

ENTERING THE MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM

A teacher or helper will greet each child at the classroom door in the morning. We encourage the children to enter using a quiet voice. This is the first of many “Grace and Courtesy” lessons in the Montessori curriculum. You can set the example by speaking in a quiet voice to your child as well as to other parents. Kindergarten children may enter the classroom independently and begin their morning work.

You can prepare your child for this separation from you by explaining that The Schoolhouse is special place for **children** to work. (**Parents** have special work in other places.) **Parents may not enter the classroom with a child.** Give your child a hug at the door and allow him/her to enter the room on their own. You may want to practice this at home. Have fun praising your **preschool** child for such independence! According to Montessori philosophy a child of 3-3 ½ should be working on a measure of independence from adults. The Montessori classroom offers this experience to the child.

It is natural for some children to experience some degree of discomfort while adjusting to a new environment. We have a strategy planned that helps to ease this transitional discomfort. The plan is as follows: if your child begins to cry when entering the classroom please allow the teacher to take your child from you and into the classroom **quickly**. This approach is the least painful for the child. This gives the child the opportunity to recover quickly, rather than lengthening the process of separation at the door. Too many hugs and kisses at the door prolong the separation process. Give plenty of hugs in the car and one big hug at the door. Preparing your child for their one special hug at the door will help. **Be assured that this is a process and may take a little time.**

If your child does cry on entering the classroom, please follow the policy guidelines and wait around the corner in the hallway. We will have this designated space marked for you. When your child settles down, a teacher or helper will come and let you know that this has happened. You may leave at this time and enjoy your day! If, after a reasonable length of time, your child remains unduly distressed, a teacher or helper will come and get you. It is harmful for a young child to experience extreme distress for a long period of time. We hope that all the children are ready for such independence; however, we may discover this is not the case. Sometimes a child may need to wait a few months or so until ready to separate from the parent. We want your child to be happy and comfortable with the school environment. Do not project to your child your own anxieties about separating him/her. A child’s prolonged anxiety in the hallway may upset other children who are trying to enter the classroom.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important to your child's experience at The Schoolhouse. If you know in advance that your child will be absent for a period of longer than three days, please let us know in writing. When your child is absent due to illness or other circumstances, it is not necessary to call us on a daily basis.

DISCIPLINE---TIME OUT

Discipline is gentle and simple. We use "time out" to encourage cooperation and responsibility. We find no merit in punishment or causing shame in a child. On occasion a child may be asked to sit in "the peaceful chair" to take a little time to settle down. The Directress reserves the right to ask families to leave the school if a child's behavior is physically or emotionally hurting him/herself or another child, or who, in her opinion, has physical or emotional health concerns that are beyond our capacity to care for. There are occasions when the Directress may require a child/family to become involved with a family counselor in order to continue in the school.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION IN THE PRESCHOOL

From time to time, you may want to peek in the classroom through the glass in the door. Please do not let your child see you. You will get a better indication of what your child is doing in the classroom if he/she is unaware of your presence. We want your child's work or activity to be undisturbed, as well as the other children in the classroom. The school doors are locked. When you want to observe, call the school number from your cell for entry.

FOLDER/PAPERWORK

Children's work is sent home on a weekly basis. **It is important to remember that there are many types of work done in the Montessori preschool classroom. Most work is not done on paper. If a child does not bring home any paperwork, it is not an indication that work has not been done. Please be sensitive to this.** In a Montessori school, children are working on many developmental levels. Each child is encouraged to feel comfortable and safe in his/her individual developmental process. One of our goals is to help the children feel good about what they accomplish as individuals. Another goal is to challenge each child in the developmental process. We do not push children in our program. We strongly believe that learning should be fun!

SCHOOL DRESS

We encourage parents to dress their children in a comfortable and casual way, so that they may be at ease doing their various tasks such as polishing and other practical life exercises. **Please send your child in work/play clothes.** We attempt to use paints and dyes that are washable, but some paints and dyes may stain clothing anyway. The school provides aprons for the children to wear during most art activities.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The children enjoy celebrating their birthdays in school. On a child's birthday we celebrate with "a walk around the sun." The birthday child holds a globe and walks around a candle the same number of times the earth has been around the sun since the date of his/her birth. The candle represents the sun. **This is a special moment for each child.** If possible, please send pictures of your child from birth to recent birthday age to share at group time. In celebration of this very special day, you may wish to honor your child by donating a book to the school.

PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM MYTHS

I hope that this information will set your mind at ease about few classroom myths. Always keep in mind that most of the time your children are **keenly aware** of what gets your attention. If your child should raise any of these issues, have fun responding in a healthy manner. If ever you feel there is a true concern, please drop a note to, or call, the teacher.

1. When I ask my child what he did at school that day, he tells me that he did nothing. Is this normal?

Don't be alarmed by this response. A large number of children will respond by saying they did nothing at all. Be assured that your child had a **very** busy day at school. There are a large number of reasons for this response. A young **preschool** child is like a sponge absorbing all in the environment. Some children need time to let it all sink in and may or may not choose to talk about their day. However, **at an unexpected moment**, the child may give a very detailed explanation of something that was learned or done at school. A child may be too tired to talk about the school day. Children are brilliant! If your child senses your concern over an issue, he/she may choose to explore it or control the situation. A child may do this by bringing this issue to your attention over and over again. Be sure not to fuel a situation that is not based on reality. This can be done in a lighthearted manner, usually by assuring your child that you know all is well at school. Always share concerns with the teacher. You should also be aware that a

curriculum outline is given to the parents each month. Have fun researching the monthly topics with your child!

2. Please help me to understand what it means when a child complains of being “bored.”

From time to time, a child may inform a teacher that he/she is bored. Teasingly, we tell the child that all the children and the school are **too smart to be bored.** We direct them or shoo them off to find work! We don't allow them to **sink into this feeling.** It is catching and habit forming. Be assured that there is always something in the classroom for the children to do. “Glancing around a classroom, I counted about 46 activities for a class of 10 children.” Part of our goal is to challenge children to **seek** out work in the classroom. Sometimes a complaint of boredom means a child did not get to do something and someone else did. This may also be an indication of tiredness. A parent fueling the complaint of boredom is doing a disservice to the child. A child who habitually claims to be bored is unpleasant in all life situations. Nip this complaint in the bud! Praise their ability to find challenging things to do. This is a lifelong skill!

3. My child has confided in me that no one like him. What should I do?

Please be very careful with this one. One of the most heartbreaking things a child can tell a parent is that no one likes him/her. You may want to respond with something like “you are so special, who could not like you?” Then praise them! Remember many young children choose to work alone. This is normal. Most children naturally gravitate towards other children in time. If this concern persists, though, please contact a teacher.

4. My child told me that he was in “Time Out” today. How should have I reacted?

Some children experience Time Out at school. Time Out is discipline, not punishment. If your child tells you that he/she has been in Time Out, please remain calm. Casually ask, “How was it?” Your child may want to tell you about it. We do not report Time Outs to parents on a daily basis. However, we will contact you if we experience a challenging situation with your child. We like to work with parents as a team.

Hope this is helpful!

Have fun!

These are precious times!