



Blue Butterfly

MONTESSORI

unfold



educate



inspire

Prospectus

Why Montessori makes all the difference

The Montessori Method of education has endured for over a hundred years and is successful because, it is based on a deep understanding of the way children learn: through choosing, trying and doing themselves.

When you add the specially developed materials in a prepared environment, and the close observation of a trained teacher, this leads to a very successful outcome for the child: The child learns through understanding as apposed to simply being told. From understanding comes confidence and a love of life long learning is promoted very early on.

Montessori provides the foundation for future learning, hardwiring a child's capacity to engage with new material and information and providing the tools with which to manipulate it.

Children coming from a Montessori background are more confident in their abilities, have a stronger sense of self and are more able to focus on tasks and complete them than other children.

A study by the University of London (UCL) in 2003 established that Montessori educated children have a level of cognitive attainment at age 5 that is higher than the national average. High levels of positive, social and behavioural development were also demonstrated in all areas.



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Introduction

Thank You for your interest and welcome to Blue Butterfly Montessori.

Blue Butterfly Montessori is located in the heart of Pinner Village, a quiet garden suburb of north west London. We are dedicated to delivering a high standard of Pre-School education and care incorporating the values and teaching methods of Dr. Maria Montessori.

For babies aged 3 months through to children aged 5 years, we aim to care for your child in a very unique way, because we recognise that your child is unique and personal to you. We have taken great care to create the secure, nurturing and fun environment especially responsive to a child's developmental stages and inherent desire to learn. Our child centred nursery design has spacious rooms filled with natural light, two of which have their own easy access into the private garden and play area.

It is an incredible privilege to bear witness to a child saying a new word or recognising a colour correctly for the very first time; to simply observe first hand, their inner sense of satisfaction at learning something new.



This is why our Montessori teachers and staff are at the heart of all that we do. Our teachers have been selected for their expertise within their own age group niche. They are keen observers of children and are essential in guiding each child at their own individual pace and learning style.

We will be offering a broad curriculum aimed at the development of the whole child; mind, body, heart and soul, teaching social as well as academic skills, to provide a lasting foundation of skills. We hope to instill in children, a lifelong enjoyment of learning.

By establishing and maintaining a strong home-nursery connection, we place great importance on our relationship with parents as partners in the process of developing their child.

We look forward to welcoming you at Blue Butterfly Montessori... *where to begin.*



Facilities

NATURAL LIGHT

Spacious rooms have been custom designed for pre-school children with an emphasis on natural light. Research confirms that children are energised by natural daylight and actually progress faster in classrooms where natural light is maximised.

QUALITY EVERYWHERE, EVERYTHING ... A NEW BLUEPRINT

Our approach to the planning of our classrooms represents the current and modern fundamental shift away from the traditional layouts. Children require as much flexibility as adults expect and this is reflected in our free flowing classroom layouts which are structured primarily for the benefit of the child with clearly defined areas to support; learning, rest, play and social interaction.

Our commitment to quality is as present in our choice of furniture to invite a child's curiosity and subsequent learning as it is in the way our learning resources are displayed. Children enjoy in the learning resources themselves, the full range of authentic Montessori materials, from sand paper letters for language to the globe of the continents for geography.



BRINGING THE INDOORS OUTSIDE

Our own private and secure garden/play area, set in mature grounds is created to stimulate outdoor learning, allowing children to connect with nature, be more active, and improve their social interaction skills. One corner of the play area is home to a nature garden with a vegetable growing patch together with plant and flower growing area. A shelter is in place to ensure that the children are always able to enjoy fresh air and connect with the outdoors whatever the weather, because outside play is important too!

COMFORT AND JOY... BORN FROM SAFETY

The safety and security of children is assured with a cutting edge 16 point camera CCTV system which covers the external areas of the building as well as the internal. Pre-authorised family members of registered children are welcome at any time but a strict security check system is in place for all visitors to the nursery.

THE HOME NURSERY CONNECTION ... A CLOSER PARTNERSHIP

We offer parents our own private car park with several spaces on the premises for ease of drop off and collection as the 'school run' should neither be an inconvenience nor a burden due to access restrictions. Our car park facility represents the first step in building the home-nursery connection. We are keen to emphasise our relationship with parents as partners in the education of their child. We therefore encourage and invite parents into Blue Butterfly Montessori to form a closer relationship with our teachers and dedicated support team.

Staff

We recognise our teachers and support staff as the single primary factor in the education and care of all children under our supervision. For this reason alone we are able to assure parents that:

- 🦋 Our recruitment policy ensures a thorough and rigorous vetting process of assessment to verify employment history, residential history, authentication of all professional qualifications and certificates.
- 🦋 All staff members have a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before commencing work. This is then updated every 3 years.
- 🦋 Periodic Reviews are in place to identify further training and improvement to promote best practice as we would like to attain the goal of leading the best team of child practitioners. We instill in our staff the ethic of 'continuous learning'
- 🦋 Our Nursery Nurses are able to excel in their functions as they have been selected solely for their expertise within their own age group niche. We demand a very high standard and refuse to compromise on quality as this is what we feel each child deserves.
- 🦋 An experienced and highly qualified non-teaching Manager and Deputy oversee the Montessori Teachers and support staff. They ensure that the Montessori has a strong foundation in leadership and constant wrap around support for the teachers and nurses working directly with the children. Our staff structure gives each child the best opportunity to thrive and explore their potential.
- 🦋 Our Montessori Teachers who lead the rooms from toddler age onwards are skilled interpreters of child behaviour constantly refining their observational skills and understanding of how children develop.
- 🦋 Members of our staff team distinguish themselves through their; self belief, passion, commitment, diligence and attention to detail.



**The difference:
'The first good teachers
endure in a child's
memory for life'**

- 🦋 Our staff are also chosen for their enjoyment in what they do, and so they welcome opportunities for both giving and receiving feedback of their performance.
- 🦋 We recognise the importance of a loyal and skilled staff team as we appreciate that children respond well to having a consistent, familiar and special person to care for them in the same way they their mother or father would at home. This is why we adopt a Key Person approach to caring for your child.
- 🦋 An appointed Key Person looks after your child all day, every day (unless they are away from work, in which case there is a co-key person, who will also know your child well and can step in). The Key Person is responsible for keeping and updating your child's developmental records, planning for their individual needs, and ensuring your child is safe, happy and contented.

The Montessori Ethos

BACKGROUND

The inspiration for the Montessori Method of education comes from Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952) who was a pioneer of child-centered education. She became the first woman to qualify as a medical doctor in Italy and it is her scientific background which underpins much of the teaching philosophy.



Like many nineteenth century women of her class, she felt social responsibility for the poor and supported them far beyond the duty expected of a doctor. In 1897 she was asked to visit Rome's asylums and became intrigued with trying to educate the poor and mentally disadvantaged children who were thought to be 'unteachable'. Her first notable success was to have several of her 'unteachable' students pass the State exams for reading and writing with above average scores. These mentally disadvantaged children made her wonder in awe at the untapped potential she might be able to discover in normal children.

After establishing her first school in 1907 she began observing children's reactions to their new environment without any pre-conceived ideas of what would happen – this is what we would call today: 'action research'. She modified the materials originally used on the mentally disadvantaged children in relation to the normal children's usage and her insights formed the basis for her first book, 'The Montessori Method' published in 1912. In this book she describes children as:

- being capable of extended periods of concentration;
- enjoying repetition and order;
- revelling in the freedom of movement and choice;
- enjoying purposeful activities (preferred work to play);
- self-motivated, displaying behaviours that did not require punishments or rewards;
- taking delight in silence and harmony of the environment;
- possessing personal dignity and spontaneous self-discipline;
- being capable of learning to read and write.

Montessori believed that these characteristics represented the potential of humanity. She advocated that all children should be given the opportunity to 'reveal themselves' in a developmentally appropriate environment that would facilitate their natural growth and development. The favourable environment forms one of the key links in the triangle of components at the heart of the Montessori Method. The other two links being the child and the teacher.



Q. What is the Montessori Method?

A. The Unique Triangle – Child, Environment, Teacher

THE CHILD

Montessori recognises and celebrates the unique individuality of each child and the potential that they hold within themselves.

She urges adults to demonstrate trust in the child's ability to learn and absorb the environment and culture in which they grow up, and so become an adult. She saw the child as a possible agent in affecting social change in the world at large.

Fundamental to the Montessori approach is the belief that a child's early years-from birth to six years are the period when they have the greatest capacity to learn and the greatest appetite for knowledge. What happens to a child during these critical years lays the foundations for the future.

THE FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT

Montessori saw the environment as a key factor in children's spontaneous learning. The child is viewed as an active agent of this environment, and the teacher as the facilitator of the child's learning and development.

Montessori's specifically designed equipment and materials are central to the philosophy. There are specific learning tools for each core area of learning, created to help children develop essential physical, cognitive, linguistic and social skills.

The Montessori classroom is a 'prepared environment' consciously designed to support the child's developmental needs. Everything within the setting reflects a commitment to quality and to the children's ability to do things for themselves. It is by doing things for themselves and feeling the joy of achievement that children acquire knowledge and develop new skills.

The design is expressed in the quality and accessibility of all materials-children rarely need to ask if they can get something. Montessori materials are carefully designed to provide children with a step-by-step understanding of complex abstract concepts through the use of concrete examples- such as the physical shape of letters to the structure of the decimal system. The children themselves are encouraged to participate in replenishing supplies, correcting their own mistakes, cleaning up after themselves and maintaining the ordered setting that is the foundation of the Montessori approach.

The materials themselves have been refined and perfected since Maria Montessori's time and form part of a structured approach to learning and the acquisition of skills that allows the children to dictate the pace of advance as their understanding builds.

THE TEACHER

The teacher is the third and final vital link to complete the triangle between the child and its environment. Montessori teachers seek to guide rather than control. They are not there to impart knowledge or stuff the child with data, but to provide opportunities for learning and to present the best possible environment to achieve this.

The range of learning and experience found within a Montessori setting is broader than the state prescribed curriculum. Focus is on the 6 core areas of learning: Practical Life; Sensorial; Mathematics; Cultural and Creative Activity. Learning is invited rather than imposed; encouraged rather than enforced.

Equally, the emphasis is on giving the child the chance to progress at their own speed, rather than driving towards rapid advance, early achievement or any other fixed and premeditated goals. Freed from tests, benchmarks and competitive pressures children tend to excel, driven by their own thirst for knowledge.

Self discipline is an important teaching within the approach to learning. Children enjoy enormous freedom to choose within the limits of the prepared environment. Poor or disruptive behaviour is discouraged through the reinforcement of positive behaviour and respect for the space, work and concentration of other children in the classroom.

Montessori Teachers are skilled interpreters of child behaviour constantly refining their observational skills and teaching strategies as well as developing their understanding of how children develop and learn because each child is ultimately unique. Montessori teachers distinguish themselves by forming a close partnership with the family of the child. Montessori herself recognised that both the nursery and the home have to share the values of 'following the child.' Montessori teachers are committed to continuous learning, as teaching is also a process of learning.

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say that the children are working as if I did not exist."



Our Curriculum

OVERVIEW

The Montessori approach which has been used successfully for over a hundred years, seeks to provide organised play as a means of promoting specific skills and concepts and is very much at one with the EYFS view of learning. In particular, both see observation of children as central to promoting their learning and development.

The learning environments presented by Blue Butterfly Montessori are structured and organised in such a way that children learn through all the senses.

Our Montessori curriculum identifies six key areas of activity which encompass the six areas of learning and development identified and accepted in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage). These are namely:

🦋 Practical Life

🦋 Sensorial

🦋 Language

🦋 Mathematics

🦋 Cultural

🦋 Creative

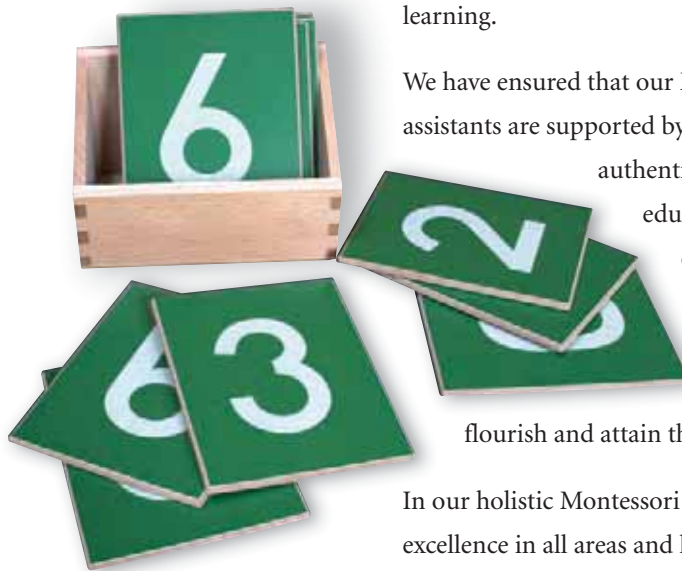
Under Extra-Curricular activities, we aim to introduce children to ICT, French, Music and Physical Exercise through specialist teachers.



Children participate in specific experiences using practical materials which are designed to develop manipulative skills. Within the Montessori environment, real experience is understood to be the source of all learning.

We have ensured that our Montessori Teachers and assistants are supported by the full complement of authentic Montessori materials, quality educational toys and associated early years play equipment. In turn, we feel this gives every child attending our setting the best possible chance to flourish and attain their full potential.

In our holistic Montessori curriculum we strive for excellence in all areas and hope families are able to learn more about what makes Blue Butterfly Montessori ... *the place to begin.*



Six Key Areas of the Montessori Curriculum

PRACTICAL LIFE

Practical life activities reflect the child's need to model behaviours reflecting their family life. One of the aims of these activities is to form a link between the home and the new environment of the Montessori classroom. Children are able to contribute towards the cultural and social life of the classroom, offering them the opportunity to experience a sense of belonging.

Typical tasks which children may be already familiar from the home surroundings include, pouring, dusting, dressing, wiping, sweeping etc. Whilst engaged in these activities, children perfect basic skills that will aid their independence both in the classroom and at home. They learn to pour their own drinks, serve food, tidy their own activities, wash their hands, wash up after their snack, water the plants in the garden and many more other skills.

Common to all practical life activities is their active nature. Children manipulate and so perfect their gross and fine motor skills as well as coordination of movement, hand-eye coordination, dexterity and pincer grip. The activities support the child's need to exert control over their environment and enhance their sense of wellbeing by the predictable and consistent nature of their organization.

The child's ability to concentrate, to organize, sequence and order the activity, and to pay attention to detail, such as replacing utensils at the end of an activity is significantly enhanced.

SENSORIAL ACTIVITIES

The sensorial materials the children will experience were developed by Maria Montessori herself and have changed little in over a hundred years, which is testament to their remarkable success.

Sensorial materials offer systematic refinement of the five senses, exploring

two and three dimensional forms- (geometric solids such as cubes, prisms, cones, pyramids and outlines of squares, circles and triangles).

The Montessori sensorial materials hold the key to the understanding of fundamental concepts and the possibility of the expansion of the child's cognitive capabilities. With the frequent focus on matching, pairing, sorting and grading, these activities are integral to building the foundation for mathematical understanding.

Sensorial activities lay the foundation for the child's academic learning in later years.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Dr Maria Montessori was surprised by children's ability to learn to read and write much earlier than generally expected. The use of phonics by Dr Montessori to develop reading and writing focusing on the sounds of letters, syllables and shapes using sandpaper letters is now widely accepted as one of the best methods for developing early literacy.

One of the reasons for the success of this method lies in the multi-sensory approach to absorption of the letter sounds and shapes by both visual and tactile means.

Children are prepared for use of writing implements early, both through the refinement of their fine motor movements within the practical life and creative areas of the classroom. A child's ability to control a pencil is further refined by the use of insets for design.

The child first learns to build words using cut-out letters (many children use magnetic letters on the fridge at home) and by careful listening to letter sounds. They start by building words with predictable patterns of a single, short vowel placed between two consonants

such as 'cat' and 'hat'. This stage of learning serves as an important tool for the introduction of reading and the decoding of words.

Phonological awareness and general pre-reading activities such as storytelling or books with props or sequencing of stories prepare children for more systematic literacy work in their primary school years.

MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY

The Montessori numeracy and arithmetic materials offer a systematic approach to learning about the integrity of numbers in relation to numerals, always using objects to support the learning. The golden bead materials, designed to introduce children to the hierarchies of the decimal system while exploring the place value using both the beads and the written symbols of the large number cards, are probably the most unique and original contribution made by Dr Maria Montessori to children learning mathematics.

Our Montessori teachers give children opportunities to use number knowledge in everyday contexts and within contexts meaningful to the child, such as counting how many fairy cakes will be needed for a snack or recognizing numerals on a birthday chart. Role Play is also used to great effect as children use number knowledge spontaneously.

CULTURAL

This area of the classroom allows our talented teachers to really distinguish themselves as the cultural area has the least amount of prescribed materials. Teachers are able to explore a wide range of topics in biology, geography and history.

Activities focus on real experiences that give children the chance to observe, explore and investigate such things as trees, plants, flowers, seasons, calendars, festivities, animals etc. Within our secure



Six Key Areas of the Montessori Curriculum

- ▶ private play area, children have an opportunity to nurture plants and flowers in the garden section. In the natural sciences such as botany and zoology, observation and familiarity is the method adopted.

For Geography however, a different approach and perspective is practiced embracing the whole solar system and exploring the natural aspects of global physical geography before focusing on continents and the countries where we live.

History is explored through timelines and natural cycles that help children understand the passage of time, a concept alien to most children. This is seen as preparation for later and more systematic study of natural history from an evolutionary perspective.

The exploration of continents and their countries also gives our teachers an opportunity to explore similarities and differences in the lives of children and their families across cultures around the world.

Dr Maria Montessori saw these activities as important learning tools for nurturing children's understanding of respect for all humanity as a foundation

toward peaceful co-existence.

The concept of peace permeates much of her work and represents her commitment to introducing children to spiritual life.

CREATIVE

Dr Maria Montessori valued self-expression and highlighted the need for children to have opportunities to participate in self-chosen and self-initiated arts and craft activities, as well as music, movement and socio-dramatic play.

Here at our well equipped Montessori setting, there are designated areas of the classrooms where children have all the necessary resources freely available to paint, using both easel and watercolours. Children are able to choose from a range of good quality implements such as crayons, coloured pencils and felt tips as well as a variety of different textured paper. We have resources to glue and make collages and to print using stamps as well as natural resources such as vegetables, wood and sponge stamps.

Our teachers help the children to develop the necessary skills for using scissors or applying glue but the

activities themselves are spontaneous and open ended allowing plenty of scope for children's self-expression and sense of accomplishment.

A generous range of musical instruments are readily available and teachers sing regularly with the children. Specialist music teachers are also employed to initiate a love of music and the instruments. Music itself is a great teacher and revealer of children's natural character and sensibility.

Storytelling using props is also a regular daily feature of our curriculum. Our Montessori teachers often dramatise stories and engage the children with role play. Once something has been initiated and understood, children are left to emerge spontaneously with their imagination to create.

Creativity is not taught but unfolded and supported in the child, and is viewed as a vital and equal component of the curriculum along with the preceding five disciplines. Children who are given ample scope to express themselves through a rich and varied creative arena tend to arrive for primary school with a more balanced and receptive disposition for further learning.

EXTRA CURRICULAR

ICT

Children are gradually introduced to computers as they get older which they can enjoy using for educational games as well as for supporting areas of interest within the curriculum. We also have two large wall mounted flat panel television screens to show educational programmes. These televisions also have the facility to connect to the nursery computers which teachers can deploy for further group teaching. Digital cameras are also available for children to use in exploring their environment. We will have specialist teachers conducting weekly lessons for ICT.

Music

A generous range of musical instruments are readily available and teachers sing regularly with the children. Specialist music teachers are also employed to initiate a love of music and the instruments. Music itself is a great teacher and revealer of children's natural character and sensibility. Our classrooms are also equipped with CD Players which children can enjoy for a variety of music, nursery rhymes and stories.

Physical Exercise

Specialist teachers are employed weekly to encourage physical movement and make exercise fun. We place great importance on physical education which

is essential in developing children's motor skills to support learning. We recognise the early childhood years as the period where children develop habits and lifestyles that continue into adult life.

Blue Butterfly Montessori is passionate about helping children understand more clearly, the vital roles physical exercise and nutrition play in their development and future health.

French

French will be introduced to the older pre-school children aged 3-5 in 'Blue Butterflies' with the help of a specialist teacher.

Healthy Mealtimes

We believe that every child attending Blue Butterfly Montessori deserves to eat seasonal, freshly prepared, nutritious and natural vegetarian food. We are against the preservatives, additives and chemicals so prevalent in the pre-prepared foods available in supermarkets today.

We emphasize a vegetarian diet for all children in our care as we believe in the long term health benefits of a diet rich in natural fruit and vegetables. The years from birth to adolescence are when eating habits are set, when growth rates are high, and to a large extent when the size of stores of essential nutrients such as calcium are determined.

We are committed to preparing healthy, fresh, nutritious, balanced menus which give children variety and choice; energy foods, foods for growth, tasty foods and foods to encourage independent eating. The

principles of planning a vegetarian diet are the same as planning any healthy diet: We aim to provide a variety of meals and include nutrients from all of the food groups.

A balanced diet provides the right combinations to meet nutritional needs. We hope to surprise parents with our variety of exciting vegetarian options!

We strive to make mealtimes fun to instill a lifelong love of wholesome, natural foods.

Blue Butterfly Montessori is also passionate about helping children understand more clearly, the vital role nutrition plays in their development and future health.



‘Salle des Bijoux’ – The Baby Room

Salle des Bijoux (The Room of Jewels) is our dedicated Baby Room at Blue Butterfly Montessori where we welcome babies from 3 months old through to around 18 months.

We appreciate that your child is the most precious thing in the world to you and your family. Salle des Bijoux has been carefully designed specifically with infants in mind with a strong emphasis on coming as close as possible to the homely family oriented atmosphere infants are accustomed to.

Your baby will receive a lot of attention and individual care from our staff who have all been selected for their dedication and expertise within this age range. Their training and natural love of babies distinguishes them as specialist teachers in their own right within the critical pre-toddler period.

We adopt a Key Person approach to caring for your baby. This means the same person looks after your baby all day, every day (unless they are away from work, in which case there is a co-key person, who knows your baby well and can take over). We understand that babies respond well to having a consistent, familiar and special person to care for them in the same way that their mother or father would at home. Your baby's Key Person will form a special bond with him or her. They will learn about your baby's individual preferences and plan a gentle routine,



following his or her established routine for meal times and sleeping to ensure a smooth transition between home and nursery.

Maria Montessori's concept for infants is called 'Nido' which is an Italian wording meaning 'nest'. The Nido protects and provides learning experiences for babies from three months to between 15 and 18 months. Our

Montessori infant environment can be considered an adapting continuum between two basic needs of the developing infant. On one hand is the bonded relationship between adult and child, whilst on the other is support for a growing sense of self and independence. The prepared environment is characterized by order, simplicity and beauty which meet the needs of the child.

Heuristic discovery play is encouraged using treasure baskets, mobiles, tactile activities (messy play) and music to ensure babies



“The greatness of the human personality begins at the hour of birth. From this almost mystic affirmation, there comes what may seem a strange conclusion: that education must start at birth” **Dr Maria Montessori**

explore real objects to develop their senses and satisfy their natural curiosity. Songs, rhymes, stories and books are all part of the daily routines.

Salle des Bijoux is distinguished more by which items and equipment are left out, rather than by those which are included. Items are generally not included if they are known to inhibit natural development. Infants are instead guided by carefully selected furniture and materials to develop emerging senses aided by quality toys to invite and sustain curiosity. Whilst babies learn by mouthing objects, as they grow and develop, they learn to use their hands. They will very often develop a fascination for grouping items in order of interest.

Salle des Bijoux is divided into five areas: movement, eating, sleeping, physical care and outside. The room has its own easy access double door opening out into our private secure garden and play area. The focus of our infant environment is on fostering basic trust in the child. Foremost within the environment is the adult whose caring, attentive response to the infant's needs, both physical and psychological, conveys the message of unconditional love and acceptance.

Your baby will enjoy happy stimulating days in Salle Des Bijoux with plenty of time for discovery, play, fresh air and sleep, but most important of all: lots of attention and affection!



Session times

We offer a choice of 3 sessions for babies, toddlers and pre-school children:

Morning Session: 8.00am to 1.00pm

Afternoon Session: 1.00pm to 6.00pm

Full day Session: 8.00am to 6.00pm

Age Groups of Learning

Babies aged 3 months to 18 months (Infants):

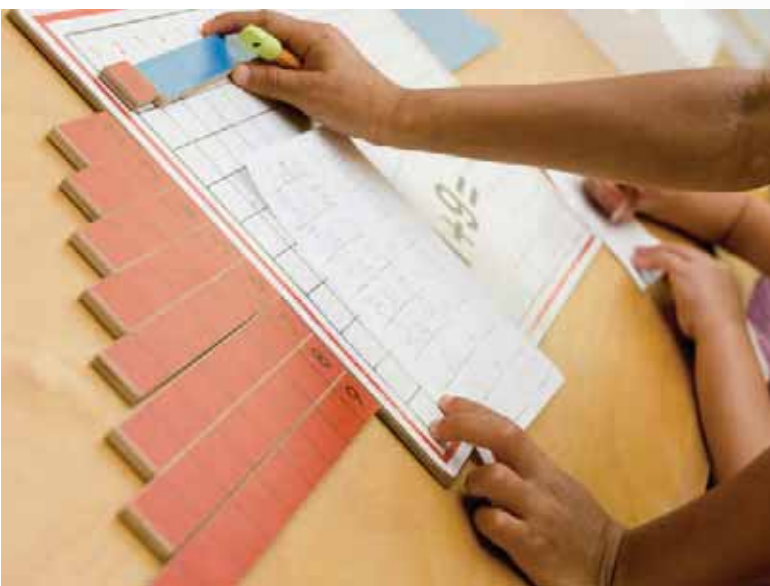
‘Salle des Bijoux’ – The Baby Room

18 months to 2 and half years (toddlers):

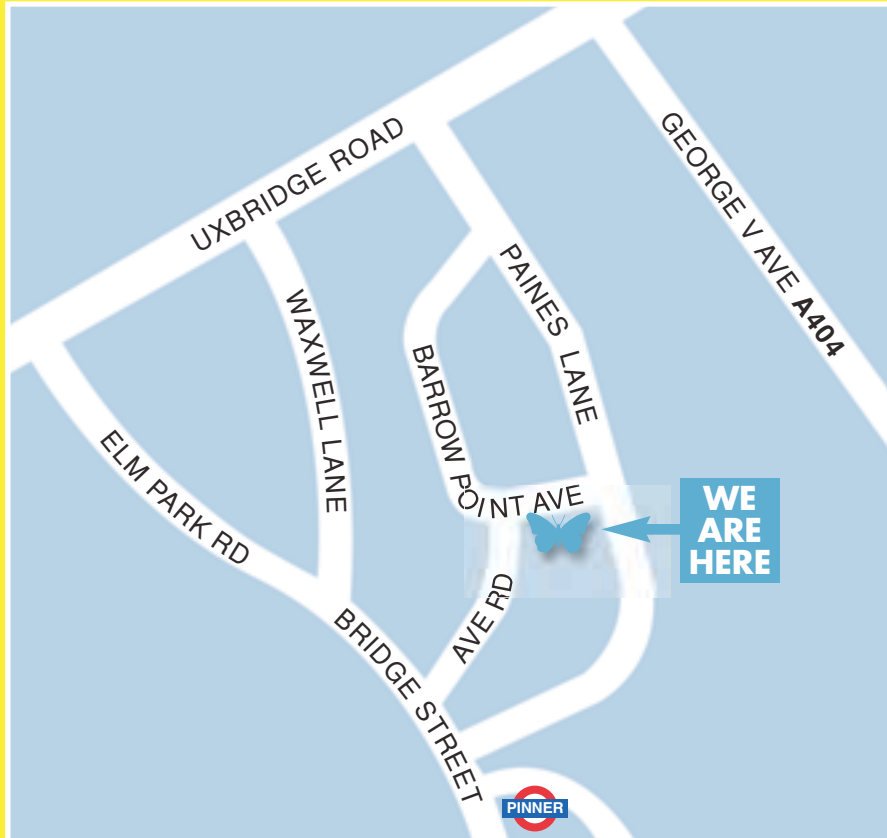
‘Green Butterflies’

2 and half years to 5 years (pre-schoolers):

‘Blue Butterflies’



Our location:



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