

Classroom Notes  
November 2020

November 16, 2020

Dear Families,

We have been thoroughly enjoying our time in the woods! I am sure you have been noticing more muddy clothes recently. Thank you so much for sending in extra clothes for your child and for providing them with the appropriate outdoor gear. Richard Louv points out in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*, that "direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults". As the weather gets cooler, please send in simple gloves or mittens with your child. We go out early in the morning and it is still quite cool in the woods or on our playground. I encourage all of you to read the book by Richard Louv to truly understand the importance of connecting children to the natural world. I have a copy for anyone who would like to borrow it and you can receive one hour of volunteering for reading any or all of the book and sharing your thoughts with me via email.

The children are loving our dance lesson on Wednesday's which is prepared and guided by Mrs. Yount. Dancing is an inherent part of human history and offers a unique experience for the children to interact with music and various cultures. Every Wednesday the children come together to listen to a song that encourages guided actions so they are dancing together as a group in their own space. We hope to be able to present one of our dances to you as a recording soon!

We will be sending home more art work next week. Many of your children are in the pre-schematic phase of art development and are becoming more intentional with their lines and marks. Some of the Primary children are entering the schematic phase and are designating lines and shapes to mean certain things such as a body or the sky or a house. This is a very important aspect to children's development as it allows them to self-express their internal thoughts while simultaneously developing their hand. The children connect with our art shelf every day and love the fall shapes in our glue box, creating images with stickers, and seeing which stamp or color paints are on the easel. Art also encourages the development of fine and gross motor skills, eye hand coordination, cultural appreciation, and deepens the child's cognitive strength.

Since we have a short week next week, I am looking for a volunteer (or two) to bring in our lunch and snack. You will receive volunteer hours for shopping for the class. Please let me know if you are able or willing to bring in a few items for lunch and snack on either Monday or Tuesday and I will pass along the shopping list.

Have a wonderful evening,  
Sarah Veitenthal

November 24, 2020

Dear Families,

Today your child was sent home with a bag of take-home work. This bag will hopefully support your child's learning efforts in the home environment over the next few weeks. The different work in this bag can be displayed individually on a tray or in a basket. You may choose to spread the work out over the next few weeks instead of putting it all out at once. For the toddler and young primary child, I like to set up a simple shelf next to a work table in the home environment in a central location. This will help your child feel a sense of routine and order when it is time for your child to work. The idea is to show your child how to use (and return) the material properly but then to allow your child to work independently. In addition to the work you find in the bag, you can also display other items on the work shelf such as a basket of blocks, language materials sourced from around the home, books, puzzles, crayons, or bead/lacing work.

Inside the bag you will find a small jar with white glue. This is great to use with the autumn cutouts (and then the Christmas cutouts) and construction paper. I show the child, with a small paint brush, how to dip the brush into the glue and then spread it on the white side of the cutout. We then flip the shape over onto the paper and press for a few seconds. You can change the size and shapes of the cutouts and provide various colored paper as the weeks go on. You can display one piece of paper and one cutout on a tray with the glue and brush. A basket can be next to the tray with the extra paper and shapes.

I included your child's clay in the bag. Your children have been working hard to roll the clay into long shapes, balls, and ovals to create snowmen, airplanes, and animals. It is wonderful to watch them create sculptures with their hands while simultaneously strengthening their fine motor skills! Clay can be used directly on the table or with a small place mat. Clay tools are always fun.

Sticker work is wonderful for developing fine motor skills. You will find small sheets of stickers that your child can peel and create a scene on the provided paper.

I also included a paint brush that can be used with washable paint you squeeze into a jar. The paintbrush is a unique size that will encourage your child to grip the utensil in a different way, ultimately strengthening their future pencil grip.

The small jar connected to a sponge and applicator is non-toxic, all-natural wood polish. You can take off the rubber bands and display one applicator, the polish, and the damp sponge on a tray. Show your child where they can use the polish and how to apply it with the applicator. They can then rub the polish into the wood with the damp sponge. Once the polish is gone, you can refill with more wood polish or any other safe, non-toxic cleaner such as glass cleaner or Dr. Bronner's all-purpose cleaner.

The water color can be used with a small paintbrush. Once the glue is gone, you can use the jar to add just a small amount of water to use with the water color paint tablet.

Mrs. Yount has gifted the children with kinetic sand. This is a wonderful sensorial experience your child will enjoy exploring. You can pour all of the sand into a larger basin or work space and use tools to manipulate the sand! You may want to store this on a higher shelf to help your child contain the sand successfully when they are ready to use it.

I hope you all enjoy the Thanksgiving video of our circle time. I will be sending more songs, poems, stories, and lessons via email over the next couple of weeks. I am always available to help you create a work space in your home and provide ideas for a Montessori inspired work shelf. Please feel free to email me any time with questions or if you need fresh inspiration!

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season and I will see all of you after the New Year!