

Resilience, Perseverance, and Compassion: Brickton Montessori at work in a Global Pandemic
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The onset of COVID-19 has presented unforeseen challenges to our world. In Illinois, schools and many businesses were shut down statewide this past Spring, and even now are tremulously moving forward. Many school districts are currently offering only remote or hybrid instructional options. At Brickton Montessori, we are proud to offer on-site learning five days a week, and have been successfully doing so for over three months now.

At the onset of Illinois' shutdown, Brickton convened a COVID Task Force that met regularly to discuss and analyze the recommendations provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Our team worked tirelessly to determine not only how to implement the recommendations as written, but how to improve upon them to further reduce potential exposure and risk in this uncertain environment.

How does that happen, you might ask? It starts with education and communication. At first, wearing a mask all day may seem inconvenient or a nuisance. We teach our students that wearing masks shows that you care about the safety and well-being of your friends, teachers, and loved ones. It is a gesture of selflessness and of love. When that message is received and accepted, what initially seemed difficult now seems much more achievable.

There are adjustments being made not just by our students, but by our families as well. We have been clear, consistent, and frequent in our communication regarding our protocols involving daily wellness checks, mask-wearing, social distancing, and other measures we are adopting in the interest of minimizing risk and maintaining everyone's wellness to the greatest extent possible.

I am most amazed, however, by the selflessness, dedication, and professionalism demonstrated by our amazing staff during this incredibly stressful time. We are a small community with veteran teachers whose dedication to their students is unsurpassed by any I have ever seen. They are the ones modeling resilience, perseverance, and compassion for our students on a daily basis, and I am inspired by their example.

Operating on-site full time instruction at a school during a global pandemic is a significant challenge. By adopting classic Montessori principles such as experiential learning, prepared environment, and educating the whole child in our approach to this challenge, we have been able to develop and maintain a strategy that continues to serve us well. This is the Brickton Montessori way.