

Dear Parents,

We are pleased to report that the school year has gotten off to a great start. With each day the children are getting more independent with their daily routine.

We have 7 new first-years and all but one returning second and third-year. The returning children have been helpful in orienting the new children to the classroom. As is customary at the beginning of the year, the children generated rules that they felt would make this a peaceful classroom. Each child has agreed to follow our classroom ground rules.

Morning Circle

It is **very important** that your child arrive at school promptly. We begin our morning circle at 8:30 a.m. and the first lesson of the day begins shortly afterwards. When a child is late, he or she may feel excluded and somewhat disoriented.

Morning Work Time

Morning work time is from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It is the most productive time of the day as our minds are fresh. (Hopefully, after a good night's rest.) Since lessons are more frequent in the morning, if you must pull your child out of class for any reason, we prefer that you do so in the afternoon.

Please do not send extra supplies to school such as back packs, pencil grippers, mechanical pencils, binders and folders with pictures on them, calculators, etc. We also do not allow electronic games and other electronic gadgets. These items are distracting and often cause problems.

Snack Time

Your child should bring snack for 25 people. We have a snack bag that should come home with your child the night before their snack day. If for some reason it does not, send something in an alternate bag. Please give your child the opportunity to bring snack in the classroom on her/his own. You will know it is their day to bring snack by the "Classroom VI Official Snack Calendar" that we sent home earlier. This calendar goes until the first week of January. Please send only nutritious snacks and no drinks. Be aware that pre-packaged "fruit" snacks are generally full of artificial color and flavorings, sugar and preservatives. So are some of the 21st century "tube-foods" disguised as yogurt. Examples of healthy foods are fruits, vegetables, dips, crackers, bagels, pretzels, homemade goodies, popcorn, etc. Cookies and sugary treats should be saved for special celebrations as a dessert, not as a snack. Your child will prepare the snack he or she brings upon his or her arrival in the morning. Please do not pre-cut or peel anything in the way of fruits or vegetables. It is part of the "Everyday Living" curriculum in a Montessori classroom for the children to learn independence and how to safely use knives and peelers.

Lunch

Lunchtime is scheduled from approximately 11:30 to noon. You are always welcome to come eat lunch with your child. We would like to know ahead of time since we are limited on seating. Also, the children setting up the lunch tables for the day would like to honor you with a special place setting. We have a microwave oven in the classroom if you would like to send something that needs to be heated. Please attach a note so your child will know the amount of time the food item will need to heat, keeping in mind that it will be fully thawed by lunchtime. Please do not send things that are not pre-cooked or tie up the microwave for more than two minutes. We request that you not send food in tubes (e.g. Gogurt, applesauce, pudding, etc.) These 21st century "tube foods" never fail to create messes! Also, since we only supply plates and napkins, **send utensils if your will need them.** We suggest plastic utensils that they take home and reuse. **Those of you who ordered milk will also need to provide a plastic cup, thermos or water bottle for your child.**

Silent Reading

Silent reading lasts for approximately twenty minutes after the children come in from the playground. They typically choose their own books or magazines (Zoo Books, Ranger Rick, National Geographic) from our classroom library. They are also welcome to bring a book from home.

Afternoon Work Time

Afternoon work begins around 1:00 and goes until 2:15 p.m. The energy level at this time of the day usually dictates journal writing, corrections and completion of unfinished work. At 2:15 p.m. the children participate in cleaning the classroom. You may hear them refer to this as "doing their job." Afterwards, we meet in circle briefly to talk about any unfinished business of the day and tell or read a story to the children.

Dismissal

At 2:45 p.m. the children are out the door and on their way to dismissal or our after school program. At this time you may ask your child, "What did you do today?" and they may either reply, "Nothing" or tell you about their social interactions. As you can see, however, they have more than likely had a very busy work day. **It is helpful if you will remind your child each morning whether they should go to dismissal or the after school program. If they are in dismissal and you arrive after 3:00 p.m. children will go to the after school program. Please strive to be prompt picking up your child; it causes anxiety when you are late.**

Daily Work

This year we will try to send "take-home" folders home twice a month. The folder should be returned the next day so the children can begin collecting other finished work. Not all work will be in the folders. The daily message, for example, is recorded in a notebook which will come home when the notebook is full. Math booklets also only come home when filled. Second and third-year students have language binders which include their grammar and word study work. These binders stay at school until the end of the year and may be viewed at conferences or any other time that you are in the classroom.

Conferences

October 7th is the conference day reserved for students that are new to our classroom. Please know that conferences can also be scheduled any time during the school year if a concern arises. Just call the office and leave a message. We will try to call you back during school hours.

Library, Spanish, Physical Education and Art

Music and Library are scheduled on Wednesday morning. In addition to the thirty minutes of daily playtime, Physical Education, Art and Spanish are on Wednesday afternoon. **Please make sure your child wears tennis shoes/sneakers and comfortable, loose fitting clothing on P.E. day.**

Group Shares

If your child wishes to bring something educational to share with the class, we will have "group shares" on Friday. Your child should have some knowledge about their share such as the types of rocks, names of shells, etc.

Parent Volunteers

We need a few good parents! Often, there are things to be done in the classroom that can be done by a parent volunteer - photocopying, paper cutting, material repair and various other tasks. If you have a few free hours, and we know those are hard to come by, we welcome you to come and help. Also, if you have a special talent or background that you think the children would be interested in and you would like to share with the class, please let us know by either calling us or sending a note with your child. Thank you!

We are excited about the start of the school year and look forward to working with your child.

Amy and Mary