

August/September 2011

Classroom II

Newsletter



**Welcome to Classroom II
for the 2011-2012 school year!**

We hope you have all had a relaxing and fulfilling summer, and that you and your children are ready for a new adventure. This year promises to be full of new friends, new lessons, and growth, both physical and emotional. We teachers are

eager to reconnect with returning families and meet our new families. We are glad you are here!



Calendar reminders

NO SCHOOL: December 16

NO SCHOOL: April 20

**International Day of Peace:
September 21**

Open House: December 15

Open House: April 19

On open house days, school hours are the same as on regular days, but parents are invited to attend and participate in some special activities that will be available. If you are unable to attend, please send your child so that s/he may participate in our special activities.

Conference dates

First year students: October 13

**Second year students:
November 4**

Third year students: January 13

There is NO SCHOOL on conference dates.

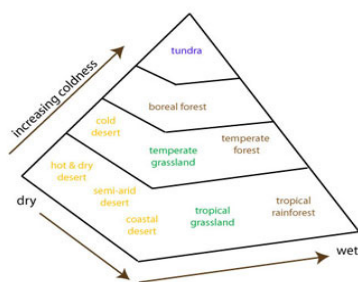
Of course, teachers are available year round if you would like to schedule additional meetings. Please contact the office to arrange a

Montessori Matters – Freedom Within Limits

Observers of a Montessori classroom are often amazed to see the class full of young children working with such independence and purpose. They choose their own activities, complete them, return them to the shelf where they belong. They care for the classroom and each other. In the classroom, children are allowed a great deal of freedom, and this freedom enables them to follow their inner drive, their intrinsic motivation, in their learning journey. This freedom works so well because they have been taught the limits that everyone must respect. During the two weeks of orientation for new students, children are shown how to ask for a lesson before selecting a new choice, prepare a work space (rug on the floor or table), take the activity from the shelf, complete the activity, return it to the shelf “in good order”. Once these limits have been established, the children are free to go about their work. And generally, a child who is free to follow his or her own interests works happily and with concentration.

International Day of Peace

We will celebrate International Day of Peace on September 21, 2011. There is a school-wide celebration in the morning, and a smaller, modified celebration in the afternoon. For more ideas on what you can do with your child to celebrate the International Day of Peace, you can visit: <http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org>



Biomes

This year, we will be conducting a year long study of biomes. A biome is a large geographical area of distinctive plant and animal groups, which are adapted to that particular environment. The climate and geography of a region determine what type of biome can exist in that region. Studying biomes is a way to learn about the world using natural rather than political boundaries. The curriculum will integrate geography with the sciences and language to help children make connections and see the world as interdependent. The biomes we will be studying are: temperate, tundra, tropical and desert.

Curriculum News

The beginning of every year finds us teaching and reviewing our classroom ground rules. **These ground rules**, such as “walking feet”, “tuck in your chair”, “finish your choice and return it to the shelf”, are the basis for allowing the children “freedom within limits”. Emphasis is placed on teaching and modeling “grace and courtesy”.

The children have been choosing activities in **Practical Life** such as hand transfers, spooning and pouring, dish washing, bead stringing and water transfer with a sponge. In language, new students letters, matching pictures and objects, classifying objects such as big/little. As always, children move at their own pace and new lessons are given as children master concepts they have been practicing.



In **math**, many counting activities are available to help children learn numbers and corresponding quantities. Other options available are the bead chains, teen boards, hundred boards, calendar work and the “bank game”.



In **geography**, we will be introducing (or re-introducing) the sandpaper globes and the continent globes as well as the world map puzzle and sorting games with air/land/water.

In **science**, we will be classifying things into groups of living/non-living and then plant and animal.



When the children come together in a **large group**, they love to sing songs and listen to the story as the teacher reads it aloud. Some of the songs we have been singing are: Farmer Gray had 5 green apples, When Cows Get Up In the Morning, Open, Shut Them, I Love My Montessori Classroom.

Snack Time



We appreciate you contributing healthy snacks for your children to share. Here are some options that the children always enjoy.

- ✓ Fresh fruit and vegetables (apples, bananas, peaches, pears, grapes, kiwi, watermelon, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, snow peas).
- ✓ Whole grains when possible (bagels and cream cheese, muffins (limited sugar) crackers and cheese.
- ✓ Dairy products (cheese or large tubs of yogurt)



As there are peanut allergies in the room, please check that pre-packaged snacks you send in are "peanut safe."

On Mondays, your child is welcome to bring something from home to share. This might be a favorite book, something found in nature during a walk, or an artifact from a trip that may augment our studies. We will TRY to allow time for the children to share their treasures during our group time at the end of class.

At snack time, the drink for the children is water. Your child has been given lessons in serving him/herself as much or as little water as s/he desires. This adds no calories or sugar and promotes proper hydration for their developing brains.



Remember to avoid sugary items. Please help us to provide positive contributions to your child's diet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter!

The teachers of Classroom II