



# The Innovative School

Authentic Private Montessori Education

## Student and Parent Handbook

2013 - 2014

The Innovative School  
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## **WELCOME**

The Innovative School is committed to providing the Houston community with a program which nurtures the growth of both family and child. We are members of the American Montessori Society, Houston Area Association for the Education of the Young Children, the North American Montessori Teachers Association and are licensed by the State of Texas. We hope to have compiled information that will answer many of your questions so that we will begin our relationship from an informed stance. We suggest that you read this handbook thoroughly now and throughout the year to refer to guidelines as the year proceeds. We hope to create sound relationships with all our families so that we may provide nurturing care for each child. Parents are encouraged to call and visit at anytime.

The Innovative School is a Montessori Program for children from 18 months through 6 years with AMS certified, trained and experienced Montessori teachers in all classrooms. We offer a five day program with options of half day, full day or before and after school. Our calendar year is similar to the Houston Independent School District's September-May schedule. In addition, we also offer a summer program.

Parents will be notified of any changes with a note in their child's folder or by mail. The school must ensure compliance with all minimum standards set forth by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. In the school office parents can find a copy of Minimum Standards. This handbook is designed to answer any questions you might have regarding the policies and procedures of The Innovative School. If you have any further questions regarding the policies and procedures, please feel free to contact the administration.

## **THE INNOVATIVE SCHOOL**

When communication, cooperation, and continuity exist between home and school, we provide the optimum conditions for development and learning. We hope you will read about the school and about Montessori philosophies, goals, and techniques in order to better understand your child's school experience. We are eager to answer questions and demonstrate materials, and we have books that you are welcome to borrow. We hope that you will become as excited as we are about this unique approach to education.

### ***Innovative?***

"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six". - Maria Montessori

The Innovative School is a vibrant community of educators and families, agreeing with Dr. Maria Montessori's methodology and philosophy. As Montessori educators, we believe that each child is born to be a learner, and that the full potential of each child is recognized only through an ordered, planned, prepared, challenged and nurtured environment that is physical, educational, intellectual, social, and spiritual.

We cultivate and honor children's innate love of learning as they prepare for a life of purpose, integrity, and academic accomplishment. At The Innovative School students gain the skills and confidence to meet the challenges of self, family, community, and the world at large. We believe that the child and their needs are the central and commanding focus of the learning process. It is the role of our school to observe, to know, and to defend the child as he or she proceeds through the stages of development.

We see in each child, the future of society and of our nation. The child in the process of fundamental development has unlimited possibilities and the future rests on our ability to cultivate this potential.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Innovative School is a passionate community of educators and families agreeing with Dr. Maria Montessori's methodology and philosophy. We strive to provide an authentic experience in a beautifully prepared environment for children to develop a love of learning and to achieve their fullest potential.

### **OBJECTIVE AND GOALS**

The main objective of the Innovative Montessori School is to provide a carefully planned, stimulating environment which will assist children to develop within themselves a foundation that consists of the habits, attitudes, skills, and concepts essential for a lifetime of creative thinking characterized by the deep love of learning.

*The specific goals for the child who attends the school are:*

1. To develop a positive attitude toward learning
2. To encourage a strong sense of self within a growing sense of community
3. To develop an increasing capacity for concentration
4. To foster continual curiosity and wonder
5. To develop initiative, independence, and persistence
6. To foster inner discipline and a strong sense of order
7. To develop the sensory-motor skills needed to discriminate and judge the objective world
8. To develop social skills within the framework of community
9. To acquire the basic skills necessary for a productive life
10. To foster each child's innate, ultimate potential through self-mastery

### **WHAT IS MONTESSORI?**

Montessori is a widespread educational environment that contains specially designed, manipulative materials that attract children to engage in learning activities of their own individual choice. Under the guidance of a certified Montessori teacher, children in a Montessori classroom learn by making discoveries with the materials, cultivating concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning. Montessori education is a course experience; it builds on the continuing self-construction of the child—daily, weekly, yearly—for the duration of the program. Although Montessori schools are divided into multi-age classrooms—parent infant (ages 0 to 3) and preschool and kindergarten (ages 3 to 6) – the prepared environments introduce an uninterrupted series of learning channels, a continuum.

In the prepared environment, there is a selection of activity as well as a great deal of movement. In our preschool classroom, for example, a three-year-old may be washing clothes by hand while a four-year-old close by is creating words and phrases with letters known as the movable alphabet, and a five-year-old is performing multiplication using a particular designed set of beads.

In the calm, ordered area of the Montessori prepared environment, children work on activities of their own choice at their own pace. They live through a blend of freedom and self-discipline in a place particularly designed to meet their developmental needs.

## **THE PROGRAM**

The Transition and Early Childhood Program of The Innovative School is designed to provide opportunities for children to grow and progress in physical, social, emotional and cognitive development according to each child's unique pace. It provides the child with developmentally appropriate periods of work and play indoors and outdoors, combined with relaxing and calming activities.

Both programs provide a Montessori environment throughout the day, implementing Montessori philosophy and practices for all activities including lunch, playtime, and nap.

### ***The Environment***

The classroom environment is prepared to meet specific developmental needs of the young child, applying and practicing key Montessori concepts.

The classroom environment is organized in learning areas with concrete activities and materials designed to facilitate the child's independence and success.

The environment is physically and psychologically safe for the child to learn. Everything has a permanent place. Lessons are displayed in category/grouping (learning areas). Within each category, diverse sets of materials are displayed in sub-groups, arranged on the child's eye level, from left to right, top to bottom, and from simple to complex tasks.

Individual tasks are divided into a sequence of steps with an isolated difficulty or concept in a single piece of material. Concepts are reinforced with diverse sets of materials that provide variations and extensions, develop further thinking and problem solving skills. New lessons are introduced when the previous level of difficulty has been mastered.

Credentialed Montessori teachers are the facilitators and guide of the environment. They make continual observations of the child's development and they are the link which connect the child to the classroom environment.

Multi-aged environment, ages 18 months to 3 and 2 ½ to 6 years old, provides a positive social interaction, and develops cooperative learning and peer teaching.

### ***The Curriculum***

Activities Focus in All Areas of Development in a prepared environment with specific goals to stimulate learning in a non-competitive atmosphere that provides the child with opportunities to explore and expand their potential at their own speed.

The Curriculum Meets the Needs of the Individual Child. It is responsive to the individual child. It facilitates, supports and enhances each child's emerging abilities whatever the developmental stage. It fosters learning in all areas of development; physical, social, emotional, and intellectual.

All Concrete (real) Activities and Experiences – Aimed to Individual or Small Group

The curriculum emphasizes learning as an active process. The child uses concrete experiences and is expected to be physically and mentally active.

### ***Stimulates Learning***

Activities are designed to enhance the child's self-esteem and provide a positive feeling toward learning.

### ***Montessori Teachers***

The teachers are the facilitators that connect the child to the environment and are trained and prepared to recognize significant times for development in the child. They are guides and make continual observations and recordings of each student's interests, activities, and developmental progress.

The classroom teachers hold a Montessori Teacher Certificate from the American Montessori Society. The teacher preparation course is a 450-hour course followed by a 9-month practicum, teacher assignments, portfolio, written and oral exams.

### **THE CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS**

*Transition Curriculum Learning Areas:*

- Movement
- Language
- Order
- Independence

The transition environment focuses heavily on independence in all areas. Adults in the environment observe, role model, and encourage the children to do as many activities as they can on their own. As adults we often teach young children "learned helplessness" because we feel they "need" our help. This creates a pattern of dependence and habit of expecting tasks to be done for the child, versus them following their innate need for independence and accomplishing tasks for pure joy.

It is an expectation upon enrollment that even the youngest of children can walk in from the car, assist with carrying a bag, putting their clothes in their cubbies, putting their lunch box away, and beginning the day with a feeling of independent accomplishment. Toddlers love to help and mimic all that adults do.

In the environment there is an important differentiation between holding a child's pants as they step in, versus them sitting down, holding the waistband, finding the correct hole for their legs, and pulling them up. These steps take great concentration, skill, and definition of movement and balance to achieve success on their own.

In looking at tasks children can complete on their own, ask yourself a very important question, "is this for my convenience, or will it foster true independence in my child"? The adults in the environment only do as much as is needed to ensure the success of a task.

Celebrating successes are a key to fostering independence. Often times toddlers may have shoes on the wrong feet, pants on backwards, or even underwear on over top of their shorts. We focus on the PROCESS versus the PRODUCT and acknowledge the independent success of the child. Honoring your child's accomplishment allows them to discover their own mistakes and fully understand the hands on process of learning.

### *Early Childhood Curriculum Learning Areas:*

Practical Life

Sensorial

Language

Math

Spanish

Cultural Subjects: Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Geography and History

Art

Music

#### ***Practical Life***

The purpose of these activities is to enable the child to acquire coordination, orderliness, self-confidence, independence, control over his/her small muscle movements and to enable him/her to understand the function of his/her immediate environment. Student will learn to open, shut, carry, pour, peel, cut, wash. In addition polishing, scrubbing, the use of buttons, zippers, snaps, ties and latches. The child's experiences will also include care of person and care of environment.

#### ***Sensorial***

These activities which surround the use of sensorial materials leads the child from sensation to ideas; from the concrete to the abstract and to the association of ideas. These materials also assist the child in learning to differentiate between sizes, colors, weights, textures, sounds, odors, and tastes. In the Early childhood environment sensorial materials include sandpaper in varying degrees of roughness, red rods, pink tower, cylinder blocks, color tablets, geometric cabinet sound boxes, and bells. Students become involved in exercises which allow him/her to organize and classify.

#### ***Language***

The development of language begins with speech and progresses into writing and reading. Vocabulary enrichment activities enable the child to classify his/her environment, enlarge his/her vocabulary and develop communication skills. In the early childhood environment the geometric insets are used to develop the small muscles as a preparation for writing. The movable alphabet, phonogram board and grammar boxes are used to teach analysis of sentences.

#### ***Mathematics***

In the transition class the child will be exposed indirectly to simple math concepts. As the child enters the early childhood environment they will progress from concrete to abstract through the use of materials such as beads, spindle boxes, and number charts. The number rods are used to teach the decimal system which is the basis for all branches of mathematics.

#### ***Geography***

The children learn about the world around them, cultural diversity and distant lands. The child's first impressions in geography are sensorial globes, puzzle maps, flags and geographical land formations which enable the child to learn and to become interested in the world in which we live.

### **Science**

Experiments are introduced in botany and in zoology. Nature studies are conducted both in and out of the classroom. In science too, the child learns by doing and empathy with one's surrounding creatures. Children learn about living and non-living things, parts of plants, parts of the body, and animals. Student begins to make scientific observations and discoveries.

### **Music and Art**

Children are encouraged to express creativity in music through free expression. The children learn folk songs, and foreign language songs. Students work with musical instruments (rhythm sticks, chimes, bells, glockenspiel, and xylophone) to heighten the child's awareness and understanding of musical concepts. Art is a natural part of the Montessori classroom which encourages individual expression. Collage, finger and brush painting, water color and clay offer opportunities to experiment and create. This area is process rather than product oriented.

<b>Traditional Classroom</b>	<b>Montessori Environment</b>
Textbooks, worksheets, pencil and paper	Prepared kinesthetic materials with integrated control of error, particularly developed reference materials
Working and learning without emphasis on social development	Working and learning synchronized to the social development of the child
Narrow, tapered, unit-driven curriculum	Unified, internationally designed curriculum
Individual subjects	Integrated subjects and learning based on developmental psychology
Schedule time, period lessons	Uninterrupted work cycles
Students passive, inactive, quiet, in desks	Students active, talking, with periods of spontaneous quiet, freedom to move
Students fit mold of school	School meets needs of students
Product-focused report cards	Process-focused assessment, skills checklists, mastery benchmarks



## **ADMINISTRATION & STAFF:**

Head of School: Munir Shivji

Curriculum Coordinator: Kathryn Miller

### ***Teachers***

Montessori teachers are often referred to as “guides” or directors/directresses to highlight their unique role in relation to the child. As guides, they seek to direct the interests and tendencies of the child, serving as facilitators to the child’s own development.

Each teacher is responsible for directing her class in accordance with the Montessori philosophy, the guidelines of AMI/AMS, and the general policies of Innovative Montessori School. Teachers establish daily plans and long-term goals for each child and the class as a whole. They continually strive to develop an on-going communication with the parents of their students.

### ***Assistants***

Assistants, who are trained by and work with the Montessori teachers, help to develop and maintain the classroom environments. Through their interactions with the children, they mirror the Montessori principles by respecting each child and nurturing independence.

Assistants receive ongoing training in Montessori philosophy and child development, which ensures that the Montessori philosophy is carried on through in our extended day and after care programs.

### ***The Innovative School Faculty***

#### **Head of School Munir Shivji - [mshivji@theinnovativeschool.com](mailto:mshivji@theinnovativeschool.com)**

Munir Shivji is a second generation Montessorian born and raised in Houston, Texas. Munir has a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and has credentials in sociology and behavior therapy from the University of Houston. He has an Early Childhood AMS (American Montessori Society) teaching credential from the Houston Montessori Center and an AMS Administrative Montessori credential from the Center for Montessori Education New York (CME/NY) . Munir also serves as Executive Director for The Institute of Montessori Education and manages the Houston Montessori Heads of Schools and Administrators Network Committee. Though, Munir's primary passion is Montessori education, he has dedicated interest in the arts, culture, music and theater. On his spare time, he loves being creative, writing, traveling and experiencing different cultures first hand. He also enjoys doing community service projects, hosting educational events, presenting workshops at national AMS Montessori conferences, chairing annual gala's and fundraisers for Montessori research and serving on the Board of the American Montessori Society.

*Lead Guide Kathryn Miller - kmiller@theinnovativeschool.com*

Kathryn Miller is a happily married, mother of four successful adult Montessori children. She became a Montessori mother, assistant, and ultimately an American Montessori Society MACTE accredited teacher. Kathryn has taught at Montessori schools for over 30 years, her longest heartfelt tenure with School of the Woods Montessori School. All four of her children attended School of the Woods through middle school, with the fourth child completing high school there. Kathryn is an instructor at the Houston Montessori Center for Teachers and The Institute of Montessori Education focusing on Early Childhood Montessori education. She is a frequent continuing education workshop presenter both locally and nationally for the American Montessori Society. She is a well known, respected leader in the local Montessori community as a mentor, field consultant, and teacher trainer. Kathryn has a passion and a knack for helping the unenlightened 'get it' in regards to developmentally appropriate parenting and teaching.

*Lead Guide Sara Kelly - skelly@theinnovativeschool.com*

Mrs. Sara has always loved working with children starting from her experience in 2003 as an assistant at Bright Start Academy. When she experienced the Montessori method at West Montessori School in Cypress, she immediately realized her calling. Her love and dedication for Montessori grew working as an assistant teacher at Esprit International School in the Woodlands. Sara discovered the power of allowing children to explore and be independent in their daily routine. In summer of 2010, Sara pursued Montessori Early Childhood teacher training at the Houston Montessori Center. Sara's love of Montessori combined with her detail-oriented, self-motivated, work ethic makes her the ideal teacher for The Innovative School. Her daughter is a student at Innovative.

*Lead Guide Bailey Bonura - bbonura@theinnovativeschool.com*

Bailey Bonura's love of Montessori began as a lower elementary student attending School of the Woods. Finding a passion for photography in High School Bailey graduated in 2005 applying to school to be a photographer. Bailey attended Portland State University in Portland Oregon graduating with Liberal Studies major and Bachelors of Art. Through college Bailey was a nanny to twin 4 year olds who were Montessori children. She became very connected to the Early Childhood Montessori practice keeping a close relationship with the children's school Puddle Town Montessori. After college she knew that she wanted to become a teacher and missed being around the 3-6 age group. Being a Montessori child she always knew that if she taught the only pedagogy for her was Montessori. She attend Houston Montessori Center for Montessori teacher training where she was reunited with Kathryn Miller who's youngest son grew up with Bailey at School of the Woods, and she was a student when Kathryn taught there. She did her internship at United Orthodox Synagogue Goldberg Montessori School in Bellaire.

*Lead Guide Patricia Navarro - pnavarro@theinnovativeschool.com*

Patricia Navarro received her American Montessori Society (AMS) Infant & Toddler Montessori credential in 2001 from the MACTE accredited Infant & Toddler Montessori Teacher Education Program at North Harris Lone Star College. She has an Associate of Applied Science and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and EC Education. In addition to teaching in the Infant/Toddler model classroom at the Child Development Lab School at Lone Star College, she served as an adjunct faculty member in the Early Education Department. Currently, Patricia is an Instructor and Lecturer in the Infant & Toddler Education program at the Houston Montessori Center for Teachers. Her areas of expertise are Montessori philosophy and application, infant and toddler development, and parent education. She has served infants and toddlers as teacher for over 10 years, and she is a frequent speaker and consultant for The Institute of Montessori Education. Patricia is a proud Montessori mother to her 3 year old son, Ivan.

*Lead Guide Michelle Battistone - mbattistone@theinnovativeschool.com*

Ms. Michelle Battistone is a nationally recognized expert in Montessori education for infants and toddlers. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education from Southwestern Adventist University and a MACTE accredited Infant and Toddler American Montessori Society (AMS) teaching credential from North Harris College. A field consultant for Montessori Education Center of the Rockies (a Montessori Infant/Toddler teacher training school), Michelle also is part of the site inspection and evaluation team for Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (an autonomous accrediting association for teacher education). Co-Founder of Montessori Mentors, she has spent over fifteen years teaching infants, toddlers, and the adults who work with them. Michelle presents workshops annually at national Montessori conferences as well as, serves as Coordinator for The Institute of Montessori Education's (TIME) Infant and Toddler education program. Before joining The Innovative School, Michelle served as Head of School at Oaks Adventist Christian School in Houston, TX.

*Support Guide Leslie Deyzel - ldeyzel@theinnovativeschool.com*

Leslie Ann Deyzel attended York College of Pennsylvania where she graduated Cum Laude with a degree in Psychology. After college, she returned to New Jersey where she began to work with families involved with the Department of Youth and Family Services as a Family Preservation Counselor. During this time she taught positive parenting skills and other life skills to help these families succeed and prevent placement. After being promoted to a Crisis Intervention Specialist with Children's Mobile Response & Stabilization Services, she began responding directly to families in crisis with the goal of de-escalating the crisis and linking families with appropriate resources. In 2011 she relocated to Houston, Texas. Her ongoing Montessori assistant training is through The Institute of Montessori Education. Leslie loves working with children different capacity here at The Innovative School.

*Support Guide Rebecca Miller - rmiller@theinnovativeschool.com*

At the age of seventeen, Rebecca Miller earned a 4.0 GPA in twelve units of Early Childhood Education at Butte College. She then went on to acquire her first position as a preschool teacher at the Peanut Butter Palace in Chico, California. Rebecca then moved to Los Angeles, where she accepted a lead teacher position working with two and three year olds at The Learning Place Pre School in Burbank, California. Deciding to continue her own education full time, Rebecca trained in lesson planning and art education for credits at Glendale Community College. In 2011, Rebecca moved from California to Houston to be closer to her mother. She is excited to be given the opportunity to be a support guide in our toddler community. She has completed the intensive training to become a Montessori toddler guide, and is doing her internship during the 2013-2014 school year.

*Support Guide Virginia Ann Reesman -*

Virginia Anne Reesman first fell in love with teaching children at the age of seventeen, working as a teacher's assistant at a privately owned art school called Chart. She also attended Glassell School of Art with Ms. Bailey Bonura for four years, focusing on photography. She has since worked as a Nanny for multiple families, as well as a care-teacher at Childtime. In addition, she has experience as a pre-school substitute teacher. Virginia is pursuing a Bachelor in Art and Education at Houston Community College, and she will be transferring to the University of Houston in the fall of 2013. She has recently become very interested in Montessori Education, and loves working with both the toddler community and early childhood.

## **ADMISSION**

Innovative Montessori School is a private, independent school admitting children of any race, creed and national origin. In the past few years the enrollment for Innovative Montessori School has increased. To understand the procedures and special considerations that determine how admissions are made, please review the following:

- 1) Tour – We encourage parents to take a formal tour of the school in order to have the opportunity to observe each of the class levels offered at Innovative. A general overview of the Montessori Education will be discussed. An appointment is required for a formal tour which can be arranged through the office.
- 2) Applications – Application forms may be obtained from the school office. When the application is submitted, the child is eligible as vacancies arise.
- 3) Parent Orientation Meeting – As parents tour our school, many specific questions or concerns may arise. During this second meeting, parents and the certified teacher or administrator have the opportunity to address those specific areas regarding each child. At this meeting it is required that the child attend so a quick developmental assessment can be done and proper placement for the child determined.
- 4) Classroom Placement – Once a space is available the registration fee and material fee is due to finalize the application.

### ***On the first day of school please bring:***

- 1) Plant – small, hardy, non – toxic plant in a small container with a hole in the bottom, on a saucer; it will be the child’s responsibility to care for the plant.
- 2) Framed photo of your family, pets and siblings – when selecting a frame, please keep in mind that it will be in the classroom, so please avoid crystal, jagged edges etc. The frame will help make our classrooms family oriented.
- 3) USB Drive with your child’s name written on it. Throughout the year pictures will be taken for your child's portfolio. The USB Drive allows parents to have a digital copy of the child's journey throughout the school year. As mentioned in this handbook, the classroom materials are hands-on materials resulting in little paper work coming home. The camera will also allow your child to make a record of his or her work to share with you.

## **BASIC SCHEDULE**

### ***Transition Half Day and Full Day Sample Schedule:***

9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m	Morning arrival and outside playtime. This is an important time for the children to run, get fresh air, and experience gross motor activity.
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m	Morning work period. During this time children will learn independent activities such as dressing, serving snack, toileting, and social interactions. The children will choose work, receive lessons, and explore the environment through their senses.
11:00 a.m.	Community Meeting (Circle time) will take place. During this important time of the day we will talk about the day, weather, family, and do songs, books and activities that indirectly reinforce the curriculum of the environment.
12:00 p.m	Half Day Students are dismissed to go home. Full and Before/After School Children transition to Lunchtime and Nap
2:30 p.m.	Full Day students are dismissed to go home

### ***Early Childhood Half Day and Full Day Sample Schedule:***

8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m	Morning arrival - The children arrive, put away their belongings, and come to Community Meeting. Community Meeting is for special celebrations, announcements, calendar, singing, group lessons or stories.
8:30 a.m.– 10:15 a.m.	Morning work period - Students choose work. The students may receive lessons from the teachers, work with a friend or work individually. The teachers circulate interacting with students observing, assessing work, and giving lessons.
11:30 a.m.	Outside playtime. This is an essential part of the day for students to develop physically, socially, and emotionally through uninterrupted free play and group games.
12:00 p.m.	Half Day students are dismissed to go home. Full Day and Before/After School students enjoy lunch together.
12:30 12:30 p.m.	Nap Time for younger students Extended Day work period for older students
2:30 p.m.	Full Day students are dismissed to go home.

## **PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS**

Children are largely dependent on their families for identity, security, care and a general sense of well being. Good communication between parents and teachers helps to build mutual understanding that provides consistent guidance for the child.

Partnership between parents and teachers forms a basis for mutual problem solving about concerns, behaviors and observations. It enhances the learning process in both the home and the school by strengthening ties and establishing consistency of expectations and routines.

## **PARENT EDUCATION**

The purpose of these events is to further develop the child-parent-teacher partnership by bringing in various programs, activities, workshops, authors and speakers that focus on Montessori educational philosophy and practice, parenting skills, and developmentally appropriate practice.

As an active participant at The Innovative School we ask that parents attend 75% of the meetings and events which we schedule and present. Families will sign in on the Family Seminars Record Log.

Prospective parents are always invited to attend these events and learn more about Montessori and The Innovative School. Priority in admission is given to families who attend our parent educational events. Childcare is available for all parent education events. Children must be enrolled or on our waiting list to be eligible for childcare. The cost is \$5.00 per child. Reservations must be made in advance with the front desk and will be accepted as long as space is available.

## **PARENT EDUCATION CLASSES**

The Innovative School recommends these multi-session classes offered on campus throughout the school year. We are committed to supporting you as your child's first teacher. Together, we can supply the knowledge, tools, nurturing and support your child needs to become well rounded and balanced individuals. We offer workshops that will dramatically enhance your parenting ability to help your children and the family dynamic.

- Balancing Work and Family
- Redirecting Children's Behavior
- Setting Up a Process of Family Involvement
- Creating a Safe Space for Making Mistakes
- Consequences that Work
- Positive Guidance and Discipline
- Communication that Builds Relationships
- Parenting as a Team

## **PARENT CONFERENCE**

It is a school policy for all parents to attend the following throughout the school year:

- 1) parent orientation meeting
- 2) classroom observation
- 3) three parent/teacher conferences

The classroom observation is scheduled November 18-22, 2013, 2 weeks prior to the first parent/teacher conferences. Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for December 2-6, February 3-7 and April 22-30. Unofficial conferences may be scheduled at any other time that you request, or when we feel it necessary. Please refrain from asking the teachers questions about the child's progress during class time. You may call or email the teacher.

We will send home a list of scheduled conference times. Conferences are scheduled for 30 minutes; if you wish a longer time, please let us know. Please fill in your Parent Response Form prior to conference.

### **VISITATION AND OBSERVATION**

Parents are welcome to visit the school. Please make an appointment with the office prior to your visit. The school serves as a model for other schools, teachers, and student-teachers, as well as parents. In order to preserve the "normal" classroom atmosphere, we prefer to schedule only one visitor or observer at a time. Parents are always welcome to come and observe the classroom during the children's work time. Please make arrangements with the office.

Understanding how the Montessori classroom works will help you with your observation and assist your understanding of the goals we are pursuing. Our Montessori classroom is a "prepared" environment. Each piece of work has been placed on the shelf to help children independently develop a particular skill. Our environment operates on the principals of freedom within limits and based on the core Montessori beliefs, respect for each other and for the environment.

Students are free to work at their own pace with materials they have chosen, either alone or with others. The teacher is a facilitator of the child's independent learning. The teacher relies on observation of the children as a continual assessment to determine which new activities, lessons or materials may be introduced to an individual child. The aim is to encourage active, self-directed learning and to strike a balance of individual mastery within the whole group community.

This is the student's classroom environment, so please, be mindful to sit quietly as you observe. We ask that you stay seated and not engage the children in conversation as this will interrupt their concentration and focus. A courteous "hello" and a direct response like "I am here to watch you work" would be appropriate.

Please use these questions while observing our classroom. Enjoy your visit!

#### **The Environment**

1. Is the environment conducive to learning?
2. Are the students able to move about freely and choose work that interests them?
3. Are the materials easily accessible?
4. Do the materials seem to be logically arranged?
5. Are the students kind and respectful to each other?
6. How is the noise level?

#### **The Students**

1. Do the students learn from one another?
2. Are the students choosing work and staying with it?
3. Are the students engaged and interested in their work?
4. What seems to be the length of time spent on an activity?
5. Do the students seem comfortable and relaxed in their environment?
6. Do they concentrate for extended periods of time?
7. Is their work orderly and are the materials returned to their original location?
8. Does the student seem positive and happy with what he or she is doing?

## The Teacher

1. Do the teachers display patience and enthusiasm?
2. Does the teacher demonstrate materials clearly and seem aware of the student's response?
3. Are the teachers aware of the students' needs?
4. Does she speak respectfully to the students?
5. Do the students respond respectfully to the teacher?
6. Do the teachers model appropriate behavior in the classroom?

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS**

Coordinate a schedule for chosen volunteer jobs with the teacher. (Parent Listener, Gardener, Cultural Celebration, Crafts, Materials)

## **EXTRA CLOTHES**

Transition children need at least three full sets of clothing and 6-8 pairs of underwear. Early childhood children need a full set of extra clothing to keep in their cubby.

All children need a pair of close-toed running shoes for the playground. These may stay at school if your child likes to wear sandals or other shoes to and from school. Regulations require that children wear shoes at all times. A second pair of inside shoes will be worn while your child is inside working. An appropriate example of inside shoes are *Snoozies* which can be washed easily and have a no-skid bottom.

*All items brought from home should be labeled clearly with the child's name.*

## **HALF DAY AND FULL DAY CLASSROOM PROCEDURES**

### ***Half Day Class Hours***

During this time the children arrive, put away their belongings, and choose work they have already had a lesson on or they get a new lesson. The teachers circulate among the children observing, interacting, assessing, giving lessons, redirecting students, etc. Snack is also available at this time. It is self-serve with clean-up being the last step. There is an outside playtime on the playground.

### ***Full Day Class Hours***

After the Half Day Class students leave for the day, the Full Day Transition Class students will work on independent sleeping skills as well as continued toileting and dressing. The Early Childhood students will eat lunch, and then depending on age and development either have a nap or an additional work time to pursue unfinished work, receive new lessons, play outside or inside and enjoy additional group activities.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Records of the child's work are kept in an individual portfolio. The content of the portfolio provide the child, teachers and parents concrete and essential information about the child's progress and activities; provides adequate planning and goal setting; and the portfolio is individual and compares to his/her own previous work not to others.



## **Portfolio Content**

### Daily Record:

Daily observational records are ongoing; dated records of each child's work are kept on each child's record keeping card according to curriculum area. These are accessible to all teachers.

### Anecdotal Records:

Records of unanticipated events milestones, quotes, expressions gestures, social interactions are recorded by the teacher using a personal diary book.

### Cumulative Records:

Summarizes notes from all sources and allows teachers to evaluate each child's development in relation to him/herself. Includes physical, social, emotional, cognitive information.

### Work Samples:

Samples of letter writing, number-writing, art , drawings illustrations, books, photos or samples of daily activities. Originals are photocopied.

### My Work Record:

Older children (with the teacher) will learn to keep daily records of their activities and begin to plan their work periods and manage their time appropriately.

### Observation of Individual Child:

Observations are done as teacher considers it necessary. They are precise and objective without drawing conclusions. Observations are done in a variety of settings and times of the day.

### Specific Behavior Record:

Records of inappropriate behavior that repeats at different times of the day is kept for a period of time to help teachers and parents have a better understanding of when this behavior appears and possible solutions. (example: biting, hitting,...).

### Progress Report:

Copy of the report given to parents (Dec., Feb., April), copy of Parent's Goals for 3 months (Dec., Feb., April).

## **SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

School notes and communications are handed to the parent whenever possible. Otherwise they will be placed inside the child's folder located at the reception desk. Please check it daily!

Any school closures will be according to the schedule given on our calendar, or as Houston Independent School District may announce for alternate weather.

## **SHARING TIME**

Early childhood students are assigned a day to bring show and tell. Please help your child choose an item from nature, photos, books, something special from their experiences away from school, or something related to the classroom curriculum for that month or week. We appreciate your leaving toys at home.

## **PLANT CARE**

Your child is invited to bring a plant to care for at school. Please be sure to provide the name and instructions for care so that we may support your child in proper care. Also, note that it is a safe plant for children. (No dieffenbachia!) The children will observe and care for the plant all year.

## **LUNCH PROCEDURES AND SNACK**

The Innovative School purchases school snacks from Georgia's Farm to Market, a local indoor farmer's market. Georgia's Farm to Market is a natural food store and restaurant where they encourage you to embrace your health. They offer grass-fed and natural meats, organic produce and a wide selection of vitamins, exotic teas, coffees and spices. We know that during a child's development years, it is extremely important that they receive proper nutrition. We provide daily snacks that are healthy, natural, local and organic which include fresh fruits and vegetables and local, hormone free milk.

Georgia's Farm to Market also caters lunch daily. If packing a lunch is difficult for your family, you may sign-up for the lunch program. Menus are available at the front desk. Lunch forms attached with payment must be turned in the school office by the 28th of each month to participate in the lunch program. The food is prepared daily and is a combination of organic, healthy, locally-sourced, and fresh ingredients. Every entrée is served with a fresh organic fruit and vegetable and hormone-free milk. Georgia's never use artificial colors or flavors or high-fructose corn syrup in the food. Menus are well-balanced, nutritious, and delicious. Georgia's Farm to Market lunch program is designed to make serving a handmade, healthy hot lunch as easy and convenient as possible.

### ***Sample Weekly Snack Menu:***

***Please note: We are NOT a nut free environment!***

If your child has a special diet, please contact the school and list on your child's application forms.

### **Monday**

AM Snack: Bananas & Graham Crackers

PM Snack: Chex Mix and carrot sticks

### **Tuesday**

AM Snack: Apples & crackers with peanut or almond butter

PM Snack: Thin pretzels and cucumber slices with dip

### **Wednesday**

AM Snack: Oranges & Ritz

PM Snack: Whole Wheat Crackers & Cheese and bell pepper slices

### **Thursday**

AM Snack: Vegetable and Dip & Veggie crisps

PM Snack: Dried fruit and Animal Crackers

### **Friday**

AM Snack: Fruit Salad and Vanilla wafers

PM Snack: Special snack (bagel pizza, toasted cheese sandwich)

### **Please note:**

- Children are encouraged to eat but not forced to do so.
- The Innovative School is a low-sugar facility. This policy is to be followed in lunches brought to school and in community celebrations (such as birthdays) and special occasions.
- Lunches from fast food restaurants are not allowed.

### **PACK A CHILD'S LUNCH MONTESSORI STYLE**

A Montessori-style bag lunch creates opportunities for children to apply at mealtime some of the functional skills they've experienced in classroom Practical Life activities: opening and closing, matching, unfolding and folding, transferring with a spoon or tongs, spreading, cutting, and cleaning up.

Prepare lunches the evening before, with the children if at all possible. They'll relish the opportunity to undertake an important role in caring for themselves in this way. Giving children a chance to choose respects their food preferences and suits their eagerness to participate in family life.

When the family schedule makes the children's participation unrealistic, pack lunch with a young child's sensitive taste buds and small tummy in mind. Provide a variety of single foods rather than an adult-sized sandwich and an entire piece of fruit. The same sandwich ingredients in individual containers are more likely to be eaten. Consider portion size -- few young children can manage a whole apple in one sitting!

For the transition class we ask that pureed foods not be sent as children are in a sensitive period for development in chewing, taste buds, and specific development of the mouth.

Each child who eats lunch at school needs to bring a cloth placemat and cloth napkin. The measurements need to be approximately 11" X 8". A thin cotton material that can be folded inside the school lunch box (provided by the school) works best. Please use plastic reusable containers instead of plastic bags. Send flatware (forks or spoons) if your child is going to need them. Involve your child in planning, preparing and packing lunch to encourage their knowledge about nutrition. This participation will decrease complaints about food. Uneaten food is sent back home to encourage discussion about the enjoyment of the food and the possibility of repeats or not! Empty calorie foods such as chips are saved for snacks rather than lunch items.

The school provides 2% milk or water for lunch. If you do not want your child to have milk, you may send 100% juice. Soft drinks such as Capri-Sun, Hi-C, Kool-Aid, etc., are not acceptable at school and will stay in the lunch box for student to take home for snack. The school provides a fruit or vegetable serving, grain (pretzels, crackers, breads), and 2% milk or water for snack in the morning and in the afternoon.

#### ***Suggestions:***

Small, separate portions let children combine foods in different ways. For example, a few crackers, a dab of peanut butter, a few cheese slices, and a few apple slices offer children several tasty combinations from which to choose at mealtime.

Children love simple dips for their veggies and soft spreads that give their hands plenty to do. Plain yogurt or cottage cheese are nutritious dip "starters." Peanut butter, egg salad, tuna salad, and cream cheese are easy spreads.

Healthy foods are a hallmark of Montessori philosophy. Dr. Montessori was one of the first educators to recognize the connection between nutrition and the developing brain.

- Cheese
- Any sliced fruit
- Peanut or almond butter (on whole grain bread, rice cakes w/raisins)
- Meat chunks
- Raw or steamed veggies w/dip
- Boiled eggs
- Corn on Cob
- Beans Gazpacho
- Soup
- Salads
- Nuts
- Guacamole
- Fruit kabobs
- Dried fruit
- Grains
- Pita bread
- Tortilla
- Brown rice
- Couscous
- Pizza or quesadillas

Lunches must be self contained and ready to eat so that children do not need teacher assistance. Please be mindful that we do not have microwaves in the classrooms and are unable to heat up packed lunches. Please send warmed items in thermos or insulated containers.

### **LUNCH DATE**

Children who have achieved drop off, pick up and lunch-independence may invite their parent for lunch. Parents may make a "lunch date" with their child. Please make arrangements with teachers AHEAD OF TIME, so we can arrange a place for you and your child. We like to have one parent at a time. For that date please bring a sack lunch (no junk food or sodas), and join us for lunch at your child's scheduled lunch time.

## Health

### Immunization

In order for your child to start school, we must have a copy of his/her updated immunization record. School must have documentation to indicate that your child is free of active tuberculosis (TB). The Health Form given to you in the Enrollment Application Package must be completed, signed and dated by your child's physician. Vision and Hearing screenings must be kept on file. You may request these screenings be completed at your child's yearly health exam with your pediatrician.

Dose One (Minimum Age)	Minimum Interval Between Doses			
	Dose One to Dose Two	Dose Two to Dose Three	Dose Three to Dose Four	Dose Four to Dose Five
DTaP (6 wks)	4 weeks	4 weeks	6 months	6 months <sup>1</sup>
IPV (6 wks)	4 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks <sup>2</sup>	
HepB3 (birth)	4 weeks	8 weeks (and 16 weeks after first dose)		
MMR (12 mos)	4 weeks <sup>4</sup>			
Hib5 (6 wks)	<p>4 weeks: if 1st dose given at age &lt;12 mos</p> <p>8 weeks (as final dose): if 1st dose given at age 12-14 mos</p> <p>No further doses needed: if first dose given at age ≥15 mos</p>	<p>4 weeks<sup>6</sup>: if current age &lt;12 mos</p> <p>8 weeks (as final dose): if current age ≥12 mos and 2nd dose given at age &lt;15 mos</p> <p>No further doses needed: if previous dose given at age ≥15 mos</p>	<p>8 weeks (as final dose): this dose only necessary for children age 12 mos - 5 yrs who received 3 doses before age 12 mos</p>	
PCV7 (6 wks)	<p>4 weeks: if 1st dose given at age &lt;12 mos and current age &lt;24 mos</p> <p>8 weeks (as final dose): if 1st dose given at age ≥12 mos or current age 24-59 mos</p> <p>No further doses needed: for healthy children if 1st dose given at age ≥24 mos</p>	<p>4 weeks: if current age &lt;12 mos</p> <p>8 weeks (as final dose): if current age ≥12 mos</p> <p>No further doses needed: for healthy children if previous dose given at age ≥24 mos</p>	<p>8 weeks (as final dose): this dose only necessary for children age 12 mos - 5 yrs who received 3 doses before age 12 mos</p>	

### ***Illness***

Licensing requires that your child be kept home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms:

1. Temperature over 99 degrees F.
2. Diarrhea or Vomiting
3. Any undiagnosed rash
4. Complaints of stomach ache, headache etc...
5. Watery, itchy or reddened eyes, excessive coughing, sneezing, runny nose, chills or muscle aches.
6. Any symptoms of contagious disease.

Any child brought to school with these symptoms will not be admitted and any child showing these symptoms during the school day will be sent home. Parents will be notified of this event and must pick up their child from school within an hour. Children have to be fever, diarrhea and vomiting free for 24 hours before returning to school. As outlined in licensing, some contagious disease may require a doctor's note for re-admission.

### ***Pink Eye Policy***

There are two known cases of pink eye one is bacterial and can be cured with drops. The other is viral and can only be cured with time in quarantine. Drops will not cure viral pink eye. Both strains of pink eye are VERY contagious, therefore, if children keep coming to school with pink eye we will continue to give it to one other indefinitely.

### ***Rules for Pink Eye***

You must take your child to the doctor immediately, once notified! Your child will NOT be allowed to use any of the work at school or be able to be around other people until one of the two requirements below have been accomplished.

If your child has Bacterial pink eye your child must stay home for 2 days while using drops. For your child to return to school you must have a doctor's note dated 2 days prior to return. The note needs to state that your child has bacterial pink eye.

If your child has Viral pink eye your child must stay home for 5-7 days until symptoms have cleared. There are NOT drops for Viral pink eye it must clear on its own. During the time viral pink is clearing your child is still VERY contagious!!! For your child to return to school you must have a doctor's note dated 5-7 days prior to their return. The note needs state that your child has viral pink eye.

### ***Medication***

Medication necessary for certain illness must be accompanied by a doctor's statement or a signed statement should be given directly to the child's teacher with instructions of its use. All medications must be in its original child proof container as given by the pharmacy. A form will be provided for parents to fill out, and teachers will sign when they have given the medication.

Any allergies related to food or drink should be stated on your child's emergency card.

## **WEATHER POLICY**

The Innovative School has established a weather policy based on requirements detailed in Minimum Standards established by the State of Texas, appropriate recommendations regarding weather for young children, and understanding how weather plays a part in the health and safety of young children. As required by licensing we will be spending time outdoors each day in the mornings and afternoons. Additional recommendations are outlined in the Child Care Weather Chart below and we will stay indoors when weather is listed as “Danger”. Colds and flu are NOT caused by weather. We will be going outside on a daily basis. If your child is too sick to be outdoors, then they should be at home. If it is warm and rainy, we will be playing outside. Rain boots and appropriate rain gear can be sent with your child or additional changes of clothing. If it is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and over 100 degrees Fahrenheit we will not go outside.

### ***The State of Texas requires that as providers we provide:***

Outdoor play in which the children make use of both small and large muscles, both in the morning and afternoon.

You may accommodate weather, air quality, and seasonal changes by adjusting the scheduled outdoor time, the length of time outdoors, and children’s clothing.

Opportunities for active play both indoors and outdoors.

“Research indicates children receive the greatest developmental benefits from attending centers which offer a variety of activities addressing emotional, social, intellectual, and physical development. A planned but flexible program that allows children to make decisions about their activities fosters independence and creative expression.

Outdoor play provides for greater freedom and flexibility, fuller expression through loud talk, and a greater range of active movement. Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity in ways that are not attainable in a confined indoor space.

There is no set amount of time that children must play outdoors in the morning and afternoon. It is recommended that children ages 18 months and older should be allowed 60 to 90 total minutes of outdoor time each day.”

Minimum Standards for Childcare Centers – Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

### ***When is it Too Hot or Cold for Outside Play***

Watching the weather is part of a child care providers’ job. Planning for playtime, field trips, or weather safety is part of the daily routine. The changes in weather require the child care provider to monitor the health and safety of children. What clothing, beverages, and protections are appropriate? Clothe children to maintain a comfortable body temperature (warmer months - lightweight cotton, colder months - wear layers of clothing). Beverages help the body maintain a comfortable temperature. Water or fruit juices are best. Avoid high-sugar content beverages and soda pop. Sunscreen may be used year around. Use a sunscreen labeled as SPF-15 or higher. Read and follow all label instructions for the sunscreen product. Look for sunscreen with UVB and UVA ray protection. Shaded play areas protect children from the sun.

**CONDITION GREEN** - Children may play outdoors and be comfortable. Watch for signs of children becoming uncomfortable while playing. Use precautions regarding clothing, sunscreen, and beverages for all child age groups.

**INFANTS AND TODDLERS** are unable to tell the child care provider if they are too hot or cold. Children become fussy when uncomfortable. Infants/toddlers will tolerate shorter periods of outdoor play. Dress infants/toddlers in lightweight cotton or cotton-like fabrics during the warmer months. In cooler or cold months dress infants in layers to keep them warm. Protect infants from the sun by limiting the amount of time outdoors and playing in shaded areas. Give beverages when playing outdoors.

**YOUNG CHILDREN** remind children to stop playing, drink a beverage, and apply more sunscreen.

**OLDER CHILDREN** need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens). They may resist applying sunscreen and drinking beverages while outdoors.

**CONDITION YELLOW** - use caution and closely observe the children for signs of being too hot or cold while outdoors. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of outdoor time.

**INFANTS AND TODDLERS** use precautions outlined in Condition Green. Clothing, sunscreen, and beverages are important. Shorten the length of time for outdoor play.

**YOUNG CHILDREN** may insist they are not too hot or cold because they are enjoying playtime. Child care providers need to structure the length of time for outdoor play for the young child.

**OLDER CHILDREN** need a firm approach to wearing proper clothing for the weather (they may want to play without coats, hats or mittens), applying sunscreen and drinking liquids while playing outdoors.

**CONDITION RED** - most children should not play outdoors due to the health risk.

**INFANTS/TODDLERS** should play indoors and have ample space for large motor play.

**YOUNG CHILDREN** may ask to play outside and do not understand the potential danger of weather conditions.

**OLDER CHILDREN** may play outdoors for very short periods of time if they are properly dressed, have plenty of fluids. Child care providers must be vigilant about maximum protection of children.

## Understand the Weather

The weather forecast may be confusing unless you know the meaning of the words.

**Blizzard Warning:** There will be snow and strong winds that produce a blinding snow, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chills. Seek shelter immediately. **Heat Index Warning:** How hot it feels to the body when the air temperature (in Fahrenheit) and relative humidity are combined.

**Relative Humidity:** The percent of moisture in the air. **Temperature:** The temperature of the air in degrees Fahrenheit.

**Wind:** The speed of the wind in miles per hour.

**Wind Chill Warning:** There will be sub-zero temperatures with moderate to strong winds expected which may cause hypothermia and great danger to people, pets and livestock.

**Winter Weather Advisory:** Weather conditions may cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous. If caution is exercised, these situations should not become life threatening.

**Winter Storm Warning:** Severe winter conditions have begun in your area.

**Winter Storm Watch:** Severe winter conditions, like heavy snow and ice are possible within the next day or two.



**Wind-Chill**

30 is chilly and generally uncomfortable  
 15 to 30 is cold  
 0 to 15 is very cold  
 -20 to 0 is bitter cold with significant risk of frostbite  
 -20 to -60 is extreme cold and frostbite is likely  
 -60 is frigid and exposed skin will freeze in 1 minute

**Heat Index**

80 or below is considered comfortable  
 90 beginning to feel uncomfortable  
 100 uncomfortable and may be hazardous  
 110 considered dangerous  
 All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

# Child Care Weather Watch

Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)										
		Wind Speed in mph								
		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
Air Temperature	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
	0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29
	-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43

Comfortable for out door play
  Caution
  Danger

Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)														
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
Air Temperature (F)	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
	104	119	124	131	137									

[www.daycare.com](http://www.daycare.com)

**Does Cold Weather Cause the Cold or Flu?**

This question has probably been asked since the first time the flu made someone sick. After all, cold and flu season occurs when the weather is cold, so there must be a connection, right? Well, not quite. No matter how many times your mother and grandmother told you not to go out in the cold because you would catch a cold or the flu, it just doesn't work that way.

Answer:

The truth is, the flu and the common cold are caused by viruses. People get sick more often in the winter because they are exposed to each other more in the winter than in the summer. When it is cold outside, people tend to stay inside and are more likely to spread germs to one another. Also, because school is in session, kids are around each other all day and are not afraid to share their germs. With so many people in such close contact, the likelihood of passing germs is much higher when it is cold outside than when it is warm and people are outdoors. There is also evidence now that viruses spread more easily through dry

air. When it is cold outside, the air is drier both outdoors and inside (where people have their heaters on) which may make it easier for germs to pass from one person to another. But it is not the cold weather that causes the cold, it just might make it easier to spread the virus.

In tropical areas, where it does not get cold, the common cold and flu season generally occurs during the rainy season. But again, these illnesses are not caused by the rain. They are just more prevalent because people come in closer contact with each other than they do during the dry season.

The most important thing to remember during cold and flu season is to remember to protect yourself against these germs when you are around other people. Viruses are passed by contact between people, so be sure to wash your hands often.

<http://coldflu.about.com>

### **TUITION AND FEES**

Innovative Montessori is not a daycare facility. We are a school with a planned curriculum for the year. For this reason, we cannot operate on a drop-in basis. Our program, our staff, and our finances are arranged on a school-year budget. Our staff-student ratio is fixed for each time period, and we do not overcrowd our classrooms.

We have hired special teachers to care for the children who are enrolled in our before and after school programs. Our certified teachers are scheduled to run the half and full day programs, and during the other times are busy preparing the classroom and the activities for the week. If you leave your child early or late, we do have to charge you. Please remember that what is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour for you multiplied by 20-30 students is a staffing problem for us.

Tuition is due by the third of each month. There is no reduction / pro-ration for absence or holidays. Payments after the third are subject to a \$35.00 late charge. There is a charge of \$25.00 for all returned checks. If more than two checks are returned NSF, all future fees must be paid in Money Order or Cash. Fees unpaid by the 15th of each month will result in your child being taken off the roll. Re-enrollment will entail a re-registration fee of \$75.00. Monthly receipts, reimbursement statements and or annual tax statements are available upon request.

### **School Tuition Policy**

The Innovative School is dedicated to providing you the highest quality learning center for your family. Described below are the basic policies necessary for us to manager our school in which your child is enrolled. We are a school with a planned curriculum for the year. For this reason, we cannot operate on a drop-in style monthly basis. Our program, staff and finances are arranged and set on a school year budget.

School tuition is an annual tuition based on a full ten month academic year, which can be divided into ten equal monthly payments. Annual tuition covers the academic school year starting in mid-August ending in May. There is no reduction of tuition for absences due to illness, vacations or any other extended absence from the school. Summer camp (June through mid-August) is optional and not included in the academic school year tuition schedule. Families on a 10-monthly payment plan schedule, require a one-month tuition deposit. The completed registration form must be accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00 and material fee of \$175.00. There are no deductions or refunds for withdrawal during the

academic school year. All fees are non-refundable. Families enrolling (depending on availability) after the first day of school will be provided with a prorated tuition for the remainder of the school year. Tuition is due by the third of each month. There is no reduction / pro-ration for absence or holidays. Payments after the third are subject to a \$35.00 late charge. There is a charge of \$25.00 for all returned checks. If more than two checks are returned NSF, all future fees must be paid in Money Order or Cash. Fees unpaid by the 15th of each month will result in your child being taken off the roll. Re-enrollment will entail a re-registration fee of \$75.00. Monthly receipts, reimbursement statements and or annual tax statements are available upon request.

Please Note: Holidays are not calculated into your monthly school tuition plan. Care is available on designated days during Winter, Spring and Summer Break for students enrolled in Before and After School Care at a daily rate of \$20.00. All reservations will be on a prepaid basis.

International families working in the USA on a Visa who are transferred back to their countries in the middle of the academic school year may give a 30-day written notice by the first of the month attached with prove of transfer and work agreement to release remaining tuition liability. Tuition deposit can be counted as your last month's payment, with proper 30-day written notice.

Families relocated outside of the Houston metro-plex area (excluding Katy, Sugar Land or within 25 miles of the 12280 Westheimer Road, Houston, Texas 77077) may request an exception to the annual contract policy; which will be considered on an individual case by case basis. All requests must be submitted in writing with proof of move or transfer 30-days in advance notice by the first of the month. Upon approval, deposit can be used towards December or May's payment, so such notice before December or May will forfeit the tuition deposit.

Summer Program: Innovative's 10-week summer program (June to mid-August) is optional and not included in the annual school year tuition. This service is provided for our currently enrolled families and filled on a first come first serve basis. Summer program registration is due in March with a camp tuition deposit which is non-refundable. Once a commitment has been made to attend summer camp, families are responsible for the registered summer program calculated tuition. Please note, August payment will contain a separate summer camp tuition plus your first monthly annual payment for the academic school year.

\* Deposit: Tuition deposit is not refundable, it can only be applied to your May's tuition payment with a 30 day written notice by April 1st that your child will not be attending for the following academic school year. If you re-register for the next academic school year, your deposit will be held for the following May. There are no refunds.

### **ARRIVAL AND ATTENDANCE**

Children enrolled in the Transition classes are greeted on the playground. We ask that parents assist their child with toileting and putting on underwear before they come outside. Good-byes should be brief and consistent. If your child needs assistance a teacher will be available to support your final good-bye. A simple exchange of important information may be needed with the teacher, but extended conversations may take away from the supervision of the children. There is a "notes" section on the daily sheet posted in the classroom, email or you may call during nap time for important information.

Children enrolled in Early Childhood classes are greeted when they enter the classroom; the classroom day begins immediately upon arrival. It is imperative that parents drop their child by the classroom door and leave. Greetings, Montessori lessons, and introductions to special activities all help set the positive atmosphere for the day. We request all our students to be brought to class on time. Please avoid any conversations when dropping off your child as it delays class session time.

Parents are asked to refrain from going inside the classroom once class has started. When you come inside the school, dropping off or picking up your child, please remember to sign-in / sign-out at the front desk.

Each environment is specifically designed for children enrolled in the school. Teachers take time to prepare, clean, and organize the classroom daily. We ask that siblings be respectful of these environments and wait at the door while parents are dropping off and picking up.

***Classroom Instructional Timings:***

Transition: (18 months – 3 years old)	9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Primary (3 years old – 4 years old)	8:30 am – 12:00 pm
Primary (4 years old – 6 years old)	8:30 am – 2:30 pm

***Release of Children***

Children will only be released to individuals stated in the enrollment application form and emergency card. Written permission to the school must be submitted to the office for the school to release your child to that individual. A photo identification or drivers license will be required.

***School Year Operation***

August 19, 2013 – May 28, 2014

***Summer Camp Operation***

July 2, 2014 - August 8, 2014

***Charges for Late Pick-Up***

There will be a \$1.00 charge for every 1 minute the child is at the school past closing.

Prior arrangements can be made for half and full day students to stay extra hours past scheduled timing at \$8.00 an hour.

**PARKING**

We request that you park in the appropriate parking spaces. We also request that in the parking lot and driveway, your speed should not exceed 10 mph.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In case of an emergency or illness the school a certified teacher or administrator will contact the parent. Please fill out and update the emergency card for accurate contact numbers.

**NEWSLETTER AND PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS**

The school newsletter is published monthly and posted on the schools webpage. Important information regarding the school calendar and various activities throughout the month are included in the newsletter. Please be aware of school closures for statutory holidays.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students are asked to wear comfortable clothes enabling them to participate in all activities, as well as be independent in dressing.

Shoes: Athletic or closed shoes are required for playground. You may send 'outside shoes' that stay at school. Additionally your child will need "inside shoes", such as Snoozies, which are washable and have a non-skid bottom. We ask that light up shoes be reserved for the home environment, as we are striving to be an eco-friendly institution.

Outside Dress: Licensing requires that the children go outside daily. Houston weather may be unpredictable and change at any moment. Make sure your child has appropriate labeled clothing available in their cubby. On rainy days if it is not thundering or lightening we will still go outside. A rain coat and boots will keep clothing dry, or your child may change into dry clothes when we enter the environment.

Character Clothing: In line with the philosophy of real to life activities and understanding we ask that "character" clothing be reserved for home.

## **CELEBRATION OF LIFE**

Birthday celebrations are very important to young children. As your child's birthday approaches, please make arrangements with their teacher for *Celebration of Life*. A "birthday" book or poster made for your child's celebration is very special for their day. Once made, your child will start to see their own timeline and the progress of their growth over the years. The Celebration of Life honors the child in a meaningful ceremony. Celebration of Life information will be provided by your teacher. Nutritious or homemade snacks are preferred. *Frosted cupcakes and sugar-filled treats are not allowed.*

Suggested Snack:

Fresh fruit

Muffins

Yogurt

Any healthy snack your child enjoys!

## **FIELD TRIPS AND "GOING OUT"**

To better enhance students learning, field trips will be scheduled during the year. Two weeks' notice will be provided with guidelines, permission slips, fees and transportation information.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

The word discipline is used at The Innovative School to refer to the spontaneous self-discipline of the child. The Innovative School nurtures self-discipline, which develops over a period of time. The basis of discipline is respect -- respect for oneself, for others and for the environment. The teachers and students at The Innovative School set limits for behavior based on the groups' need for a safe and mutually respectful community. If a student has difficulty following the rules of the community, the response will be age appropriate. Personal attention, distraction, substitution and /or removal from the situation are typical approaches. Many instances resolve with time, within the bounds of safety and common sense as children experience and accept the changes in the environment. If the student disregards the rules of the

classroom community, the teacher in consultation with the administrator will contact the parent for their support and cooperation.

### ***Cooperative Discipline***

Positive guidance techniques facilitate the development of interpersonal skills, respect for oneself and others. Children learn from each other and benefit from peer stimulation. They learn to participate in group activities and develop an awareness of others. They are encouraged to solve disagreements using learning appropriate communication techniques.

#### Positive Guidance Techniques are presented to the child by:

- Modeling
- Encouraging expected behavior
- Redirecting
- Setting clear limits
- Offering alternatives
- Logical consequences
- Natural consequences
- I messages :  
“*I feel...(feeling) ~ when you...(behavior) ~ because...(effect) ~ I want...(desired behavior).*” (example:  
“I feel angry when you cut in line because I was next. I want you to go to the end of the line.”)

#### Ground Rules

- Are for everyone to follow including teachers, parents and visitors.
- Are reinforced at all times.
- Provide a safe environment for learning.
- Encourage respect and thoughtfulness of others.
- Assists the child to develop the sense of responsibility.
- Encourages him/her to accept the consequences of his/her actions or behavior.

#### Basic Ground Rules

- We speak quietly inside.
- We walk inside.
- We handle materials gently.
- We wait for our turn.
- We put things back where we got them.
- We line up outside when the teacher claps hands or rings the outside bell.
- We get in line and keep our hands on our own bodies. (No Pushing)
- We say yes or no, please and thank you.
- We stop when the bell rings and listen to the message.
- We roll or fold rugs neatly.
- We are polite to one another.
- We respect others while they are working (no interrupting).
- We ask permission before touching another’s work.
- When we make a mess, we clean up every time.
- We take care of others when we hurt them.

- We tap the teacher’s shoulder one time to get her attention.
- We are polite, respectful, and cooperate with our parents when they visit or when it is time to go home.
- When new rules are needed, they are discussed at community meeting with the whole group.

**Positive Guidance Techniques**

1) Using Positive Statements

Try to state every sentence without using the words “nor or not”. Tell the child what is acceptable to do so they know what is expected. If you tell children only what is unacceptable, they have many alternatives to follow. Many alternatives that are equally as inappropriate as the behavior you are seeking to change. Since many inappropriate behaviors are designed to gain an emotional response or attention, you deny meeting this need when you give attention only to behaviors that are unacceptable.

EXAMPLES:

Say: “Remember to walk inside.”  
 Instead of: “Don’t run inside.”

Say: “Throw the ball to me.”  
 Instead of: “Don’t hit the window”

2) Setting realistic limits, offering alternatives, giving choices

Young children need help in operating within boundaries, which are in line with their abilities. Keep rules simple and to a minimum that reflect only those essentials that you really value. Maintain limits as consistently as you possibly can, realizing that each situation and each child is different. Limits should be clear, simple, and leave maximum latitude for your child to operate as freely as he/she is capable. Children learn to make decisions by (1) following directions where no choice is offered, (2) making a choice between two offered alternatives, (3) choosing among an increasing number of alternatives, (4) selecting appropriate alternatives themselves. Freedom is the ultimate goal, not the point of departure. At each step a child must be able to demonstrate the necessary skill before being allowed additional choices. At any point a child has difficulty making appropriate decisions, alternatives are once again reduced until the child can successfully handle the options. Children who can make choices appropriately should be offered the opportunity to do so, and a choice is only offered to a child when you really intend to leave the choice up to him/her.

EXAMPLES:

Say: “ You must keep your shoes on.”

Instead of: “Well, it's hot today, and even though we usually have a rule about wearing shoes, I guess it'll be ok for you to leave your shoes off – since they are already – but just for today.”

Say: “It I time to go now.”

Instead of: “Are you ready to go?”

Say: “Put the blocks back on the shelf.”

Instead of: “You can either pick up the blocks or you can get a spanking.”

Say: "What are you eating first, your peas or your chicken?"

Instead of: Stop playing with your food."

3) Encourage independence by giving children the MINIMUM help needed in order that the child can perform a task or correct by him/herself.

Adults may help a child focus on the nature of a problem he/she is having without directly interfering and giving the solution before the child has a chance to think about it and work out alternatives for him/herself. Children are allowed little chance of power. Whenever possible, the adult must allow the child to maintain as much control over a situation as is appropriate.

In dealing with specific situations and unique children, the adult must learn what is appropriate in each case; what is appropriate for some children may be totally inappropriate for others. The adult allows the child minimum assistance and allows him/her as much (but only as much) control as the child can comfortably handle.

4) Redirecting

By stating sentences positively and offering alternatives, you can shift attention away from an inappropriate behavior and focus on an acceptable one. The idea is to guide children into behaviors that are acceptable, thereby showing the behaviors they were engaging in as unacceptable without calling direct attention to them. True redirection is challenging a specific behavior that is unacceptable in one situation into the same behavior when it is acceptable in another.

EXAMPLE:

Say: " Throwing sand may hurt someone's eyes. You may throw the ball into the basket."

Instead of: " Don't throw sand. It's not nice."

Redirection is usually used, like giving directions, when the adult does not have time to sit down with the child and use a lengthier technique.

Because the nature of this technique does not include time for clarifying why certain behaviors are inappropriate or for reflection by the child on what he/she was doing, it may not be as effective in all cases as some other techniques. It is a very important tool, however, because it focuses on behavior in a positive way without dwelling on the negative aspects of misbehavior.

5) Active Listening

This technique is a tool to improve two-way communication between child and adult. First determine problem ownership; is the child behavior a problem to the child or to you? If the problem is the child's, you may use active listening. The process involves making "you " statements as the child verbalizes so that you are restating what the child is saying to offer acceptance of the problem and to encourage him/her to keep talking about it in an effort to get him/her to solve it. If the problem is yours and no the child's it is inappropriate to use active listening. You must then use "I" messages for communication. Children behave to satisfy a need in a situation where the child's behavior is a problem to you (but no to the child), you must seek to communicate this to the child and to shift need to the child so that she/he too will want to change the behavior. The use of contingencies is a useful way to shift problem ownership.



Example: Adult: "John can I help you with your problem?"  
 John: "Sally's being mean to me."  
 A: "She has made you feel sad." (these are statements, not questions)  
 J: "She took my book."  
 A: "You were reading that book and didn't want her to take it."  
 J: "No, and she turned my favorite page."  
 A: "You were enjoying that page."  
 J: "She always takes my things."  
 A: "It's all right to be angry when she does that. What can you do to keep her from doing that?"  
 J: "I can tell her I feel bad when she takes my things and I don't want her to do that again."  
 (John has been allowed to express his feelings; the adult has restarted what he has said to support and encourage him. He has come up with an appropriate alternative to try to solve his problem. The adult must go with John or at least watch him to be sure that this alternative works for him.)  
 J: "I feel bad when you take my book and change the page. Give back my book and I don't want you to do that again."

The above statements, which begin with "you", are examples of restarting what the child has said. In some cases with young children, the adult must make some interference. If, in restating, the adult says something the child didn't mean, the opportunity is there for the child to correct the misconception, thereby giving the adult some additional information not known before. In the process of active listening it is important to add nothing really new except these possible inferences. With young children it is often necessary to ask a question to help them continue to talk. It is difficult to restate a simple "yes" or "no" or nodding of the head. The adult must remain accepting and nonjudgmental until the child suggests an alternative that is appropriate; then the adult must reinforce the alternative and see that the child carries out with success.

Adult: "What can you do to keep her from doing that?"  
 John: "I could hit her."  
 A: "When she takes your things, you would like to hurt her."  
 J: "Yes, she makes me so mad."  
 A: "You really get tired of her taking your things."  
 J: "Yes"  
 A: "We have a rule about hitting, John. Can you think of any other way you can keep her from taking your things?"

## 6) Time Out

An excerpt from the book Positive Time Out by Jane Nelson

"Many parents and teachers say ludicrous things such as "Go to your room (or to the corner) and think about what you did." What is ludicrous is the assumption that we can control what a child thinks! A look of awareness appears on adult's faces when I ask, "Do you *really* think you can control what a child thinks? Most adults do not realize that children are constantly making decisions about themselves, about their world, and based on those decisions, about what to do to survive or to thrive.

Negative time out is based on the silly thought that in order to get children to do better, first we have to make them feel worse. Positive time out is based on the understanding that children "do" better when they "feel" better. Check out these premises for yourself. Do you do better when you feel worse, or when you feel better? How can we think negative time out would be effective for children when it wouldn't be effective for us? Negative time out is certainly not effective if it perpetuates a child's discouraging beliefs about herself and her environment. Nor is it effective if those beliefs increase her need for revenge or rebellion in whatever form it takes.

Positive time out can help children learn many important life skills, such as the importance of taking time to calm down until they can think more clearly and act more thoughtfully. When human beings are upset, they function from their reptilian brain (the brain stem) where the *only* options are fight or flight. I joke with people by saying, "When children push your buttons, you react from your reptilian brain, and reptiles eat their young." Adults are often functioning from their reptilian brain when they send children to time out, and resentment will put children in their reptilian brain. Again the vicious cycle of fight or flight. Positive time out allows children (and adults) space to calm down until they are again functioning from their rational brain (the cortex)--so they can problem-solve and learn. Positive time out encourages children to form positive beliefs about themselves, their worlds, and their behavior. In this state of mind, they can learn from their mistakes and/or problem solve on how to make amends for any hurt or damage their behavior might have caused. Children feel empowered and motivated to improve from an inner desire and locus of control and they develop skills that help them improve their behavior."

## 7) Home and School Partnership

Undesirable behaviors must be recognized and valued by both parents and teachers. A problem behavior is something that is preventing the child from reaching full potential. Parents and teachers must assist each other to help the child by communicating and setting compatible goals. The key is to form a cooperative alliance for the good of the child.

### Guidance & Self-Discipline – Conflict Resolution with young Children :

Hitting, biting, pushing, and scratching are elements of toddler behavior that parents often struggle with the most. It is embarrassing for many parents when their young child hurts another. It is important to remember that all of these behaviors are normal in very young children. However, as caregivers it is our responsibility to quickly stop any behavior that might hurt another child. Once both children are safe, we may take the time to carefully consider and choose a response that truly supports both children. We must try to discover and understand the underlying motivation for the misbehavior.

Infants and young toddlers are very interested in cause and effect. Biting or hitting can elicit a loud response from the other child. Sometimes the child who hits is interested in this causal relationship and quite unaware of the pain being experienced by the child he or she has hurt. Giving the child the information that hitting hurts will help him or her begin to empathize. In a situation where the child seems interested in cause and effect, we must be careful about how we involve that child. We want to demonstrate our concern for the injured child with gentle touching and care. However, if we invite the child who was inappropriate to help too much with the care of the injured child, this helping may be seen as another positive effect of hurting. The adult must use discretion in these instances. Often the environment can offer its own solutions. When children are searching for causal relationships to explore, it is important to provide many appropriate opportunities to explore cause and effect.

Very young children may bite because they are teething and looking for anything to grip with their teeth. Again, the child must be told that biting hurts. Involving the child in getting a tissue or ice for his or her hurt friend will in this case help increase empathy. It is also valuable to demonstrate gentle touching and encourage it when the hurt child is receptive. Sometimes the injured child is still too upset to accept this support and nurture. We must always support children in maintaining the physical boundaries they require.

When children are teething it is helpful if they have several options to soothe sore gums, such as cool washcloths, or crunchy teething biscuits.

Some young children are uncertain about how to engage with others. A toddler may hit or push another child in an attempt to greet and interact. Again, caregivers must immediately stop the hurtful behavior and be certain both children are safe. It is then helpful to suggest more appropriate invitations to play. Simply learning to wave hello may be an exciting new idea.

When a toddler is experiencing strong emotions, he or she has minimal language skills and limited impulse control. Any maneuver that might end the conflict will seem like a good idea to the child. It is helpful to remember that even adults have trouble expressing themselves when they are in an emotionally charged situation. Although very young children may hit in anger or frustration, they are not yet exploring concepts of aggression and authority. Three and four year olds are interested in exploring those concepts. One and two year old children are still very egocentric. It is these very experiences of conflict and interaction within the home or school, which begin to lead the child out of egocentricity and into community.

It is our job as teachers and parents to guide children toward more appropriate ways to handle conflict. Giving children the words they need to express themselves is very important. It is something that must be done for them repeatedly as they learn to identify both their feelings and their needs. The more we support them in this struggle for self-expression as children, the more they will be able to handle strong feelings as adults. If we can look at inappropriate behaviors such as hitting, biting and pushing as opportunities to guide young children toward becoming more empathetic human beings, then we can perhaps be more empathetic ourselves.

In this busy, modern world, it is not unusual for children to experience their lives as hurried or stressful. Sometimes children, who are experiencing stress in their lives, will behave inappropriately. When stress appears to be negatively affecting a child, adults must work together to support the child. Reducing stressful activities, creating opportunities for connection, and developing soothing rituals for the child are all helpful responses. Often a child's need for a slower pace can create a more peaceful rhythm for everyone.

As, teacher's we use only positive methods of re-direction and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. We are mandated reporters to the state and follow the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers for guidance on discipline issues.

## 8) A Child Friendly Home

Our homes are designed for adults and most of our furnishings reflect this. One of the reasons children are so joyful in a Montessori environment is that they are able to function so effectively in the child size room. If you feel awkward or ill at ease in their small-scaled environment, it may give you a hint of how they feel in our oversized one.

One way to make your home more comfortable for your child is to include something child centered in every room. A small rocker and a basket of books are a nice quiet addition to more formal living areas in your home. A small table and chair in your dining room or kitchen are nice for meals and simple food preparation. If you don't have room for another table just placing a small stool at a coffee table creates a great space for your child.

Stools are just a great help for the child in general. A sturdy stool in the bathroom makes hand washing an easy thing for the child to do throughout the day. A utility stool in the kitchen makes it easier for the child to assist you in simple food preparation tasks. A toddler who has a few dishes to wash at the sink, or lettuce to tear will be a much more relaxed companion during that often hectic early evening time.

Some other suggestions for the kitchen can make it easier for your child to be successful. Find a low cabinet or shelf to store child sized plates and silverware. Keep child friendly snacks and drinks on low shelves in both the refrigerator and the pantry. A child size pitcher with a lid can be used to store milk or juice. A small thermos works well for this as well. The kitchen is also a great place to store child size cleaning tools. Try to create tools for your child that are similar to the ones you use for cleaning. If you use sponges for cleaning spills, cut one in half for your child. Keep a small broom for him next to your larger one. Children in this young age group still love to participate in cleaning. However, it is important to remember that while you are sweeping to achieve a clean floor, they are sweeping just for the joy of the process. When you invite your child to join you, focus on the process not the product!

Several things can be done to support your child in the bedroom. Wherever your child sleeps as an infant, a low mattress on the floor can be a nice transition before the big single bed or the exciting bunk bed. The low mattress is easy for the child to get in and out of in the morning or at night when he or she needs help. Your child may be more comfortable in the little bed because there is no risk of falling and no space for anything to hide under the bed! A low bureau with easy to open drawers or low open shelving will make it easier for your child to choose clothes and dress independently. Small pictures on the outside of the drawer or the edge of the shelf can help your child locate clothes and make it possible for him or her to put clothing away when it comes back from being laundered. Low shelves are also a nice location for your child's toys. Baskets and small containers can be used to help your child keep toys sorted and stored. Young children are only able to keep things orderly if there are a small number of items that have clearly defined locations.

If it seems difficult for your child to keep things put away, consider reducing the toys available and either storing or donating excess toys. Plus, at this young age it is important to remember that our children have short attention spans. As the adult caregiver it is our responsibility to remind them to put things away as they are finishing not after they have already moved on to something else. If your child has moved on and is engrossed in a new activity, quietly return your child's old activity to its place. The transition time between play activities or between play and other life events is the best time to help your child clean up with you.

Remember these are just suggestions. Some will work for your family and some will not. You may have other ideas to share with this community. Please do. It is through working together that we will create a true community for our children.

### **IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

#### ***State Licensing Rules and Reports***

Parents may review the State of Texas Minimum Standards and the center's recent licensing reports.

Local Licensing Office – 713-940-3009

PRS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline – 1-800-252-5400

PRS website - <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

#### ***The Innovative School***

The Innovative School                      281-558-7323

The Innovative School Fax #              281-558-4304

The Innovative School Website:        [www.theinnovativeschool.com](http://www.theinnovativeschool.com)

Emergency After-Hour Support

### **VISITORS**

Parents and Visitors are always welcome to visit our center during operation hours. For safety reason and to maintain a proper teaching atmosphere, visitors are not allowed to go directly in classrooms. All business should be conducted directly via school office.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Items found in and around the building will be taken to the office and kept for a limited period of time.

### **PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents should plan on attending scheduled conferences. Some of the questions to ask teachers regarding your child during this conference include:

- How is his/her behavior and learning style (how he/she learns best)?
- What are the goals and expectation for this year?
- What are his/her strengths and weakness?
- What areas need more work and improvements?
- Does my child participate in class? Is he/she activity involved in learning?
- How can I help him/her in the area he/she is lacking?

## **VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTICIPATION**

### **Back to School Night**

This event gives parents an opportunity to meet your child's teacher and the administration. Parents are informed about planned events for the school year, and are familiarized with the school policies.

### **Montessori Orientation**

This event is held during the first month of the school year. All parents whose children are enrolled in the transition and early childhood programs are requested to attend this forum. Parents are oriented with the Montessori curriculum with the goals and approaches to this curriculum. Montessori in the home activities and suggestions are also specified at this event. S.T.E.P. is a course designed to help parents relate more effectively to their children and combines Parent Effectiveness Training (P.E.T.) and the Rudolph Dreikers techniques learned in *Children: The Challenge*.

### **Montessori Journey**

The Montessori journey is a night in which families participate first hand in our Montessori programs, enabling families to understand their child's day at school.

### **Parent Meetings / Workshops / Material Making Meetings**

During these informal work sessions, parents will develop a deeper understanding of their child's use of Montessori materials and lessons. This will be hands on activities which will permit parents to make materials for their homes to extend the Montessori learning.

### **Open House**

In this program children are the host of the show. Children invite their parents and give them a tour of the classroom and demonstrating their work.

### **Book Club**

Parents are invited to read a book written by Dr. Maria Montessori. At these monthly meetings the book is discussed and tips given on applying philosophy to everyday life.

### ***How Parents Can Help***

- 1) Help your child come to school unhurried and dressed in clothing that they can manage themselves. Transition parents, please, take a moment to practice the toileting process and remove diapers and/or pull ups upon arrival to school.
- 2) Be on time, both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the day. Your child will feel more secure and the teacher's will appreciate the effort.
- 3) Leave all pacifiers, bottles, sippy cups, and personal toys in the car or at home. This allows the child to begin practicing emotional independence as well as protect personal property from getting lost at school.
- 4) Clearly Label all items brought to school.
- 5) Remember to sign-in/sign-out with the keypad daily.

- 6) Do not send you child if she/he is ill or has had fever ill within the past 24 hours.
- 7) Be informed: Read the Parent’s Handbook, newsletters, snack calendars, and all articles of interest sent home.
- 8) Keep us informed: Always let us know of changes in information such as addresses, phone numbers, etc. And changes of routines at home such as trips, guests/visitors, sleepless nights, etc. These can all affect your child’s day at school.
- 9) Attend parent education opportunities organized by the school. This gives you a great deal of knowledge about what your child experiences at school each day.
- 10) Become an active participant. Regularly attend parent workdays, family socials, parent encounters, conferences, discussion groups and other school events. We have many opportunities for parents to volunteer. Check in the office or with your child’s teacher for ideas of how you can become involved. Be an active part of The Innovative School enriching children’s lives and bringing together families.

### **THE ROLE OF THE PARENT AND THE SCHOOL**

Parent, teacher, child, and school relationships are very important in a student's life. An alliance based on mutual respect and support will enhance all individuals' understanding, knowledge, and insight and offer a cohesive, prepared learning environment.

#### ***How to Give Support to Your School***

- Be involved, volunteer
- Be informed, attend all conferences & meetings
- Be knowledgeable, attend Parent Education meetings
- Contribute your knowledge

Involved parents support their Montessori school by contributing their time and talents. Each school offers different programs and projects for parents to volunteer their time, energy, and resources. Informed parents communicate with their school by attending planned conferences and other parent activities, reading newsletters and e-mails, and asking questions. Ask the school's administrator or your child's teacher for the best time and method to communicate informally — to share insights, questions, and observations.

Knowledgeable parents select a school by seeking an optimal match between their child's needs; their expectations; and the school's philosophy, program, and services. Parents support the school's policies and procedures and attend Parent Education Meetings, as well as read articles and books about Montessori education.

And, most importantly, feel welcome in your school community. Montessori is a philosophy of life not merely an academic educational methodology. Montessori schools not only enroll children they enroll families.

## **PARENTS AND THE AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY**

### ***Public policy/advocacy***

Dr. Maria Montessori viewed the child as a member of a family, not as an isolated individual, and one whose most formative life experiences take place within the family. She recognized parents as a child's first and most influential teachers.

### ***As A Parent You Are A Role Model And Teacher***

- Know your child well
- Be a patient observer and careful listener
- Place your confidence in your child
- Provide simple, safe and consistent rules encouraging your child to take responsibility and to contribute to his or her home and family.

### ***As A Parent You Prepare Your Child's Home***

- Provide safety (physical & emotional)
- Provide organization, consistency, a reliable routine
- Prepare areas that are child sized — a place of her/his own
- Provide your child age-appropriate responsibilities in you home
- Provide "real life" experiences
- Provide age-appropriate choices and opportunities to make positive decisions

### ***As A Parent You Set The Limits***

- Offer protection from objects and ideas that can hurt
- Always encourage your child to be capable and confident
- Limit toys and games to a workable number (rotate toys)
- Monitor television and other forms of media (inappropriate exposure can negatively affect social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth)
- Develop consistent routines which encourage your child to develop self-control (self-control, responsible behavior and freedom are outcomes, not starting points)
- As a parent you support and encourage your child
- Offer great possibilities for exploration in the home environment
- Encourage children to do for themselves ("Let me do it myself!")
- Encourage your child to be an active agent of his/her own education



## **TRANSITION CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS**

Written by Michelle Battistone, 2013

Dr. Maria Montessori talks about the importance of the first 6 years of life. She refers to this time as The Absorbent Mind. Children minds are like sponges, absorbing everything from the environments they are part of. In the Transition Curriculum we are focusing on the first part of the Absorbent Mind, which she defined as the "Unconscious Absorbent Mind". Within this important stage of development there are specific sensitive periods which she observed. These sensitive periods are Movement, Language and Order. Everything in the curriculum supports these sensitive periods and the appropriate development of the child.

The Transition environment supports a toddlers need for exploration. Each material on the shelves are designed to be multi-sensory experiences and able to be used in many different ways, depending on the child's development. The classroom is designed with not only the group of children, but the individual child's needs and interests.

Supporting developmentally appropriate practices, the environment is set up for child directed interaction with the materials. The teacher is a guide, with observation as the number one goal. As observations are made, the appropriate materials can be created and placed to allow toddlers to explore. Through carefully planned routines and consistency each child becomes independent in the care of self, the environment, and the community. We are setting a foundation with the toddlers which becomes a part of their soul and sets the precedence for their future successes.

### ***Movement***

There are two areas in the development of movement. Both are equally important for the child. Fine motor looks at the development of the hand. Gross motor is the development of the body as a whole. Everything from eating, to toileting, to dressing requires either fine or gross motor to be accomplished.

### ***Fine Motor***

Dressing - Being able to dress oneself takes a lot of fine motor control and eye-hand coordination. The tiniest activity from pulling up pants, pushing down pants, pulling velcro, pushing off shoes, pulling a shirt over your head, all takes practice and development.

Eating - Eating with a fork or spoon, serving snack with tongs or a spoon and even pouring a small pitcher takes development of the hand muscles. As they master these important skills independence is achieved.

Toileting - The natural toileting process is actually a result of muscle control. Being able to hold urine, and successfully use the toilet are important in the development. At The Innovative School we use only cloth underwear so children have the opportunity to develop this control within the appropriate developmental periods.

Imbucare - Imbucare is the Italian word for "put in". On the shelves this begins with putting objects into something large and circular. It moves to fitting shapes or puzzles into holes, and even being able to put buttons into a small slit. Toddlers love these activities and it takes concentration and skill to be able to be successful.

Infilare - Infilare is the Italian term for "threading". Putting rings on stationary posts, to threading with large beads, and beginning to thread smaller objects with shoe strings. These activities prepare the hand for drawing, writing, and eye-hand coordination.

#### *Works which support Fine Motor Development*

Puzzles

Shape sorters

Insert works

Self serve snack

Toileting and dressing

Threading works

#### *Gross Motor*

Gross motor development has anything to do with the entire body. Activities such as steps, a balance beam, a rocking horse, sit-n-spin, climbing the ladders outside, the rock wall, sliding, swinging, riding a bike, even learning to walk, run, and jump with stability all support this important development! Toddlers have a need to move, to throw, to push, to pull, to display maximum effort. The transition environment supports this need and gives safe and appropriate activities for the children to engage in.

#### ***Language***

Toddlers are in a sensitive period for language! They are learning all about speech and communication. The adults in the environment are reading, singing, and modeling the appropriate use of language throughout the day. Each material or interaction supports language learning and exploration as the child is becoming more social and independent.

Receptive - the first part of language is a child being able to hear, and receive language. A child may not be able to speak, but when you call their name and they respond, this is the first part of understanding verbal communication.

Expressive - After receptive language has been established, the child will begin repeating words, asking what something is, and wanting to speak back. As their vocabulary builds they are better able to let you know what they want, need, or are interested in.

Comprehension - Comprehension and understanding of language is an important step. Being able to follow directions, or understand what is being spoken is absolutely key to complete communication.

Sign Language - The use of sign language is important in our environments. This give children who are not verbal yet a tool to communicate needs. When we give them something to do with their hands it makes connections in the brain concrete. It also gives them an appropriate way to share messages without the impulse of pushing, hitting, or biting.

Multiple Languages - As children are in the sensitive period for language, it is absolutely acceptable and prudent to expose them to as many languages as possible. Receptively they will begin understanding at this age and become truly multi-lingual. It may take longer for the expressive language to be present, but with the use of sign language children can communicate clearly.

### *Works which support Language Development*

In the environment works which support language would include:

Naming objects

Reading books

Matching objects

Matching objects to pictures

Matching pictures to pictures

### ***Order***

Children thrive on order and consistency. They learn routines quickly, and the more consistent these routines are the more normalized children become in the environment. Order is also essential for the beginning of mathematic concepts and learning about rules, culture and society. The adults in the environment take care to be consistent in the presentation of routines, following through on completing processes, and displaying loving, firm, and kind expectations which may have a life-long impact.

### *Routines in the Environment*

Washing hands

Wiping noses

Dressing Routine

Saying Good-bye, and return of parent

Completing a cycle of work (getting a rug, completing a work, restoring the work, putting back rug)

Serving snack and lunch

Circle time

Setting safe limits in the classroom

Waiting and listening for our name

### *Works that support order*

One-to one correspondence

Stacking

Sorting

## **THE EARLY CHILDHOOD MONTESSORI CURRICULUM LEARNING AREAS**

**Written By Kathryn Miller, 2011 - 2012**

### ***PRACTICAL LIFE***

The lessons in the Practical Life area are designed to lead children to mastery of their environment promoting order, concentration, coordination of movements, and fine and gross motor skills. Children gain independence, self confidence and self control as they learn to function in their surroundings without unnecessary aid. Active participation in the everyday life activities in the child's life facilitates the development of self confidence, self reliance, and self discipline, which will lead to building the child's positive self image and self esteem.

There are four classifications of the Practical Life activities, which are mastery of care of the person, care of environment, control of movement, grace and courtesy. The activities are divided into three levels.

The **first level** contains the following activities:

These are Elementary Movement exercises, which help the child to function in their environment by gaining an understanding of classroom logistics and procedures, develop the skills needed for independence in the classroom, and develop grace and courtesy.

Rug Procedure - A rug clearly defines the student's workspace. Each rug or mat has a specific method of use and restoration to create consistency and independence.

Chair/Table Procedure - The table defines the student's workspace. Each table or chair has a specific method of use and restoration to create consistency and independence.

Apron and Coat Procedure - Facilitates the child's independence.

Folding Procedures - These create the order for exercises all over the classroom, as well as in the child's personal life.

Cleaning and restoration procedures - These procedures create thoroughness and consistency, which enhances classroom management, and carries over to the child's personal life.

Open and Close - Child practices and opening and closing containers familiar to them, as well as ones used in the environment, to help them be successful in activities all over the classroom and in their personal lives.

These activities are considered **Preliminary Exercises** for the purpose of providing and refining the skills the child will need to be successful in activities all over the classroom and in their personal lives.

Velcro, Snap and Button Frame- Wooden and fabric frames designed to teach the skills needed in dressing oneself.

Dry Transfer - Transferring dry materials (Beans, etc) to increase control, cross the midline left to right, as in writing and reading and to establish dominant hand.

Wet transfer - Transferring water to master the use of a sponge.

Spooning - Transferring dry materials using a spoon to refine skills and develop three-finger grasp for handwriting.

Bead stringing - Getting beads onto a string using three-finger grasp.

Dry Pouring - Pouring beans, etc. for the purpose of developing the ability to stop & pour 'just enough.'

Wet Pouring - Pouring water for the purpose of developing the ability to stop & pour 'just enough.'

Cutting - Introduction to the use of scissors for safety and accuracy.

The **second level** contains the following activities:

These activities are considered intermediate activities for the purpose of bridging the child to the most advanced work.

Advanced Pouring - Pouring dry materials & water for the purpose of perfecting their skills.

Advanced Spooning and Tongs - Transferring dry materials using spoons and tongs to tweezers, to perfect their skills.

Basting and Pipetting - Transferring water using basters and pipettes to perfect their skills.

Open and Close with Object - Child practices opening and closing containers with objects inside to develop and perfect layouts.

Bubble Making - Making bubbles in a large bowl using the earlier skills, combined with new abilities of logical order, sequenced steps and more involved restoration.

Needle Threading and Knot Tying - Refined three-finger grasp to thread a needle for sewing and tying a slipknot for sewing fabric.

Zipping, Buckling, and Tying Frames - More challenging dressing skills.

Table Setting - Practical skill which will be used in class and at home.

The **third level** contains the following activities:

These activities are considered advanced activities for the purpose of mastering the four goals in Practical Life, which are *care of the person, care of the environment, control of movement, grace and courtesy*.

Large Water Activities -

These incorporate fine and gross motor skills, logical sequencing, ability to stay with work, and clean up/restoration skills, which all illustrate child's ability to complete a work cycle and their awareness of care of the environment.

- Object washing, Hand washing, Doll washing, Table scrubbing, Dish washing, Clothes washing.

## Multi-skilled Exercises

Sewing - Sewing activities, which brings the child to independence in their skills of sewing for creation, as well as repair.

Food Preparation - Food preparation techniques to aid in the child's independence, self care, care of others and grace and courtesy.

Plant Care and Flower Arranging - Activities to enhance the awareness of the needs and care of the living things and how one can use nature to beautify the environment.

Polishing - Sequence of activities for cleaning and buffering different types of materials, for the purpose of care of the environment. These activities increase the child's ability to stay with longer piece of work longer, maintain organization, order and concentration, as well as promotes logical sequencing, much the same as the more abstract form of skills needed in writing a thesis.

### **SENSORIAL**

The Montessori Sensorial materials are composed of concrete bits of information, which can be organized into meaningful patterns. The didactic Sensorial materials give the child hands-on experiences with basic Piagetian concepts: one to one correspondence, seriation, and classification. These are key concepts needed for abstract thinking. The young child uses the material in a variety of imitative exploratory modes without really understanding the concept and only replication the classical presentation. (First Level)

Later the child will explore the many ways the material can be organized, generating new patterns and beginning conceptual understanding and it is represented by the initiation and pattern completion mode. (Second Level)

In the next step toward conceptualization, the child begins to organize two or more materials (concepts) into one meaningful pattern that it will extend the concepts into the environment. At this level more than one variable is changing, and the child stays focused on a specific variable without becoming distracted. Also at this level the child makes a full use of the Sensorial materials including parallel environment tasks. (Third Level)

Montessori teachers are trained to understand the stages for which the child passes through as he/she moves toward conceptualization. The language used with the Sensorial material presentations is precise and accurate. Language, e.g. large, thin, or red, can help "to anchor" the concepts in the child's mind and emphasizes the main component of a lesson.

### **First Level**

This is a level of exploration and imitation that follows the initial classical presentation. The ability to imitate and replicate is a crucial skill, and a catalyst to an awareness of the possibilities inherent in the activity, by giving the child a strategy with which to begin. Through imitation and little experimentation, the child will unconsciously begin to assume late the concept. Imitation does not imply understanding: imitation precedes understanding. Much of what adults do in life has been learned on the imitation level, and it entails little or no conceptual understanding. For example, we cook with no understanding of chemical reactions actions.

The **first level** contains the following activities:

#### *Knobbed Cylinders*

Purpose: This is a discrimination of dimension, one to one correspondence, seriation, three-finger grasp and counting to ten activity.

Language: Cylinder, big, little, diameter, height.

Materials: Four blocks of natural wood. Each contains a series of 10 removable cylinders with knobs and each has a respective hold to fit in. They vary in height and diameter.

#### *Pink Tower*

Purpose: This is a discrimination of dimension, seriation, counting to 10, visual perception of size, and eye-hand coordination activity.

Language: Cube, large, small

Material: Ten wooden pink cubes progressively in an algebraic series starting from the smallest 1cm<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Brown Stairs*

Purpose: This is a discrimination of dimension, seriation, counting to 10, reinforce layout top to bottom, left to right activity.

Language: Rectangular prisms, thin, thick, stairs, broad, narrow.

Material: Ten wooden brown rectangular prisms with same length 20 cm. but vary in width and height and depth.

#### *Color Box 1*

Purpose: Tablets with primary colors for visual discrimination of colors.

Language: Naming colors, matching, reinforce of layout activity.

#### *Rough and Smooth Boards*

Purpose: Grading from rough to smooth strips for the development and enhancement of tactile discrimination

Language: Rough - smooth

Material: Wooden boards divided with sandpaper squares and strips, alternating rough and smooth surfaces.

#### *Mystery Bag*

Purpose: The child tactically explores the objects in the bag and learns to mentally visualize what he/she is feeling

Material: A cloth drawstring bag with a variety of surprising things inside.

#### *Geometric Cabinet*

Introduction Tray with geometric shapes contains circle, square and triangle wooden frames, with insets and knobs.

Purpose: Discrimination of geometric forms; development of visual, kinesthetic and tactile sense; and to learn their names.

The introductory lesson is followed by the first drawer of the geometric cabinet, containing 6 wooden circle-frames, with 6 circle-insets with knobs for grasping with three-finger grasp. The circles decrease in diameter from 10 to 5cm.

### *Monomial Cube*

Purpose: To increase perception of sight, to build the relationship of parts to the whole, to build a cube from seven wooden prisms.

Material: Seven wooden prisms with a barric and tactile quality, they are color coded, attractive and they are inviting to handle.

### *Thermic Tablets*

Purpose: Awareness of the thermic quality of objects.

Material: Box with compartments and tablets that contains thermic qualities

Language: Cold, warm, cool

### **Second Level**

The **second level** contains the following activities:

#### *Knobbed Cylinders*

Purpose: At this level is exploring variations by using 2 or more blocks together.

Language: Comparatives and superlatives

#### *Pink Tower*

Purpose: At this level the child is exploring variations and building possibilities following the isolated concept of discrimination of dimensions large and small.

Language: Comparatives and superlatives

#### *Brown Stairs*

Purpose: At this level the child is exploring building variations by following the isolated concept of discrimination of dimension, thickness and thinness.

Language: Comparatives and superlatives

#### *Knobbles Cylinders*

Purpose: Discrimination of dimension, seriation, counting to 10 activity. The child will be introduced with one box at a time.

Materials: The knobbles cylinders are composed of four colored boxes; each contains colored cylinders varying in height and diameter.

Yellow Box: contains a series of ten red wooden cylinders that vary in diameter (opposite to yellow box) and height.

Green Box: contains a series of ten red wooden cylinders that vary only in diameter (opposite to yellow box) and height.

Blue Box: contains a series of ten blue wooden cylinders that vary in height.

#### *Red Rods*

Purpose: The red rods help the child to perceive length, the child can visually and with his/her whole body, experience the discrimination of length and dimension.

Material: Ten rods (red in colors) different in length. Each differs from the next by 10 cm. The longest is 1 meter.

#### *Geometric Solids*

Purpose: At this level the child is able to learn more names of solids and explores combinations.



### *Color box 2*

Purpose: The child learns more names and explores finding colors around the environment.

Material: This box has primary and secondary colors + gray.

### *Rough and Smooth Boards*

Purpose: The child continues to refine the tactile sense, but this time the material requires longer layout and longer steps.

Material: A set of 5 sandpaper tablets with 5 matching tablets of different degrees of roughness.

### *Geometric Cabinet*

Purpose: Introduction to the rectangular and triangular drawers (each with 6 shapes that decrease in size). The child will learn their names and is introduced to a set of cards with different outlines of the shapes for the child to map the wooden insets.

### *Sound Cylinders*

Purpose: The purpose is the training of the auditory sense by matching the sounds.

Material: One box with 6 identical cylinders red top, one box with 6 identical cylinders blue top. When the cylinders are shaken they produce 6 different levels of sound from soft to loud.

### *Binomial Cube*

Purpose: Its purpose is to increase perception of sight and build the relationship of parts to the whole and how to build a cube.

Material: Made of eight wooden prisms with barric and tactile quality. Color coded to construct relationships on how to build the cube. It is attractive and is inviting to handle.

### *Thermic Bottles*

Purpose: Awareness of the thermic sense and the language describing each temperature.

Material: Tray with 8 metal bottles for matching.

### ***Third Level***

The **third level** contains the following activities:

#### *Color Box 3*

Purpose: For the child to discriminate and grade colors.

Language: Name of colors, shades and using comparative and superlative

Materials: Box with 9 compartments with 7 tablets of each color in different grades from dark to light

#### *Trinomial Cube*

Purpose: Discrimination of shape in three dimensions, perception of the sides of the prisms and the relationship of parts to whole and more complex mapping.

Materials: 27 prisms, painted in various colors and arranged in 3 layers to form a cube.

Constructive Triangles

#### *Triangular Box*

Purpose: To show that equilateral triangles are formed by other triangles; preparation for geometry.

Materials: Triangular box containing colored equilateral, right, obtuse, and isosceles triangles.

### *Large Hexagonal Box*

Purpose: To show that polygons are formed by other triangles and quadrilaterals; preparation for geometry.

Language: Triangles, rhombus, trapezoid, hexagon

Materials: Small hexagonal box containing colored congruent equilateral triangles, right triangles, scalene, obtuse and isosceles triangles

### *Blue Triangles Box Containing Blue Equilateral Triangles, Right Triangles, Blue Scalene And Blue Obtuse - Angled Isosceles Triangles.*

Purpose: To explore ways of putting the triangles together without color coding

Language: Rhombus, trapezoid, hexagon

Materials: Box containing blue equilateral triangles, blue right-angles scalene triangles, blue scalene and blue obtuse-angled isosceles triangles.

### *Geometric Cabinet*

Purpose: Introduction to the polygons and quadrilaterals drawers (each with 6 frames and inset, shapes that decrease in size). The child will learn their names and is introduced to cards to map the shapes.

Language: Name of all shapes, using comparative and superlative.

Sound Cylinders

Purpose: Training of the auditory sense by grading the cylinders from loud to soft.

### *Geometric Solids*

Purpose: At this level the child is able to learn all the names of solids and is more aware of similarities and differences of forms; using wooden bases and labeling; lesson with planes and curves; preparation for geometry.

### *Bells*

Purpose: The bells set up like the keys of the piano from C to C. Learn to play scale and simple song.

Silence Game

Purpose: To create the means where the child has an opportunity to become aware of the sounds outside him/herself by making a conscious control of every movement.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

Language arts lessons are divided into 3 groups.

1) Concrete lessons aim to master the basic skills necessary for later reading. They are divided in categories:

Awareness and use of spoken language, vocabulary and expressive language-naming objects and their attributes, using complete sentences, asking for help, Show & Tell

Listening activities - stories, group lessons, cultural exchanges

- Visual discrimination of forms, shapes and symbol awareness- looking for similarities and differences in pictures, figure ground (parts to whole)

- Awareness of visual and auditory discrimination and sequence, bead stringing, patterning, sequencing story cards, phonetic object box (isolation of beginning sounds - no symbol)
- Isolation of sounds - phonetic object box (isolation of beginning sounds - no symbol), sandpaper letters, sorting objects & pictures by beginning sound, word building

## 2) Reading and writing skills

These exercises are designed to strengthen and enrich the children's vocabulary, grapheme awareness (actual letters and letters as a part of a word) and phonemic awareness (ability to examine language independent of meaning, hear the sounds that make up the words, identify the sounds that make up the words, see relationships between sounds and manipulate component sounds - alter and rearrange sounds to create new words). They lead the child through phonics toward reading and comprehension of printed material and expressing thoughts and ideas through writing.

## 3) Handwriting

Developmentally appropriate fine motor lessons and activities designed to promote mechanical writing skills.

It is important to keep in mind that the student moves on to new lessons as he/she masters skills. Therefore, some students move from one piece of work to the next level quickly, while others require more practice to gain mastery. It should also be noted that students may not have to do all the activities in a particular area to gain mastery of the skills being learned in that area. It is the teacher's job to see that each child is challenged and also feels successful.

### ***First Level***

First year students work in the language area begins with organization, visual discrimination and vocabulary development. The goal is working left to right (the way we read).

*Auditory* - this includes stories, songs, finger plays, and nursery rhymes. This activity is usually a full group, circle, or line time activity.

*Object Baskets* - child learns the names of fruits, vegetables, etc.

*Matching* - student matches identical objects like animals, shapes, things, associated with holidays such as ghost, witch, jack-o-lantern at Halloween, turkey, cornucopia, name the objects, he/she moves on to matching objects to pictures (less concrete) and then to matching pictures.

*Visual Discrimination* - includes figure ground activities (relationship of part to whole).

*Categorizing* - students begin to refine visual discrimination by finding similarities and differences in objects and pictures. First with same/not same - a set of cards with 4 pictures, 3 or which are the same. Using a complete sentence student tells why 4th picture is not the same. Next the student analyzes objects according to descriptors - hot/cold, up/down, in/out, full/empty, on/off, front/back are identified and again using full sentences child "reads" his/her work, "The ice is cold. The fire is hot."

*Handwriting* - Child works on 3-finger grasp using practical life and sensorial materials, name tracing.

*Creative Writing* - Student begins to "write" on artwork, naming objects using his own symbols for words.

## ***Second Level***

Students continue working on visual discrimination and begin working on patterns, sequencing, and auditory discrimination of sounds that make up words.

*Bead Stringing* - student strings beads on a cord according to the pattern card beginning with 2 part patterns working up to 4 and 5 part patterns.

*Patterning* - student places objects or pictures on a mat in sequence of pattern card beginning with 2 part 1 row pattern and going up to 4 parts 3 row pattern. (This is training the eye to read left to right)

*Pattern Completion* - student finds part to make up a whole picture.

Phonetic object box - student first identifies beginning sounds of objects, no symbol, "the first sound in bat is b." As the student masters beginning sound, he/she works on identifying ending sound, still no symbol.

*Sandpaper Letters* - student traces letters and says sound. Student now sorts objects and pictures by beginning sound, ending sound and the last step being word building using the sounds he/she has mastered. This work is grouped into sets and displayed by color coded containers.

*Handwriting* - as the student is introduced to sounds he begins working on writing those sounds using rainbow letters sequence. The student will also be introduced to metal insets.

*Creative Writing* - student uses letters or letter combinations to label art, or "write" a note to mom or dad. This is the beginning of inventive spelling. Sometimes a word is just one letter.

## ***Third Level***

Students continue acquiring letter sounds, perfecting handwriting skills and begin word building. Students are blending words and beginning to read.

*Word Building* - using the movable alphabet and objects or pictures students build words beginning with, 4, and 5 letter words.

Phonetic drawers - students match objects or pictures to printed words, printed words to objects or pictures and then progress to matching phrases and sentences.

Phonetic booklets - students read 3 letter words.

Readers - students work through short vowel readers. At this time the student is introduced to sight words like the, a, and are.

\*\*\*When the student can consistently read short vowel books, he/she will be introduced to phonograms (long vowels).

*Phonograms* - students work through phonograms much the same as letter sound work: dictation, spelling with objects, spelling with pictures, matching words to objects or pictures, and booklets with single word per page. Then the student reads long vowel readers.

Handwriting - student continues to perfect handwriting by using handwriting sequence: rainbow letters, tracing with pencil, then writing free style. He/she is also still very active in using metal inserts to perfect pencil control.

Creative Writing - student is introduced in a very concrete way to the idea of noun, verb, etc. Students individually or in small groups label objects and are introduced to the symbol for the type of word.

SRA's - students read a story and answer questions about what he/she has read. This is beginning reading comprehension and reading to get information.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Maria Montessori observed that the child has a natural mathematical tendency toward precision, classification and measuring, and that learning, is an active process that entails the child's direct manipulation of the prepared environment.

The classroom prepared environment encourages and nurtures the child's natural desire to engage in activities developing skills and attaining concepts. Skills are those specific abilities which can be taught and which the child can improve with practice. Concepts, on the other hand, are attained; they cannot be taught directly and are building on prior experience, by adding bits of understanding to the child's conceptual foundation.

The child's conceptual attainment can be compared to a weak flame; it wavers, often goes out, and needs to be rekindled again and again until finally it glows strong and clear. The mathematical concepts the child builds in the 3 to 6 classroom environment, form the groundwork for future mathematical achievements.

Number and mathematical concepts and relationships are constructions of the mind and they cannot be transmitted verbally or taught directly to the child, they require the coordination of mental and physical activity and action with objects. The development of logical mathematical reasoning unfolds from a concrete reality to abstraction, which the child derives from the action on things. The child's progress of counting, numbers and mathematical concepts vary according to their individual ability and developmental level. The child is introduced to new lessons when the previous activity has been mastered.

*The Lessons in Math are divided in 5 Groups and in Three Levels of Mastery*

1) One to One Correspondence

2) Numeration

- Concept of Quantities
- Recognition of Numerals
- Matching Quantities to Symbols
- Presentations 0 to 10

3) Operation

Using concrete lessons, Golden Beads and other materials children learn to compose large quantities with correspondent numerals and to gain an understanding of the Decimal System and the basic operations.

#### 4) Linear Counting

Concrete lessons designed to learn to count to 1000, learn to skip counting.

#### 5) Facts

Using concrete materials children learn and later memorize addition and subtraction and multiplication facts.

### ***First Level***

#### One to One Correspondence

Purpose: As children learn to count, they must, at the same time, learn not only the concept associated with each number but the permanency of the number as well. Learning to count is important, but simple counting will not help the child learn number concepts. They must also understand what the number they said stands for. For example they learn that 4 forks are the same quantity as 4 spoons. The words "four" always means the same quantity and it's permanent in its meaning no matter what object is being talked about. The young child learns this notion of numbers through lessons on one to one correspondence that are divided by levels of difficulty.

Matching Objects to Objects, 1 to 5 and 1 to 10

Matching Objects to Quantity Picture Cards, 1 to 5 and 1 to 10

Matching Quantity Picture Cards to Quantity Picture Cards, 1 to 5 and 1 to 10

#### Numeration

##### *Concept of Quantity*

Purpose: Teaching quantities; practice counting; association of name with quantity; number is made up of other numbers.

##### *Lessons*

###### Red and Blue Number Rods

Materials: Set of wooden rods painted in red and blue segments according to quantities from 1 to 10. This is a rug work.

###### Red and Blue Number Rods Table Tops

Materials: Set of wooden rods painted in red and blue segments according to quantities from 1 to 10 designed to work on a table.

###### Colored Beads Stairs

Materials: a set of colored beads 1 to 10. Each bead has a determined quantity. 1 is one red bead; 2 are two connected green beads; 3 are three connected salmon beads; 4 are four connected yellow beads; 5 are five connected light blue beads; 6 are six connected purple beads; 7 are seven connected white beads; 8 are eight brown beads; 9 are nine connected dark blue beads.

## ***Second Level***

### *Recognition of Numeral*

Purpose: to teach the symbol of numbers; kinesthetic and tactile experience to learn numbers; prepare the hand for number writing; to train eyes for number recognition.

#### *Lessons*

##### Sandpaper Numerals

Materials: Set of sandpaper numerals from 0 to 9

##### Painted numerals

Materials: Set of wooden tablets with painted numerals from 1 to 10

##### Sorting Numerals

Materials: Variety of numerals from 0 to 10 for the child to sort.

##### Matching quantities to Symbols (numbers)

Purpose: Teaching quantities and numbers together; spoken number can be represented in 2 ways, by quantity and by number or symbol.

##### Red and Blue Number Rods and Painted Numbers

##### Red and Blue Number Rods Table Tops and Numbers

##### Colored Beads Stairs and Numbers

### *0 to 10 Presentations*

Purpose: Introduction to "0"; 0 in a sequence of numbers; association of quantity to symbol; introduction of sets; introduction of odd and even; laying out numbers in a sequence with preciseness; remembering numbers and activities.

#### Lessons:

##### Spindle Box

Materials: Wooden box with compartment labeled from 0 to 9

##### Cards and Counters

Materials: Box with wooden number tablets from 1 to 10 and 55 plastic counters

##### Memory Game

Materials: Small folded cards with numbers written on them, a container with objects and a small basket or container.

## ***Second Level***

### Operation

#### *Golden Beads Introduction*

The golden bead material, it is used for many different exercises in mathematics, was originated by Dr. Montessori, who chose gold for its mellow and pleasing color. It seems always to be a favorite among children. The beads are easy to handle and they present the various concepts clearly. The child's interest in numbers is easily stimulated.

Lessons:

Introductory Tray

Materials: Tray containing 1 unit bead, 1 bar of ten beads, 1 square of 100 beads and 1 cube of 1000 beads.

Purpose: Using concrete golden glass beads the child learns the names of learns to identify the categories of the decimal system; thousand, hundred, ten, unit and the quantities, composition.

Visually and sensorially the child perceives the concept of size of the beads, that represent specific quantities, and the relationship that each quantity, is made up of ten of the previous quantity. Also the child gets the weight perception (baric quality) by actually feeling the difference between one, ten, hundred, and thousand.

Mystery Bag

Materials: Cloth drawstring bad with golden glass beads.

Purpose: The child finds quantities in the bag to reinforce the names units, tens, hundreds and thousands.

#### Golden Beads Quantity Presentation

Bank Game.

Material: Bank shelf with a large number of all the categories of golden beads.

Purpose: For the child to learn to compose quantities with the golden beads; to give relative size of different quantities and to gain an understanding of the Decimal System. The progress is according to the child's individual ability and developmental level, new lessons with more steps are introduced to the child when the previous lesson has been mastered.

Symbols or Numbers of the Decimal System Presentation

Boxes with Numerals

Materials: Color coded numbers of the decimal system from 1 unit to 9999 thousand

Purpose: to learn the numbers from 1 to 9999 of the decimal system; to building quantities with all the categories of the decimal system using boxes with color-coded numerals.



### Association of Golden Beads Quantities and Numbers of the Decimal System

Nine's Tray Materials: Tray containing 9 units, 9 tens, 9 hundreds and 1 thousand and 1 set of unites number cards, ten number cards, hundreds of number cards and one thousands number card of the decimal system.

Purpose: Using concrete lessons, golden beads and other materials, the child composes large quantities with golden beads and correspondent numerals to gain more understanding of the Decimal System. The child learns that every category changes after 9 and is able to build large quantities knowing only 1 and 9 and 0. These lessons prepare the child for later work with golden beads and decimal system.

Linear Counting

Teen Board

Materials: 1 set of color bead stair 1 to 9; 9 golden bead ten bars; Sequin Boards (2 boards with the number ten printed on each section and 1 to 9 wooden numbers.)

Purpose: Recognition of the numbers from 11 to 19 quantities and symbols; association of numbers from 11 to 19 to the quantity; sequence quantities and numbers.

### **Third Level**

#### Association of Golden Beads with Numbers of the Decimal System

45 Beads Layout

Materials: 45 units, 45 tens, 45 hundreds, 45 thousands and one complete set of numeral cards of the decimal system.

Purpose: Learn to put all numbers and quantities in a sequence; review and learn all categories of the decimal system; associate quantities with numbers of the decimal system; prepare the child for later work with golden beads and the decimal system.

#### Rearranging Categories of the Decimal System

Exchange Game

Purpose: The child learns to rearrange the categories of the decimal system according to the law of the decimal system.

#### Operations

Static Addition with Golden Beads

Purpose: Using golden beads the child composes 4 digit quantities with corresponding numerals and adds them together learning the concept of addition. Learn the language plus, equal, addend, sum.

Dynamic Addition with Golden Beads

Purpose: Show the concept of addition by rearranging the categories of the according to the law of the decimal system. Concrete preparation for carrying the number; learn the language plus, equal, addend sum.

Static Subtraction with Golden Beads

Purpose: Show the concept of subtraction using golden beads. Learn the language minus, equal, and take away, subtraction.

### Dynamic Subtraction with Golden Beads

Purpose: Show that categories of higher order can be composed into a category of lower order. Learn the language minus, equal, take away, subtraction, minuend, subtrahend, difference.

### Multiplication with Golden Beads

Purpose: Show the function of multiplications. Quantities can be added by equal amounts.

### Division 1 digit with Golden Beads

Purpose: Show the function of division. Quantities can be divided into equal amounts.

### Linear Counting

#### Tens Board

Materials: Box with golden tens and units. Unit holder, wooden tens board

Purpose: Associate numbers to quantities following a sequence; recognitions of numbers from 1 to 100; learn the language of the passage from one category to the next e.g. 29 to 30; recognition of number patterns.

#### 100 Square Chain

Materials: 100 bead chain; box arrows; 1 hundred square

Purpose: Learn to count to 100 in a linear form

#### 100 Board

Materials: wooden board with 100 squares printed on (ten across and ten down) chips with numbers 1 to 100; control chart.

Purpose: Practice and sequence numbers 1 to 100; recognition of number patterns

#### 1000 Chain

Materials: 1000 beads chain; arrow numbers; ten 100 squares; 1 thousand cube

Purpose: Practice and sequence numbers 1 to 100; recognition of number patterns

Purpose: Recognition of number patterns. Recognition of numbers from 1 to 1000 in quantities and symbol and in a sequence.

#### Square Chains

Materials: Square chain 5; square of 5; box with arrows (counting by 5's) materials follow same order for the rest of the chains 9,8,7,6,4,3,2,1's.

Purpose: Practice counting in a linear form; learn to skip count; recognition of number patterns; indirect preparation for multiplication.

#### Cube Chains

Materials: Cube chain of 5; cube of 5; squares of 5; box with arrows (counting by 5's) cube chain of 9; cube of 9; squares of 9; box with arrows (counting by 9's) material follows same order for the rest of the cubes 8,7,6,4,3,2,1.

Purpose: Practice counting in a linear form; learn to skip count; recognition of number patterns; indirect preparation for multiplication.

### Addition Facts Materials

Purpose: Using concrete materials children learn and later memorize addition facts; learn vocabulary addend, sum; add with vertical and horizontal equations; find components of a number; experience with commutative law.

Addition Facts to 10 with Objects

Addition Facts to 10 with Red and Blue Rods

Addition Facts to 10 with String Beads

Addition Facts and Exchange with Snake Game (made with colored glass beads)

Addition Facts to 10 with Colored Bead Stairs

Addition Ways of Making Numbers with Stripboard

Addition Facts to 18 with Colored Bead Stairs

### Subtraction Facts Materials

Purpose: Using concrete materials children learn and alter memorize subtraction facts. Learn the vocabulary minuend, subtrahend and difference. Subtract with vertical and horizontal equations. Decompose a number.

Subtraction Facts to 10 with Object

Subtraction Facts with Stripboard

Subtraction Decompose Number 9

Negative Snake for Memorization of Subtraction Facts (made with colored glass beads)

### **CULTURAL SUBJECTS**

The child is presented with concrete experiences of the world of nature and the physical universe. Lessons in Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Geography and History encourage exploration, observations, and discovery, developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving techniques and appreciation for the world around him/her and the effects they have on it.

#### ***The first level contains the following activities:***

These are developmentally appropriate activities which help the child understand their body and their body in regards to spiritual awareness, directions, time, and their world.

Parts of the body: Activities designed to help the child name all the parts of the body.

Left and Right: Activities designed to help the child determine left and right.

Directions: N, S, E & W: Activities which include movement and song to teach the concept of directionality.

Weather: These exercises are designed to create awareness and language for how the weather looks, feels, and what causes it.

Calendar: Concrete, real experiences with time, including routine of the day, learning the days of the week, months of the year, and special observances and holidays of the year, as well as their own birthday.

Observation: Activities designed to develop the skills of keen observation in order to satisfy the natural curiosity of the child.

Classification: Activities which give the child real experiences with classification using criteria such as hair color, type of shoe, or type of clothing, etc. for the purpose of learning to classify.

Food/nutrition: These activities are designed to help the children learn the food groups in order to develop healthy eating habits.

***The second level contains the following activities:***

These are developmentally appropriate activities which help the child understand their world.

Land, Air, Water - Concrete, hands-on materials that teach the elements of the Earth.

Brown and Blue Globe - Uses a model to teach land, water and atmosphere of the Earth.

Land and Water Forms - Concrete, hands-on materials that teach the concepts of land forms.

Continent globe - A model of the Earth used to teach the names of the continents.

Solar System - Models of our solar system used to teach the names, sizes, positions, and general information about the Sun and planets.

Introduction to Mapping - Demonstration to illustrate the relationship between a globe and a map.

Living/Non-living - Identifying the qualities of living vs. nonliving using objects and pictures.

Plant/Animal - Identifying the similarities and differences of plants and animals using objects and pictures.

Solid/Liquid/Gas - Using concrete materials to identify the three states of matter.

Sink/Float and Other Simple Experiments - Hands-on activities to identify the properties of solid/liquid and gas.

Classifying Plants - Using real plants, models, and pictures to classify types of plants.

Classifying Animals - Using real animals, models, and pictures to classify types of animals.

***The third level contains the following activities:***

These are developmentally appropriate activities which enhance the child's comprehension of the connection to their world.

Map Making - Process of child creating his/her own map of the world and its continents.

Continent Study - Study of individual continent: naming countries, learning about the people, their cultural celebrations & traditions, animals, artifacts and natural resources of each continent.

Parts of the Earth - Concrete model used to teach the names of the layers of the Earth.

Rocks/Minerals - Children use real rocks to learn classifying the different types of rocks and their names.

Volcano - Using a model of a volcano to learn the parts of a volcano and what make it erupt.

Astronomy/Constellations - Using books and pictures to learn about the moon and the stars.

Water Cycle - Using a puzzle to learn the concept of evaporation, condensation, and precipitation.

Clock/Time - Using a model of a clock to teach the parts of a clock and learning to tell time.

Flags -Using miniature flags to learn the parts of a flag, the symbolism of a flag and the countries/state they represent

Experiments - Simple experiments to teach abstract scientific concepts. (Magnetism, air pressure, weight viscosity)

Plant and Animal Nomenclature - Learning the names of the parts of plants and animals.

***SECOND LANGUAGE SPANISH***

Purpose: To acquire basic listening fluency and basic comprehension to build a foundation for excellence in pronunciation and grammar.

Method: The Total Physical Response - Montessori Three Period Lesson

Rationale: How a child acquires the First Language Model, to Learn Other Languages

1) The Total Physical Response

Listening - Receptive Stage

From birth to the emergence of words (the age of silence) is the most critical period for language development of the child. During this period the child is constructing an intricate cognitive map for understanding what others are saying. We speak to the young child with words and sentences. These verbal messages are given with certain body language, tone of voice, gestures, facial expression and body movements.

## 2) Understanding - Decoding Stage

When we give the child simple commands, for example: "Let's go outside," we stand up and offer our hand for the child to hold. When Mom says, "Come over here, give Mommy a hug" she reaches toward the child with a smile and her arms and hands are extended. These messages are not only verbal instructions: the body is also signaling messages. Before infants talk - while they are still in the babbling stage - they are able to respond and decode the meaning of the language spoken to them by looking, reaching, grasping, turning and smiling. All of these exchanges do not demand speech from the child. We allow the child a great deal of time to listen before expecting speech.

## 3) Decoding and Internalizing Stage

The child first responds with a physical action and later with simple one-word utterances such as "yes", or "no" and then words. When speech appears, it will not be perfect. Gradually as the child develops, more complete production, as part of the normal developmental process will shape itself, in the direction of the mature speaker.

The acquisition of the child's first language is a complex process. Before the child can talk, he/she is acquiring an unconscious map of how the language works and what it means. He/she is constructing a "blueprint" for understanding what he/she hears from people around him/her.

Jean Piaget suggested that infants internalize a map of how their language works by constructing reality through sensory motor behavior such as touching, reaching, grasping and crying. When this map is sufficiently intricate, speech is released.

Extensive research on second language acquisition has demonstrated that using the model of the first language significantly enhances the mastery of the second language, is less stressful, and produces significant gains in short and long term retention.

learning strategy of re-enacting infant language development at an accelerated pace is called TPR (Total Physical Response). It is based on the idea that the brain and nervous system are biologically programmed to acquire languages in a particular sequence and in a particular mode. The sequence is listening before speaking. The mode is to synchronize language with the individual body. In a sense language is orchestrated to the choreography of the human body.

The learning principles of T.P.R. are:

- Acquiring listening comprehension fluency in a second language first.
- Child is silent while understanding expands.
- Synchronizing second language with body movements, gestures, and single words.
- Listening in a context which the teacher manipulates the orientation, location and movement of the child.

### ***Montessori Three Period Lesson***

Maria Montessori created an educational method that follows the natural physiological and physical development of the child. She observed the close connection between movement and the developing mind, and that the children use movement to extend their understanding of the world around them. She developed a very important tool for teaching and learning that is constant in a Montessori environment. It is called The 3 Period Lesson. The Three Period Lesson itself consists of Association, Recognition, and Recall.

Association (Listening and Receptive Stage) it provides the child the name with a precise vocabulary and distinct pronunciation.

Recognition (Decoding-Understanding Stage) the child responds with movements to different commands like pointing, showing, giving...and demonstrates that he/she can identify and comprehend.

Recall (Decoding - Internalizing Stage) the child is able to recall and verbalize.

**From: Dr. James J. Asher, Professor of Psychology, Cal State U. at San Jose**

## **ART**

The lessons in the art area of a Montessori environment are designed to facilitate the child's self-construction through appropriate work as a response to a natural order. At stages within that order, the children show sensitivities or needs for particular types of work. Creativity also has a growth pattern that is recognizable. The progression of the child's art begins with scribbles and exploration and develops into pictures and works that tell stories. The activities in the art area are observed in three levels or stages. The art area contains five stands: Crayoning, cutting, gluing, painting, modeling.

### **The first level contains the following activities:**

Exploration of the materials and tools are essentials for the development of the child's ability to express themselves through art.

Crayoning, Markers and Pencils - Scribble work is one of the earliest and most important spontaneous expressions of creativity. They are made for the sheer joy of doing. There is no premeditation or intent. Experience for the joy of the tools and their effect.

Cutting - Children learn how to handle scissors safely, while exploring the cause and effect with paper. The paper is prepared in thin strips with no line, thick line, thin line, curve, diagonal and zigzag. The children master cutting accurately on the lines.

Gluing - Simple presentations using glue stick and eventually School glue (Elmers). The task is to use the glue in simple collage with precut paper pieces onto larger paper.

Painting - Presentation on the use of a brush. The first lessons are for the purpose of making a simple stroke on paper with a brush. Then the child is introduced to more colors, one at a time.

Modeling - Experiences with different types of clay are introduced along with objects made with clay, such as pinch pots or coil pots. Children then begin to create their own models.

### **The third level contains the following activities:**

Crayoning, Markers, and Pencils - Semi representational stage where children have been building their knowledge of line and shape, yet still may not see a rectangle as a house or a circle as a face. This is an appropriate time for *recall motivation*, where the adult asks open ended questions such as, "Show what you look like when you had chicken pox." It is important for adults to note that children are not able to picture or symbolize something they have not experienced.

Cutting - Children learn to cut with accuracy and responsibility. They are capable of cutting with intent and applying this with other art strands, i.e.: gluing.

Gluing - Third level gluing may use glue as the main medium such as making stained glass with colored glue, or perhaps sculpting.

Painting - The child is independent and creating with many different types of paint on various types of materials, such as paper, wood, ceramic, etc.

Modeling - Children are introduced to other modeling mediums, such as paper mache, construction with tubes and boxes, and sculpting with various other mediums.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Records of the child's work are kept in an individual portfolio. The content of the portfolio provides the child, teachers and parents concrete and essential information about the child's progress and activities; it provides adequate planning and goal setting; and the portfolio is individual and compares to his/her own previous work not to others.

### **Portfolio Content:**

- **Daily Record**  
Daily observational records are ongoing; dated records of each child's work are kept on each child's record keeping card according to curriculum area. These are accessible to all teachers and children.
- **Anecdotal Records**  
The teacher using a personal diary book records of unanticipated events, milestones, quotes, expressions, gestures, and social interactions.
- **Cumulative Records**  
Summarizes notes from all sources and allows teachers to evaluate each child's development in relation to him/herself. Includes physical, social, emotional, cognitive information.
- **Work Samples**  
Samples of letter writing, number writing, art, drawings, illustrations, books, photos or samples of daily activities. Originals are photocopied.
- **My Work Record**  
Older children (with the teacher) will learn to keep daily records of their activities and begin to plan their work periods and manage their time appropriately.
- **Observation of Individual Child**  
Observations are done as teacher considers it necessary. They are precise and objective without drawing conclusions. Observations are done in a variety of settings and times of the day.
- **Specific Behavior Record**  
Records of inappropriate behavior that repeats at different times of the day is kept for a period of time to help teachers and parents have a better understanding of when this behavior appears and possible solutions. (Example: biting, hitting...).
- **Progress Report**  
Copy of the report given to parents (Nov., February, May). Copy of Parent's Goals for 3 months. (Nov., February, May).



## **FOCUS OF STUDY**

### ***September - October - November***

#### *Group Dynamics:*

Ground rules; Basic procedures; Grace and courtesy; Cooperative working; Making friends; Restoring the environment; Sharing our playground; Ground rules to animal care; Our classroom community; Introduction to dress up; Introductions to V.I.P.

#### *Language:*

Literature Books, Stories and Poems, Friends, Woods, Fall, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Native American

#### Development of Spoken Language:

Grace and courtesy language, Farm - zoo animals, calendar - days of the week, Yesterday - today - tomorrow, Classification games, Fall language, Halloween language

Thanksgiving language, Flannel Board (body, face building)

#### Other Language Activities:

Songs, Finger Plays, Movement activities

### ***Science - Geography - Cultural Subjects:***

*Cultural Subjects* - North American, Native Americans, The fall, Halloween, Thanksgiving  
*Science - Geography*

*Introduction to Science* - Observation, Classification Living - Nonliving, Classification  
Plant & Animal, Woodland and Farm Animals

*Our Bodies* - Body Concepts, Body Language

*Zoology* - Fish, Introduction to Magnetism, Exploring the 3 States of Matter, Exploring Liquids  
Weather (looks like, feels like)

*Earth Science* - Rock and Fossil Exploration, Dinosaurs

*Botany* - Exploring plants, Exploring leaves

### ***Sensorial:***

Tactile and hearing Sense

### ***Art:***

Basic Introductory Lessons: Cutting, Gluing, Pencils, Crayons, Collage, Markers, Tape, Printing, Tracing, Paint (dry), Wipe off Board Seasonal Projects

### ***Spanish:***

- Basic words about: myself, my body, my family, food, snack, and everyday objects of the classroom
- Spanish Exploring Box
- Total Physical Response Action Words: stand, sit, walk, touch, sing, smile, pick up, jump, point, to skip, hop, pick up, put down, put, give

- Basic Concepts: you, me, they, and we, big, little
- Feeling: Basic Feelings: happy, sad, OK, very good, very bad, so, so, hungry, tired
- Conversation Responses: Grace and courtesy (yes, no, please, thank you)

***December - January - February***

***Group Dynamics:***

Care of environment, Making friends, Getting along with friends, Problem solving (When you - I feel - Because - I want), Feelings, Awareness of others, Ground rules review, Our classroom community

***Language:***

- Literature Appreciation: The story of Christmas. Books with stories related to Christmas the holiday season, legends and traditions. Hanukkah, The story of Hanukkah, books related to Hanukkah, and the traditions. Rhymes and riddles, Valentines stories and poems.
- Development of Spoken Language: Manipulative materials for "show and tell a story", Flannel Board, Nursery Rhymes
- The way we are the same and different, Feelings, Homes, Opposites, Prepositions
- Weather words
- Other Language Activities: Songs (Hanukkah, Winter, Christmas), Games, Finger Plays, Rhymes, Movement activities

***Science - Geography - Cultural Subjects:***

Christmas, Hanukkah, Martin Luther King - Rosa Park, The way we are the same and the way we are different.

*Our Bodies* - Nutrition, The Heart

*Zoology* - Birds observation, characteristics, habitats, Animals in the winter

*Physical Science* - Exploring air, Exploring solids, Exploring liquids, Exploring static electricity

*Weather* - Weather - temperature, Nature and winter, Shadows

*Earth Science* - Earth rotation - day and night

*Dinosaurs* - Fossils

*Botany* - Exploring Plants, Bulbs, and Seeds

***Sensorial:***

Visual and olfactory sense activities

***Art:***

Seasonal and holiday projects, Gluing with different medium, Taping paper, Rubbings  
Tracing with large geometric shapes, Geometric figures in art form, Shadows, Clay, Folding and cutting. Recycle box. Paint tempera, Watercolors.

**Spanish:**

- More of myself; my body; my family; animals; food; clothes; everyday objects
- Cultural Element: Christmas
- Total Physical Response Action Words: stand, sit, walk, touch, sing, smile, jump, point to, skip, hop, pick up, put down, put, give, sing, dance, pickup, throw, show, eat
- Basic Concepts: you, me, they, we, pretty, ugly, little, big, up, down
- Feeling: Basic Feelings: happy, sad, hungry, sleepy, cold...
- Conversation Responses: Grace and courtesy, holiday greetings

**March - April - May****Group Dynamics:**

Reinforcement of group and line ground rules, Reinforcement of playground ground rules and safety, Problem solving with friends, Working independently (what, where, how)

**Language:**

*Literature Appreciation* - Fairy Tales. Rebuild the story. Focus on different authors.

Poems, Spring and Easter traditions and stories

*Development of Spoken Language* - Flannel board: Fairy tales, Recreating and building Stories Spring season words

*Other Language Activities* - Songs (Easter - spring - garden), Games, Finger Plays, Rhymes  
Movement activities

**Science - Geography - Cultural Subjects:**

*Cultural Subjects* - Texas, Easter, Spring, Mother's Day, Africa, Europe

*Zoology* - Invertebrates - Earthworms, Insects (butterfly - moth observation of metamorphosis)  
Vertebrates - Reptiles, Amphibians (observation of frog development)

*Our Bodies* - Our teeth, Inside our bodies

*Physical Science* - Exploring light, Exploring colors, Absorption, Reflection

*Botany* - Exploring plants, seeds, flowers

*Earth Science* - Rocks and Minerals Inner Earth Volcano, Tropical Rainforest, Clouds, Rain

*Planets* - Solar System

**Sensorial:**

Gustatory and tactile activities

**Art:**

Chalk, Collage, Rubbing, Crayons, Printing, Painting liquid tempera, Gluing, Tracing, Watercolors, 3 dimensions construction, Easter/Spring/Texas projects

**Spanish:**

- More of myself - my body - my family - animals - food, clothes, everyday objects, my house, colors, more classroom objects, every day words at school, weather words
- Cultural Elements: South America
- Total Physical Response Action Words: stand, sit, walk, touch, sing, smile, jump, point to skip, hop, pick up, put down, put, give, sing, dance, pick up, throw, show, eat, cut, look at, draw, erase, fold, push, pull, open, close, get, clap, turn on, turn off, want
- Basic Concepts: you, me, they, we, some, inside, few, over, first, the leader, the line, after, not many, same, different, pretty, ugly, little, big, up, down
- Feeling Basic Feelings: happy, sad, hungry, sleepy, cold, hot, angry, sleepy, tired
- Conversation Responses

**June July August (Full Day Program)****Group Dynamics:**

Ground rules review, Care of environment, Getting along with friends and more problem solving, Cooperative games, Awareness of others, Splash day, Riding toy day

**Language:**

- Literature Appreciation: Stories Related to the Ocean Life, Vacations, and Summer Subjects
- Rhymes, Riddles, Poems
- Development of Spoken Language: Manipulative materials for "show and tell a story"
- Flannel Board, Sea Life Vocabulary, Journaling, Creative Drama
- Other Language Activities: Songs (summer, beach, ocean) Games, Finger plays
- Rhyme, Movement activities

**Science - Geography - Cultural Subjects:**

Our Country, Coral Reef, Africa, Cooking, Nature and the summer

*Zoology* -Sea Life, Sea Mammals, and Whales

*Exploring Mollusk* - Univalve - Bivalve Exploring, Sea Shells

*Botany* -Plant care

*Earth Science* - Ecology Projects

**Sensorial:**

Visual, Tactile, and Gustatory Sense

**Art:**

Variations and extensions of all the lessons learned during the year, Seasonal and craft projects

**Spanish:**

- Focus More of Myself - My Body - My Family - Animals - Food, Clothes
- Every Day Objects - My Home
- Colors - Classroom Objects - Every Day Words - Weather Words
- Cultural Elements: Mexico, Central America
- Total Physical Response Action Words: some, inside, few, over, stand, sit, walk, touch, sing, smile, jump, point to, skip, hop, pick up, put down, put, give, sing, dance, pick up, throw, show, eat, cut, look at, draw, erase, fold, clap, turn on, turn off, want
- Basic Concepts: you, me, they, we, some, inside, few, over, first, the leader, after, not, many , same, different
- Feeling: Basic Feelings: happy, sad, hungry, sleepy, cold, angry, tired, hot
- Conversation Responses: Grace and courtesy, may I, traveling, the restaurant