



PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

FOR PARENTS AND STAFF

The entire Rochambeau Maternelle faculty thanks you for entrusting us with the education of your child. We take great pride in such a serious responsibility and are honored to facilitate a nurturing environment in which your child can flourish while achieving academic success.

Maternelle (preschool and kindergarten) invites students ages two through six into a friendly, multicultural atmosphere. We integrate French immersion with English instruction through play and hands-on learning, enabling each child to grow and advance at his or her own pace to reach their full potential.

The educational team here at Maternelle has curated this brochure as a guide to helping new families understand the Rochambeau philosophy. We wish to provide basic information pertaining to the Bradley Campus, addressing frequently asked questions that often arise during the course of the preschool program.

Preschool is an adventurous beginning into a wonderful journey of education! Here at Rochambeau, we strive to facilitate positive and enlightening experiences that your child will always remember.

A warm welcome into the Rochambeau family! We are eager to get to know you, your family and your child and are always available to answer your questions.

Frédéric Tavernier, Directeur de la maternelle



MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission

The mission of Rochambeau is to create a multicultural learning environment built on a rigorous French curriculum accredited by the French Ministry of Education. The school is part of the worldwide AEFÉ network of schools and provides a safe environment that welcomes students of all backgrounds and nationalities, guiding them to become confident, caring, and open-minded critical thinkers who will gain access to the best universities and thrive in a diverse competitive world.

Our Vision

Rochambeau, the French International School, values diversity, celebrates multiculturalism, and empowers students to understand and improve the world around them.

The school's core values are:

- Pursuit of Excellence, expect and help everyone to do their best
- Intellectual rigor and fairness, strong emphasis on hard work and work well-done
- Adaptability to a changing world
- Respect for diversity, the individual, ideas, cultures and the environment
- Support and cooperation between and among our students, our staff and our community
- Openness and transparency in our decision making process and communication

Together these values support a school which is culturally diverse and truly international.



SCHOOL LIFE

Campus structure

The Rochambeau Maternelle is located on the Bradley campus and is open to children from two to five years old. Maternelle comprises seven classes divided between four preschool levels: Toute Petite Section (TPS) to the Grande Section (GS). Classes contain up to 24 students (except for TPS which has a maximum of 12 students) starting at two years old.

Class Levels	Age of Children in the Section
Toute Petite Section (TPS) <i>Nursery</i>	2 years old
Petite Section (PS) <i>Preschool</i>	3 years old
Moyenne Section (MS) <i>Pre-Kindergarten</i>	4 years old
Grande Section (GS) <i>Kindergarten</i>	5 years old

School Calendar

Each year the school calendar is planned by the administration in conjunction with representatives from the teaching staff, volunteer parents and secondary students. A calendar can be found [here](#) on the Rochambeau website.

Enrollment

General procedure

The application process opens in January of the year for which application is made. The Rochambeau online application is available [HERE](#). A list of required documents for enrollment is available [HERE](#). Rochambeau accepts applications on a rolling admissions basis. Decision letters are emailed mid-March or earlier once the Admission committee reviews applications. Priority is given to families with siblings currently enrolled at Rochambeau.



Financial Aid

All families are eligible for financial aid. Financial Aid is allocated based upon families' financial needs. Children with French nationality must first apply to the French Consulate. For more information, please reference rochambeau.org/financialhelp

Termination of enrollment

During the admission process, parents are strongly encouraged to inform the school if their child has experienced prior academic, emotional, social, or behavioral challenges. Such information allows the school to determine whether it has the proper resources to address the child's needs. The Head of School (Proviseur) has the right to refuse admission to any student whose needs cannot be adequately met by the school. While attending Rochambeau, should any student develop academic, emotional, social, or behavioral difficulties that the school cannot reasonably accommodate, the Head of School has the right to refuse continued enrollment of the student. Such a decision might be taken if continued enrollment would make an adverse impact on either the school's ability to provide satisfactory education if resources required for the student adversely affect the progress of other fellow students.

Our Staff: Key people in the school

There are four key instructors designated to each class: French teacher, English teacher, preschool assistant and lunch supervisor.

Based upon personalized needs, **other adults may work with children**, after informing the respective parents:

- FLE teacher (French as a foreign language): for students needing support/strengthening in French;
- ESL teacher (English as a second language): for students needing support/strengthening in English;
- Academic support teacher: for children in need of academic learning support;
- Student Achievement Advisor: for students striving to achieve social and emotional success;
- School nurse (located at Forest Road and available upon request at the Bradley campus); and
- Bus monitors for students taking the intercampus shuttle (to Forest Road or Rollingwood campuses).

The administrative team on campus include the Maternelle Director, the Maternelle secretary and the maintenance manager.



Finally, **substitutes** are provided when the regular teacher or preschool assistant are absent. The school has a team of substitute teachers available who have been recruited by the campus directors.

Class teachers

French-speaking teachers are required to have a master diploma and a teaching certificate from a French university or equivalent. English speaking teachers must have a teaching certificate from a native English speaking country. Regular professional development in-school or through the North America French School Network or the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools provide continuous education for all teachers in order to keep them abreast of changes in the French national curriculum and new teaching strategies. Federal regulations require that all teachers up to and including pre-k complete approved continuous training at a minimum of 12 hours per full year of employment as a child care teacher.

Teacher's aide

All Maternelle teachers have a teacher's aide. All teacher's aides must possess a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalence; or demonstrate completed courses for credit from an accredited college or university. According to the individual's professional development plan, each teacher's aide must complete Maryland approved continued training, at the rate of at least 6 hours per full year of employment as a teacher's aide.

For teachers and aides, recruitment is managed by the Head of Maternelle and the Academic Director through at least two separate interviews. During the interview process, candidates are asked about their general education philosophy, teaching strategies, communication skills with families, student support ability and more.

Student/staff ratio

CHILD AGE GROUP	STAFF/CHILD RATIO	MAXIMUM GROUP SIZE
2 years old	1 to 6	12
3 to 5 years old	1 to 12	24



Arrival and departure hours

MORNING	AFTERNOON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8:30: School opening • 8:30 - 9:00: Students arrive • 9:00: Classes begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3:10: Classes end • 3:10 - 3:30: Students depart

Sample schedules

(Examples only - final schedules are posted in classrooms)

TOUTE PETITE SECTION (TPS)	
9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bathroom break ○ Gathering and daily routine (attendance, weather, calendar) ○ Motor skills and/or workshops in class
10:00 - 10:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hand washing - snack - bathroom break
10:15 - 10:40	Recreation
10:40 - 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classroom workshops or motor skills ○ Gathering: language skills (counting rhymes, songs, etc.) ○ Bathroom break - hand washing
12:00 - 12:30	Meal and bathroom break
12:30 - 2:30	Naptime
2:30 - 2:50	Motor skills/hands-on activities/language skills
2:50 - 3:05	Recreation
3:05 - 3:10	Return to classroom and prepare to depart
3:10 - 3:30	Children are picked up in the classroom by families



PETITE SECTION (PS) - MOYEN SECTION (MS)	
9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Bathroom breako Gathering and daily routine (attendance, weather, calendar)o Motor skills and/or workshops in class
10:00 - 10:15	Hand washing - snack - bathroom break
10:15 - 10:40	Recreation
10:40 - 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Classroom workshops or motor skillso Gathering: language skills (counting rhymes, songs, etc.)o Bathroom break - hand washing
12:00 - 1:00	Meal and bathroom break
1:00 - 2:00 (MS) 1:00 - 2:15 (PS)	Naptime/Quiet time
2:00 - 2:50	Workshops/remediation/language skills
2:50 - 3:05	Recreation
3:05 - 3:10	Return to classroom and prepare to depart
3:10 - 3:30	Children are picked up in the classroom by families

GRANDE SECTION (GS)	
9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Bathroom breako Gathering and daily routine (attendance, weather, calendar)o Motor skills and/or workshops in class
10:00 - 10:10	Hand washing - snack
10:10 - 10:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Gathering: language skills (counting rhymes, songs, etc.)o Workshops
10:45 - 11:10	Recreation
11:10 - 12:00	Classroom workshops or motor skills
12:00 - 1:00	Meal - bathroom break - recreation



1:00 - 2:30	Motor skills/classroom workshops/remediation/language skills
2:30 - 2:50	Recreation
2:50 - 3:10	Gathering: language skills (counting rhymes, songs, reading stories, etc.)
3:10 - 3:30	Children are picked up in the classroom by families

Naptime in TPS, PS and MS

The French National Institute for Prevention and Health Education (INPES) and the National Sleep Foundation agree that between the ages of two and five years, children need from 10 to 13 hours of sleep; until at least the age of 4, a nap is often needed to supplement nighttime sleep. Time provided between 1 and 2 hours allows children to meet their needs for rest. Each child awakes at his or her own rhythm and then participates in activities with the teacher. Each child has their own bed. Sheets are sent home every other Friday to be laundered. Children may bring their own stuffed animal and pacifier for naptime only.

Bus schedules & routes

Buses pick up and drop off students from their designated bus stops to the school and commute students between the three Rochambeau campuses, including the Bradley Campus. Parents register annually for the bus service through Rochambeau website [HERE](#).

Children must be at least **three years of age to ride the inter campus shuttles and at least four years of age to ride the bus from their neighbourhood stop.**

MORNING SHUTTLE	AFTERNOON SHUTTLE
Rollingwood (8:25 a.m.) Bradley (8:45 a.m.)	Bradley (3:00 p.m.) Rollingwood (3:15 p.m.)
Forest Road (8:15 a.m.) Bradley (8:35 a.m.)	Bradley (3:10 p.m.) Forest Road (3:25 p.m.)

Each school bus displays an animal associated with a number stamped on the side of the bus to assist our students in identifying which bus they are supposed to ride. The animal corresponds with the animal printed on the bus tag they receive at the start of the school year.



1. Parents who desire to pick up their children before or at the end of the school day should **contact the secretary on their respective campuses;**
2. Any changes concerning student transportation and bus routine should be communicated **via email to the campus secretary by 12PM on the same day -- at the latest;**
3. For occasional bus transportation, parents must purchase bus tickets online only at 12 PM at the latest and via credit card or debit card. Occasional tickets are neither refundable nor transferable to another date and should clearly indicate date, time, bus number and requested stop; and
4. If parents would like to request a change of bus line or stop, they must notify the school transportation department by [EMAIL](#).

Lunch and snacks

When arriving at school, children should bring a meal in a lunch box provided by their family. Hot meals are stored in the classrooms and cold meals are stored in the school's cold room. After washing their hands, children eat lunch in the classroom from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m.

After school care

Due to the limitation of the school's operating hours by a clause in its agreement with the neighborhood (*Special Exception*), after school child care and extracurricular activities cannot be provided on the Bradley campus. The school has established two partnerships to provide these programs¹:

- Child care: At BCDS (Bethesda Country Day School, 5615 Beech Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814):
 - In the morning, parents drop their child off at BCDS (opens at 7:00 a.m.). At approximately 8:30, a Rochambeau shuttle picks children up and takes them to Bradley.
 - In the afternoon, a shuttle picks children up and drops them off at BCDS, where parents may pick them up (closes at 6:00 p.m.).
- Extracurricular activities: at the Ayrilawn Park YMCA (5652 Oakmont Ave., Bethesda, MD 20817): In the afternoon, a shuttle picks children up after class and drops them off at the YMCA, where parents may pick them up (activities end at 5:30 p.m.). This service is only available for students aged five or above.

¹ For children older than 3 years, the minimum age for riding intercampus shuttles.



Birthday Celebrations

The parent of a child who wishes to celebrate their birthday during school hours should contact their teacher to schedule a date and time, preferably in the afternoon.

Toys at school

Toys are not permitted. Stuffed animals and pacifiers for naptime are permitted through MS.



TEACHING AND LEARNING AT ROCHAMBEAU

The goal of Rochambeau Maternelle (or preschool) is to accomplish the first step in achieving bilingual educational success with all of its students. Rochambeau thrives in a dynamic environment that fuels children’s eagerness to attend school while learning, affirming and developing their personalities. The Rochambeau approach is based upon one basic yet powerful principle: all children are capable of learning and growing to the best of their abilities. By expressing its confidence in each child, Rochambeau believes that each student has the potential to learn and succeed in school and beyond.

The Maternelle program consists of nursery school through kindergarten as an entire learning stage (*cycle 1*) from two- to six-year old children which takes into account the child’s development and establishes a valuable link between family and school. Learning modalities are organized and approached around problem solving and educational games. Nursery school also allows children to experience, learn and absorb the basic principles of social life while developing their identities as individuals within a group setting.

The cycle of learning

The skills and knowledge that are cultivated among students from Nursery through middle school have been established by stages beginning with Cycle 1 (see cycles below). Teachers are provided with assessment tools and have access to French national benchmarks in order to measure the progression of all students. The curriculum proposes annual improvement in almost all disciplines.

CYCLE 1 Nursery				CYCLE 2 Elementary			CYCLE 3 Elementary & Middle School		
TPS	PS	MS	K	CP	CE1	CE2	CM1	CM2	6
2Y	3Y	4Y	5Y	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH
PRIMAIRE									MS



School curriculum

The curriculum is organized into five domains of learning. Each of the five domains is essential to a child's development and must find its place in the organisation of the daily time:

- language usages;
- acting, expressing oneself, understanding through physical activity;
- acting, expressing oneself, understanding through artistic activities;
- starting to develop the tools to structure thoughts;
- exploring the world.

At Rochambeau, fluency in the languages of French and English is essential. The practice of physical activities, artistic expressions and educational development support relationships between cerebral actions, sensations, imagination, sensitivity and thought. The time devoted to structuring thoughts and exploring the world focuses on developing a fundamental understanding of numbers and mathematical tools, the class environment and encouraging a child's curiosity. Preschool helps children make sense of the world around them by providing critical building tools that they will carry into elementary school. For each domain of learning, the Rochambeau program establishes a general definition, sets forth objectives and provides teaching indications to benchmark progression of learning areas.

Guiding principles

Beliefs and practices that underscore Rochambeau early childhood learning are reflected in the following Guiding Principles.

- **Children learn by playing:** games and play time allow children to build and strengthen their autonomy, act on reality, create their own fiction and color an imaginary world; to exercise motor behaviour and experiment with various social roles and conduct.
- **Children learn by resolving problems:** high level cognitive activities are fundamental to stimulating children's desire to learn and develop their intellectual independence.
- **Children learn by practicing and reflecting:** For young children, learning takes place over an extended period of time and their progress is rarely linear. Young learning requires time, repetition and reflexion about what has been learned.
- **Children learn by remembering and memorizing:** learning situations and activities are organized to allow children to recollect their experiences which fosters stabilisation of knowledge and skills.



Bilingual education at Rochambeau

Cummins² makes the distinction between two differing language proficiencies:

- **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills** are the "surface" skills of listening and speaking which are typically acquired quickly by many students, particularly by those from language backgrounds similar to English who spend a lot of their school time interacting with native speakers.
- **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency** as the name suggests, is the basis for a child's ability to cope with the academic demands placed upon her/him in various subjects.

Cummins states that while many children develop native speaker fluency within two years of immersion in the target language, **it takes between 5-7 years for a child to be working on a level with native speakers as far as academic language is concerned.**

Rochambeau early language immersion program

Rochambeau bilingual education programs include the following:

- 2 years old - 90% French and 10% English
- 3-6 years old - 80% French and 20% English

The focus of instruction is for all students to receive the same core academic curriculum as defined by the French Ministry of Education. For English Language Art in kindergarten, some elements of the Common Core³ have been included in the Rochambeau curriculum.

The quality of the program relies on the following features:

- **Diverse linguistic backgrounds** comprise all Rochambeau classes;
- **A student-centered approach** fosters reciprocity between students possessing higher-level cognitive skills. The Rochambeau program encourages students to share their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge with their fellow students;
- **Teaching techniques** respond to varying levels of linguistic proficiency, enabling students to orient efficiently to the class curriculum;
- **Cooperative learning strategies** are implemented to encourage student collaboration on common tasks while simultaneously sharing work experiences; and

² Cummins, J. and McNeely, S. (1987) Language Development, Academic Learning, and Empowering Minority Students. In Tikunoff, K. *Bilingual Education and Bilingual Special Education: A Guide for Administrators* Boston: College Hill

³ <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>



- Cooperative teaching facilitates linguistic knowledge transfer when French and English teachers collaborate, thereby enabling students' comprehension of the language

Native language Education

Rochambeau students continue their native language development in French or English since the education in their native language facilitates the acquisition of a second language. If a child already understands certain concepts in his/her native language, all he/she has to do is acquire the label and vocabulary for these terms in English or French. Parents are encouraged to nurture at home their child's native language by, for example, reading extensively in their own language, talking about daily activities and encouraging her/him to explain how she/he solved problems or managed social situations during the school day.

Language acquisition support

Rochambeau welcomes children from diverse language backgrounds into the early childhood classroom. In order for students to feel safe and to achieve success, the school provides several layers of support:

- **English and French as a second language:** students entering the school with limited proficiency in either French or English can benefit from English (ESL) or French (FSL) as a second language. During these times, students learn the basics of the targeted language through games and interactive activities related to the curriculum of the class. These activities are led in pulled-out or in-class settings based upon the needs of the students and requirements of class projects.
- **French/English language group support:** once a week students of the same class are divided by proficiency levels in order to reinforce and enrich their mastery of the French and/or English languages. Activities are literacy and oracy based.
- **Bilingual Co-teaching classes:** Twice a week elements of the curriculum whether in science, physical education or arts are co-taught by the French and English teachers of the class. During co-teaching, the pair (French teacher and English teacher) are expanding opportunities for students to engage with both adults in the classroom in both languages making sure that key concepts are understood by all learners.



CURRICULUM

At Rochambeau, students are given the time to learn. Knowledge, skills and attitudes are shaped over the course of three to four years. By the end of *Grande Section* (kindergarten), students should master the following:

Language Usage: literacy and oracy in French and English

Oracy

Verbal communication is considered a key tool of student success whether in French or English. During their time in preschool, students learn effective communication with adults and their peers through language, articulation, and syntax. Activities and exercises that involve narrating, describing, evoking thoughts and explanations, questioning ideas, proposing solutions and discussing points of view are carefully planned by teachers. During the 3 or 4 years of preschool, children learn and recount from memory nursery rhymes and poems.

Literacy

Students are introduced to a vast array of books to stimulate their curiosity about reading. Written text accompanied by spoken language gradually prepares the children to learn how to read (which happens formally in first grade in the French curriculum). Teachers assist students in identifying patterns in the oral language, manipulate syllables, discriminate sounds and recognize the correspondence between a letter and its sound. Students are encouraged to recognize the letters of the alphabet and identify the correlation between the three manners of handwriting: cursive, printing and block capitals. To prepare students to **write**, teachers instruct students how to write their names in cursive without using a model, and how to write a stand-alone word by using letters or groups of letters borrowed from recognized words. Teachers also engage students in verbal participation of the **production of written text**, understanding that we do not write as we speak.

Acting, expressing oneself, understanding through physical activity

Physical education is a significant activity of preschoolers and is scheduled once a day. The primary objective is to help students use their senses and bodies to explore the physical environment. With utmost intensity, they explore a full range of motions that lead to the mastering of fine and gross motor skills. They learn how to enhance their strength, balance, agility and coordination.



A variety of games and activities encourage students to run, jump, skip and overcome obstacles in different settings whether natural or contrived by the teacher. PE also promotes opportunities for interaction with peers, and physical exercise while fostering the development of self-confidence, sportsmanship and responsibility. Coordinating one's gestures and movements with those of others during dances and games, teamwork, role-playing in games, playing fairly against each other and developing strategies in order to achieve common goals comprise the Rochambeau PE curriculum. Finally, physical education also engages students in various artistic activities whether or not with music.

Acting, Expressing Oneself, Understanding Through Artistic Activities

Visual Arts

Art classes stimulate interest in a variety of mediums. Students express their creativity by choosing different tools for use in their choice of media to fashion their own artistic creations. An array of projects leads students in drawing and illustrating both freehand and tracing models. Projects are directed individually and in small groups. The hands-on nature of these art classes promotes eye-hand coordination and develops hand strength necessary for handwriting.

Music

On a daily basis, the children listen, sing and move to music from many diverse cultures. Teachers encourage students to memorize a repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs, interpreting them in an expressive manner. The first instrument that the child plays with is his/her own voice exploring the variants of timbre, intensity, pitch and nuance. Students are also engaged in identifying and reproducing with or without instruments simple rhythmic formulae and describing musical pieces while expressing their feelings and interpretation using basic vocabulary.

Starting To Develop The Tools To Structure Thoughts

Numbers

By the end of kindergarten, students know how to count up to thirty and write numbers up to ten. They learn how to count forward and backward from a given number within a known sequence. They understand the concept of cardinality and the relationship between numbers and quantity. They are able to represent numbers in different ways (i.e., with dice and hands or



numerically). They learn how to count objects and pair numbers with quantities, understanding that the number of objects is the same regardless of the arrangement or their order. Students compare numbers and concepts such as *greater than*, *less than* or *equal to* by using different strategies. They rank sets of objects in increasing and decreasing orders.

Operations

Students develop an understanding of the concepts of addition and subtraction by playing with sets of objects. They solve addition and subtraction problems without using the written form of these operations.

Geometry

Students identify and describe shapes and objects using the respective names of the shapes and describe the relative position of objects using appropriate vocabulary. They become familiar with and identify shapes (i.e., flat, square, solid) regardless of their form, orientation, color or size. Students compare different shapes to describe their similarities, differences and attributes. Often with the use of a Tangram, students create shapes and compose more complex figures. All activities are supported by language which allows these objects and actions to be described and promotes the identification of first descriptive characteristics.

Measurement

Students describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight and compare objects with measurable attributes in common, (i.e., comparing the height of two children and describe one child as taller/shorter). They classify objects into given categories and describe the differences (i.e., *taller than*, *smaller than*).

Exploring the world

Space and time

Students learn how to place real life events from school or personal life on a daily, weekly and monthly timeline. They identify simultaneity and succession of events using time or space expressions to relate an event, a story or an explanation. In doing so, students gain an understanding of concept of chronology.

They locate objects from one's point of view or another's point of view by describing the relative positions of these objects using terms such as *above*, *below*, *beside*, *in front of*, *behind* and *next to*. They learn how to follow a route on a simple map or a drawing of this route and also how to draw a simple map to illustrate the route.



Sciences & Technology

Through observations in science, students recognize the main stages of development of animals plants and begin to understand the essential needs of both. They learn the names of the different parts of the human body, on themselves or on a representation and gain understanding of the rules of personal hygiene and healthy living.

In technology, students fabricate objects and structures following simple instructions and models and use digital tools such as computer tablets.

Field trips and outreach programs

During the school year, there may be occasional outreach programs and group field trips planned for students to visit various local destinations such as farms, children’s theaters, parks, museums, etc. These outings are typically scheduled during normal school hours and welcome parents as chaperones. **The school is solely responsible for students’ transportation and supervision during these trips.** Participation in these group visits are not optional since they represent part of the school curriculum except in the case of adverse situations such as illness.

The school’s objective is to bring quality outreach programs to the student. These programs are generally overseen by highly trained teachers and are a wonderful complement to the school curriculum.



ASSESSMENT

Maternelle assessment overview

Assessment forms an integral part of the Rochambeau curriculum and a critical tool in supporting development and growth of young students. Teachers are provided with assessment tools. As such, they maintain access to French national benchmarks in order to measure the progression of all pupils and keenly identify those who are experiencing difficulties.

Rochambeau Maternelle has developed assessment tools in an ongoing process that includes observing, collecting evidence, synthesizing and interpreting information. Testing could play an important part of the assessment but does not provide a complete picture of a child's educational development. Therefore, assessment in preschool and kindergarten focuses on what a student has acquired versus what he/she has not yet acquired. Teachers understand that the younger the child the more difficult it is to obtain a valid assessment; that performance of an assessment is also influenced by a child's emotional state that can affect the resulting the assessment. Teachers use adaptive tools to evaluate students. In short, teachers focus on what a student knows rather than what the student does not know in an effort to build new knowledge and skills. This positive approach of assessment enables teachers to give parents and students constructive feedback.

Importance of assessment

Assessment provides educators, parents, and families with critical information about a child's development and growth. Assessment can:

- Provide a record of growth in all developmental areas: cognitive, physical/motor, language, social-emotional, and approaches to learning;
- Identify children who may need additional support and determine if there is a need for intervention or Rochambeau Learning Support Services;
- Help teachers plan individualized instruction for a child or a group of children that are within the same stage of development;
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses within the curriculum by informing the school with insight about how the program meets educational goals and needs of the children; and
- Provide a common ground upon which educators and parents or families can collaborate on strategies that support their children.



Assessment methodology at Rochambeau Maternelle

Methods of child assessment are both informal (observations, collecting data and a child's school work, using educator and teacher ratings) and formal (using assessment tools such as questionnaires and standardized testing facilitated by the French Ministry of Education). Both methods are effective and help inform educators and parents about a child's progress.

Informal assessment

- **Observations** are made with minimal or no intrusion into a child's activities. During normal class time, teachers observe all facets of development, including intellectual, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical development of each student.
- **Cahiers de Vie (binders or notebooks)** reflect a colorful record of a child's work collected during the school year. The collection clearly shows the progress of a child's development. This tool is important in fostering a partnership between teachers and parents.

Formal assessment and report cards

- **Educator ratings** are useful in assessing a child's cognitive and language skills as well as evaluating their social and emotional development. At Rochambeau, these ratings are collected in the *Cahier de Suivi*. This notebook records all of the skills and knowledge that a student has mastered from the first year of nursery school through kindergarten. Because the notebook uses pictograms to illustrate a student's success, it is a wonderful tool that enables parents to discuss progress with their child and provide insight into important academic and developmental milestones in their child's development. This notebook is communicated to families twice a year and sent on to elementary school at the completion of kindergarten.
- **Synthèse acquis de élèves** (student achievement report). This report which is intentionally brief identifies what a student has learned during *Maternelle* and highlights, when necessary, specific areas where help is needed. Compilation of this report remains the responsibility of the educational team and is not based upon standardized testing. The report is communicated to families at the end of the school year in June and sent on to the elementary school educational team.



The Rochambeau assessment philosophy

We believe that most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Therefore, challenges are normalized and not considered as failures but rather as necessary stages in the development of new skills. Teachers develop targeted interaction with students aimed at helping them analyze their learning strategies and procedures, and clarify tasks, objectives and success criteria. Teacher feedback focuses on the learning process over results. Assessment practices encourage student self-evaluation and peer evaluation and are based on success criteria. It is Rochambeau belief that to learn "how to" something is not to be able to succeed once, but to demonstrate a lasting knowledge, (Assessment in kindergarten, R. Tavernier collection, Bordas 1992).

Conferences

Good communications and a relationship of trust between school and the family are essential for a successful school experience. To support our mutual educational responsibility, the school invites parents to meet their child's teacher several times over the course of the school year:

- Back-to-school meeting:
 - Presentation by the school's operations director
 - Presentation by the classroom teacher about educational structure, plans and what is expected from families.
- Individual meetings regarding your child's learning and progress
 - in November
 - in February
 - based on your child's needs, an individual meeting may be scheduled in June

In addition to these scheduled meetings, daily informal conversations with the teacher during drop-off and pick-up times before or after class encourage better understanding and communication about your child's experience in school and at home. Teachers and the director can also be contacted by email and are available for individual meetings by appointment upon request.



SCHOOL-PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parent involvement

Parents are asked to volunteer at different events such as field trips, celebrations and class activities.

Homeroom Parents

Each class has one or two volunteer homeroom parents. Some of the duties of room parents include contacting class parents to assist in organizing special events, chaperoning field trips, translating messages in English/French, email correspondence for providing snacks, etc. Once a month homeroom parents meet with the preschool director to discuss areas of interest and to be informed about upcoming school events.

Parent representatives for Primary

Each year, preschool parents are invited to elect five representatives for the Primary⁴ Advisory Council or *Conseil d'Ecole*. This Council is held three times a year and gathers teachers, parents representatives and members of the administration, including preschool and elementary directors. The main goals of this Council include:

- To be informed on pedagogical and educational actions undertaken to achieve the school objectives;
- To validate the School Code of Conduct⁵; and
- To inform or advise on any other important issues impacting school life.

The Parent Association of Rochambeau (PAR)

PAR is a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland. Its purpose is to :

- Support Rochambeau and ensure the success of its educational objectives;
- Promote understanding and cooperation between parents, administration and teachers;
- Maintain an ongoing dialogue between parents, the administration and teachers;
- Provide a forum of discussion among parents concerning issues related to common interest and the development of their children; to promote cultural, artistic, social, recreational, athletic, fundraising and other activities to the benefit of the School's community;

⁴ (Nursery through Fifth Grade)

⁵[http://www.rochambeau.org/uploaded/PORTALS/RESOURCES_ADMIN/REGLEMENTS_INTERIEURS/Internal_Rules_2015_16_ENG_\(definitive\).pdf](http://www.rochambeau.org/uploaded/PORTALS/RESOURCES_ADMIN/REGLEMENTS_INTERIEURS/Internal_Rules_2015_16_ENG_(definitive).pdf)



Membership is open to any parent whose child is enrolled at Rochambeau. All memberships shall be granted upon a majority vote of the board.

Class Blog

Every preschool teacher maintains a blog as an additional tool of communication with parents. Its purpose is to keep families informed about their child's daily activities, inner workings of the class and what learning experiences are planned. The blog also allows parents to see what the school is doing to support their child's progress. Access to class blogs is reserved for parents of the child in the respective class. To provide the best security for everyone concerned, we ask that parents not share any of the documents on this blog.

School website and headlines

The Rochambeau website (<http://www.rochambeau.org/>) includes both a public site with general information about the school and a secure portal for parents providing access to internal information, rules, procedures and forms, calendar, extracurricular activities and vacation camps, as well as photo galleries and more. Parental access codes are provided by admissions services.

Email communication

Email is a fast and convenient way for general parent/ teacher communication. Teachers are provided with Rochambeau email accounts to increase efficient and effective communication. Teachers are expected to respond to a parent's email outreach in a timely manner. An acknowledgement of the parent's outreach within 48 hours is required to ensure that action is taken. We ask parents to take note of the following:

- Instant responses are unlikely – teachers are away from their desks for most of the day and need time to formulate replies in the midst of regular duties such as lesson preparation, teaching and administration.
- Staff generally deals with emails during working hours – it is not reasonable to expect teachers to respond outside of school hours or on weekends or holidays.
- Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, social or behavioral matters are best addressed by scheduling an in-person conference with your child's teacher(s). An e-mail message on these matters is not optimal.
- For any concern about your child's teacher, please address it first with the teacher (prior to discussing the matter with your School Director).
- Emails are subject to the same requirements of courtesy and consideration as would apply to all other forms of communication.



- Emails are not confidential and should be written with the understanding that staff may view them.
- Please do not ask teachers or school staff to re-direct your emails to other families. We only forward emails to school staff when deemed appropriate.

Because Rochambeau adheres to privacy laws most importantly as they relate to student records, we will not transmit any student information via email without a signed permission⁶ form from the parent/guardian. This pertains to any e-mail addresses that are registered in the Rochambeau website portal. If your email address changes, you are required to fill out and sign an updated form before we send any information to the new email address.

Other communication

Drop off and pick up times are not designed for discussing students issues. Children academic progress, learning expectations, social or behavioral matters are best addressed by scheduling an in-person conference with your child's teacher(s).

Parents may not directly approach a child other than their own to address social or behavioral matters.

⁶ Rochambeau Email Authorization Form



DISCIPLINE POLICY

Learning how to adapt in a group setting

The Maternelle structures learning and teaching around a central concept of "*learning together and living together*". The class and the group constitute a learning community which establish a basis for building comradery that respects diversity while remaining open to plurality of world cultures. Students learn to identify roles of different adults, function of differ within the class, they are consulted regarding certain decisions concerning the class life and thus discover the foundations of collective debate, different spaces in the classroom and in the school and the rules with which they are associated. Rochambeau Maternelle strives to ingrain in its young students the initial principles of life vital to functioning in society. Teachers and staff alike ensure that all children are treated equally most notably between girls and boys.

Code of conduct

Expectations for behavior are clearly defined in the Preschool Code of Conduct⁷. Rochambeau Maternelle is a place for teaching and learning comprised of students, teaching, non-teaching and administrative staff, and parents. Together they form the school's educational community. In pursuing its mission of education and encouragement to excellence, the school values the growth of each student in a climate of mutual respect and tolerance. School is the place where, in addition to academic studies, students learn how to live in society, how to accept responsibility and become good citizens. This philosophy provides definition to life within the academic community.

HEALTH

Vaccination requirements

In accordance with the laws of the state of Maryland, students' medical files must be up-to-date regarding the following:

- Emergency contact form
- Medical visit and information

⁷ <http://www.rochambeau.org/page.cfm?p=713>



- Vaccination certificate (NB: if you are coming from France, please pay close attention to the list of required vaccinations, making sure your child receives any missing vaccinations and complete the BEFORE YOU LEAVE France. The cost for these vaccinations may be several hundred dollars in Washington, D.C..)
- Blood lead level test
- Medications form

More information and medical forms can be found on the Rochambeau Parent Portal website. Username and password are necessary.

Nut policy

Nuts are prohibited on all Rochambeau campuses. Each year, some of our students experience severe allergic reactions to nuts. We ask that you do not bring nuts (peanuts, walnuts, almonds, etc.) or products that may contain nuts (i.e., Nutella, peanut butter, etc.) to school. Any food provided for snacks, lunch or other classroom activities (including holidays, field trips, etc.) must be carefully checked to ensure that they do not contain nuts. Families can help us provide a nut-free environment in our school by carefully reading package labels and reminding their children not to share their food with friends at school.

Lice Policy

The school provides families with an informational document defining the institution's lice policy. It can be found online on the Rochambeau website. Whenever the school learns of a case of lice, it informs the parents of children in the infected child's class.

If lice are found, parents must inform the teacher who in-turn informs the administrative office and nurse. Parents should then treat their child in accordance with the recommendations in the document provided at the beginning of the school year.

If school personnel find lice, the school contacts the family to ask them to pick up their child as soon as possible, and requires that he or she receive the recommended treatment. For the student to be allowed to return to school, the family must provide a signed statement indicating that the treatment recommended in the document provided to families has been administered (treatment of hair, washing sheets, etc.).

Medication

Children must never bring any medication to school. For students with chronic illness, a specific authorization, the *Individualized Medication Protocol*, must be provided in liaison with the primary care physician and the school nurse. If the child needs regularly scheduled medications, parents/guardians must provide the school office with *Maryland State Department of Education*



Form OCC 1216, completed by the child's physician (this form is provided in the back-to-school kit). Please note that each child may have a personal sunscreen stick in his or her locker that they apply themselves prior to going outside for recreation.

Toilet training

In TPS (Nursery) many children are not toilet trained by two years old. During the TPS year, children who wear diapers are welcome with the goal of toilet training them by the end of the year through progressive training in cooperation with the family. When the child begins PS (preschool), they must be toilet trained. If they are not, summer vacation may be a good time to toilet train in a relaxed environment. Children who are not toilet trained at the start of the school year will not be admitted.



SAFETY & SECURITY

Drills

In accordance with Maryland State Law, fire and evacuation drills are held throughout the year at different times of the day. Early in the school year all students are instructed in proper procedures and a scheduled fire drill is conducted. Thereafter, unannounced drills are held monthly throughout the year. In addition, emergency school-wide evacuation and lockdown drills are held periodically. **Children cannot be released to their parents during a fire drill or lockdown drill.**

The school director will notify parents after each drill so that they may reassure their children if necessary.

Maryland state reporting

Certain student-faculty communications are subject to confidentiality laws. According to Section 5-704 of the *Family Law Volume of the Annotated Code of the State of Maryland*, any teacher or other professional employee of the school who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect must immediately submit a report to the appropriate authority. In compliance with mandated reporting, the school employee is granted immunity from criminal or civil penalties or liability when such a report is submitted in good faith. Said reports are kept confidential.

Inclement weather policy

The school follows the regulation of MCPS regarding the child care weather watch. Therefore, Rochambeau's inclement weather policy includes the following guidelines:

- If Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) announces closure, Rochambeau will close. Parents would then be informed through e2campus (SMS and email) and on the school website;
- If MCPS stays open late, the Head of school or his/her designee will decide whether or not to keep the school open late and until what time. Parents would then be informed through e2campus (SMS and email) and on the school website; and
- If MCPS closes early, the Head of school or his/her designee will decide whether or not to close the school early and at what time. Parents would then be informed through e2campus (SMS and email) and on the school website.



Security

Entrance to the campus

Rochambeau understands the seriousness of security as a growing issue among parents. As such, we encourage parents to inquire about the school's security policy and how faculty and staff strive to ensure the safety of all students.

Parents must remain with and *supervise* their children if they come early and/or stay after school. Dogs (except working dogs for the disabled) are prohibited on the Bradley campus.

The entrance to the school is gated. Gates are open from 8:20 am to 9am in the morning and from 3pm to 3:40pm in the afternoon to enable drop offs and pickups. Outside of these time frames, parents and visitors must request access to the school through an intercom system located at the entrance of the gate. The main entrance of the school is always locked permitting only authorized staff to enter. A phone paging system is in place to alert in case of intrusion.

Parents must use the main entrance of the school to enable the school secretary at the front desk to identify every person entering and exiting. Outside of designated pick-up and drop off times, parents are required to wear a visitor badge when inside the school.

Recess areas

Recess areas are located in safe and secure sections of the school to ensure the safety of all children during indoor and outdoor play. On a daily basis, the playground is inspected for any safety hazards. All playground equipment has been tested by our facilities personnel for safety and sturdiness. The ground of the playground and beneath all play equipment is layered with mulch to ensure safe fall zones; the steps leading to the recess area are coated with rubber.

Classroom safety and hygiene

All classrooms are equipped with window guards, capped electrical outlets, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and finger guards. In the 2-year old classroom, rubber bumpers cover most furniture. In the hallways, five fire extinguishers are affixed to the walls in the event of a fire emergency.

A housekeeping team cleans the classrooms, offices and hallways on a daily basis with, non-toxic cleaning products. Cleaning supplies, sharp objects, paint, etc. are locked safely out of reach of the children when stored in the classrooms. Sleeping mats are cleaned once a week.

Teachers encourage children to wash their hands throughout the day and regularly teach lessons that promote awareness about good health and hygiene.



CONTACTS

Graziella Cowan, Administrative Assistant	bradley@rochambeau.org
Frédéric Tavernier, Preschool Director	tavernierf@rochambeau.org
Catherine Levy, Head of School	levyc@rochambeau.org