

Classroom Notes
September 2020

September 9, 2020

Hello parents,

I am pleased to tell you that the children are settling in to the many, many routines, transitions and ways of the classroom. There is so much to learn.

Mostly Ms. Irwin and I are enjoying getting to know each of your children and having some fun. You would be surprised to know the number of things we do in a day.

During the work period is when your child works one-to-one or in a small group with their teachers. Each child has their own personal lesson plan designed to meet their developmental needs.

Yesterday we hiked in the woods after outdoor snack. Today we had snack indoors and worked on the procedure for each child to enjoy snack with a friend. It took a little longer than usual since it's all new. A few kids unfortunately did not get to eat their snack, but fortunately lunch is early.

So many of the kids are arriving to school with all the things they need to make their day flow well. Think if your child is one of them. Checklist:

- An extra change of clothing?
- A backpack with their name written on it?
- A lunchbox that fits inside the backpack with their name on it?
- A separate snack container with their morning snack? (We are hopeful for a separate container so we aren't debating with children over which food is their snack food and which food is their lunch food!)
- A clean face covering.

It would be helpful to me if you respond to this email. Respond with any questions, fun stories, or concerns. A simple "got it" will work so I know you are on my parent distribution list.

Getting ready for day three!!

Carrie

September 17, 2020

Hello Parents,

Week two! The children are definitely learning the ropes, as they say, and it is lovely watching them forging new friendships. Since we have so few brand-new children in our class we are already humming right along. The veteran kids are showing lessons on dressing frames, vertebrate puzzles, and puzzle maps. They are enjoying showing new friends some of the art lessons and how to clean up spills with a broom or a floor bucket. Since many materials are individualized this school year (pencils, scissors, clay) we are distributing the materials as lessons are given. The children show their fascination as they observe others interacting with Montessori materials. I can almost formulate my lesson plan as I watch them in their observations. With each presentation, each child builds their repertoire of choices, but for some there is no way I could move fast enough!!

The children are getting used to wearing lanyards to keep their face coverings from getting lost or misplaced. The face coverings and lanyards have added a whole new layer to our transitions! We are working hard to get children to focus on our words and follow through with one and two-step instructions. Our routine is almost to the point where it will stay standard each day - and then it will get too cold to eat outside and we'll be switching it up again!!

If there is one thing I would like you to understand about the importance of a clean face covering each day: Children's noses run, they sneeze, and there is oftentimes visible saliva on their masks. Visible. It either comes from them licking their mask or simple condensation from breathing in and out and in and out. They should NOT be wearing the same covering each day. Period. Please be sure to switch the masks out or have enough for a week and wash them all over the weekend. Until we get permission from daycare licensing for children to stop wearing face coverings it is a rule we must follow, so let's make it the best it can be and have the children wearing a clean face covering to start each day. We do give the children as many breaks from wearing their masks as possible.

You may have seen our picnic tables in the front yard. Aren't they wonderful? The plexiglass is working just fine to give the children freedom to eat with their friends. A few notes about snack time and lunch. Most of you have the snack container and lunchbox all figured out. We so appreciate the care to that detail. I will ask that you please not send juice boxes/pouches of any kind. We stick to water to drink at school. It is healthy for the children to hydrate with water and certainly makes for easier clean up than juice or milk. Some children like the little yogurt drinks. They are fine if it is something that your child loves. Do note that with the prepackaged fruit cups and yogurt drinks that we cannot send them home with children once opened. It is our practice to have children pack up their uneaten food so you can tell what they are eating. This should help you figure out what things they like and don't and help you to gage portions.

Following lunchtime, we head to the playground. The playground has been such fun for the children. They are running, golfing, and building elaborate structures from wood cookies. If anyone has any downed trees, we love to have slices of the tree cut for children to play with. You would be amazed at what their imaginations come up with! If you are handy with a chainsaw please let me know.

I hope you all have a great weekend. We are cruising into Friday already!
Carrie

September 26, 2020

Dear Parents,

Under separate cover I sent four pictures to you of children in our class engaged in practical life lessons. The first is a picture of hands working on a screwdriver board. The second a child buckling the buckling frame. The third a child engaged in the beginning steps of tying. And the last, a child at the easel painting a picture.

The practical life lessons are a series of lessons presented to all students in the Montessori primary class focusing on the care of the person and the care of the environment. They also include all forms of art. Your child's development strengthens with the practice of these tasks. Their ability to concentrate lengthens, their hands learn to work together and become more coordinated with the use of tools meant specifically for the size of their hands, and their ability to make choices and set goals for themselves comes from the independent choice to participate in these lessons of practical life.

Featured are the dressing frames. There are specific frames to practice buttoning, snapping, buckling, zipping, tying and lacing. Isn't it wonderful to see children's hands working together? It is a pleasure for me to look around the classroom to see children focusing on varied tasks of their own free will.

There are many other practical life lessons. Children have been busy sweeping up debris from the floor, arranging flowers in small vases, and washing small cloths with an old-fashioned washboard and hanging them to dry.

The art shelf lends many opportunities for painting, making collages with a glue brush, doing rubbings, cutting with scissors - all lessons designed with beauty, and appealing to your child's sense of aesthetics, while also using brushes and scissors to strengthen the hand for future writing tasks.

Practical life is a large part of what makes a Montessori class so appealing. The children form a community with all helping to do their part. Countless times in the past weeks I have witnessed a student tying someone else's shoe, helping with a zipper, or assisting someone to find something in the classroom. Hands are busy and hearts are full!

Enjoy the weekend! Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, stories or concerns. We typically get an opportunity to check in at the back-to-school picnic and I miss having the time to talk to each of you directly. Send a message if you need anything!

Sincerely,
Carrie