

Room 21

Ms. Amy and Ms. Alicia

Welcome to 2015-2016 school year. Ms. Alicia and I are so excited for this school year.

BLOG

Please check out the BLOG, if you have not signed up please do so- this is a key communication tool. Weekly blog updates are sent once a week. This is a great instrument to keep you updated on what we are studying and the community resources available to enhance your child's learning and reading. This is a great avenue to integrate school learning with family time. The classroom blog also provides critical dates of projects or activities.

<http://blogs.mariamontessoriacademy.org/amy> , on the right hand side subscribe by entering your email address, go to your email and open up the invitation and accept.

Classroom Information and Student Achievement

The first six weeks of school are normalization period. Please if you need to have your child miss school please be respectful of this time. This period of time is essential where the dynamics of the classroom are being formed; the children are learning their environment and curriculum, establishing time management skills as well as establishing themselves intellectually, emotionally and socially. We are creating a community in our classroom and building teams by playing cooperative games and other team building activities.

The class is experiencing and hearing historical stories to help put the curriculum into a greater scope and perspective, and following up with artistic lessons, experiments and projects. This is a great time for child exploration, a time for the children to express through all forms and also to encourage their greater thinking skills and to get them engaged! This is also a time for placement testing and for understanding the classroom dynamics. This is a pivotal time to establish the classroom climate.

Observation time

After this time, we invite you to please sign up to observe in the classroom and to see the children at work. Observation times are generally 30 minutes. Please schedule these with Ms. Amy via email aotto@mariamontessoriacademy.org

Attendance

School starts promptly at 8:30 a.m. If your child is not in the building by 8:30 in the morning you will have to walk your child into the school and check him/her in at the office, and they will be considered tardy. Please help your child be on time to school. It is very important to his/her education to be here on time and start their day calm and relaxed, not rushed and stressed.

Daily Notebooks

This year we have daily notebooks with dividers for each of the subjects in class. I will give your child a calendar to put in the front of their notebook. There will be a calendar for each month - this is where due dates for projects will be written. The daily notebook is a great resource to look at your child's daily work.

Planners and Expectation Sheets

Student will be utilizing the planner to track their work- inside the planner will also be long term due dates. Students will plan their daily work following the expectations we set for the week.

Study Guides

At the front of their daily notebook you should find their cultural study guides. This is a resource for them to help guide them in their cultural studies when they are not in lessons.

Grading

Each child will progress at his/her own pace through the lessons for their level. As teachers we constantly observe the child and provide them with an environment (lessons, materials, guidance and encouragement) that will help the child strengthen their interpersonal development.

Your child's work will not be given a traditional grade, but will often have a percentage or a score with an attached rubric. Rubrics help students to see their areas of strengths and areas to work on. At times there will be self-assessments, teacher assessments and/or student- assessments. Students will also be conducting parent teacher conferences.

Homework- Long Term Projects

Homework will not look traditional. Children have long-term individual or group projects that are assigned, generally given between 2-6 weeks to work on, depending on the assignment. We focus on long term projects that pertain to what is being studied in class. Projects are correlated with class presentations to further the education of their peers and to practice their presentation skills.

They will be given dates and guidelines for when these projects are due and are to be presented to the class. There are 2 continent studies, monthly book reports beginning in October and the Science fair that are a few long term projects to look forward to.

Please attend Parent Education nights and Parent Teacher Conferences- these are opportunities to see your child's work and to better understand the Montessori curriculum.

I will assign computer homework for the students. I expect them to practice IXL (math website), Utah Compose (writing website), and Sage Formative (test prep website) at home. I will send the user names and passwords as soon as the programs are up and running. Sometimes unfinished work will be sent home to finish.

Reading Homework

Your child will have many opportunities to read and be read to in the classroom and we highly encourage reading at home. We'd like to recommend at least 20 minutes a day. The students will have monthly book reports with specific book genres and rubric to follow.

Cultural Subjects

In the afternoons Botany, Geography, History, Zoology, Physical Science and Physiology are covered. Music and PE are on Thursdays.

Field Trips

Our classroom loves to go on field trips. In order for us to be able to have these wonderful experiences we need the help of the parents. I will need parents to transport the students to and from many of the field trips. If at all possible if any of you could become registered drivers through the school's front office it would be FANTASTIC!

A list of all the proposed field trips for the school year and a field trip permission slip will be coming home in about 2-3 weeks.

Procedures, Routines and Leadership

We are excited to be implementing Stephen Covey's 7 Habits from The Leader in Me into our classroom:

- ***Be Proactive***- take initiative for decision making, taking responsibility for choices and consequences that follow
- ***Begin with the End in Mind***-self discover, make goals
- ***Put First Things First***-self management, time management, learning to prioritize
- ***Think Win-Win***- valuing and respecting all people, learning how to compromise to accept all people's choices and practicing inclusion vs. exclusion
- ***Seek First to Understand then to be Understood***-use empathetic listening- listening with your whole body (eyes, ears- body language), focusing on them and not on what you are going to say!
- ***Synergize***- team work, combining the strengths of everyone, accomplishing from the work of everyone- not just one.
- ***Sharpen the Saw***- taking care of our bodies, our minds. Practicing and living a healthy lifestyle- exercising, eating healthy- finding balance.

Please seek opportunities for your child to be a leader outside the classroom. Recognize and compliment them when they are acting as leaders, and please share these stories with us. Practical life lessons, caring for the classroom environment, are implemented as part of the elementary curriculum and as well as leadership opportunities with peers.

Grace and courtesy is part of our everyday culture in the Montessori classroom; pushing in a chair, closing a door quietly, self-control and conflict resolution a few examples of practicing grace and courtesy. Don't be surprised if they want to implement some of these at home!

Slippers & Shoes

Slippers are worn inside as we spend a lot of time doing work on the floor. This is to protect your child's hand and feet from being stepped on while they are working, also maintaining a peaceful working environment and prepares the child's mind for work.

Wearing slippers indoors helps keep our school clean. Slippers need to have hard soles for emergency purposes. We ask that the slippers and shoes have no commercial logos or characters on them. No flip flops, open toed or high heeled shoes. Shoes must be closed toed shoes, for the protection of their toes!

Snack

There is a philosophical reason behind snack time in the Montessori Method. Your child will gain the skill of helping to prepare (cutting apples, etc) and clean up snack and serve their classmates. This teaches leadership and is one of the children's favorite activities. We will be teaching healthy eating habits and ask that only healthy snacks be brought for this time. We really need your help for this food preparation/snack time to work. If everyone participates you will only have to provide snack once every 2 months! (That's only 2 times a year!) Fresh produce from your garden is a welcome snack as well.

Recess and Lunch

Recess will be after lunch for the upper elementary, 12:30-1:00. Lunches must be brought from home. Please send a small ice pack in your child's lunch box if the food needs to be kept cold. Please do not send anything that needs to be warmed in the microwave longer than two minutes. Please do not send drinks with colored dyes to protect the carpet.

Birthdays

When it is your child's birthday, we honor your child with a Celebration of Life. I will create a Sign Up Genius sign up sheet for these events. In our classroom we will have our Celebration of Life in the afternoon after 2:30 on Wednesdays or in the morning. We ask, if possible, for you to come and provide pictures for each year of your child's life as well as sharing something specific for each year of life. We ask that **no younger siblings** attend so that we can focus on your child's special day. Please **NO food** for celebrations. If you would like to donate a book in honor of your child you may. If your child's birthday occurred in August before school started, you may opt to have a Celebration of Life during the first few weeks of school beginning next week or at your child's half birthday. For June and July birthdays, we can celebrate your child's half birthday. It is a fun and special way to honor your child on their birthday. There will be a Celebration of Life Sign Up Genius coming soon.

Suggested Healthy Snacks

Celery/Carrots/broccoli and ranch dip
Carrots and ranch dip
Pretzels
Graham Crackers
Bagels and cream cheese
Strawberries, cantaloupe, oranges, grapes, apples, pears,
Snack-sized fruit cups
Raisins or fruit leather
Granola or granola bars
Whole Wheat Crackers
Dry cereal (not sugar cereals)
Goldfish crackers
Rice cakes
Jerky
Tortilla chips & salsa
Tortillas
Whole wheat bread and butter

Please do not prepare the snack beforehand. Children and a teacher will do this.

Please! No candy, soda-pop, chips/Cheetos, or red drinks (to prevent stains).

**Thank you for understanding our commitment to
healthy minds and bodies.**

Ms. Amy and Ms. Alicia