BCMS, your service contract ends on 08/20/15. Your tuition obligation ends on 08/01/15, upon payment of your 12<sup>th</sup> and final amortized installment.

Should you elect to leave early (i.e. break the contract) before the completion of the 12 months, for any reason, 60 days advance notice – *in writing* – is required and there is an **early withdrawal financial penalty**.

We encourage you to look at your school year contract, and talk with Miss Jill for further details, before you make your decision to leave early - as **the financial aspect of early withdrawal could impact your decision**.

### **In conclusion:**

Thank you!

**Thank you for choosing a Montessori education for your child – “*an education for life*”.**

Thank you for entrusting BCMS with your child’s care and education. It is a trust that we have valued and taken seriously. We set our standards high, expect the best, and believe our students deserve no less. We could not be prouder of our students and the life skills they have learned from our amazing and dedicated teachers and staff.

**Thank you for partnering with us in this Montessori journey; we recognize that your commitment to your child’s early education has involved hard work and sacrifice.**

It has truly been both a pleasure and privilege to have been part of your lives! Here's to you and your amazing child making a smooth transition from preschool to Kindergarten. We look forward to working together with you on this over the next several months.

Kindly,  
BCMS