



WESTPARK MONTESSORI SCHOOLS OF IRVINE SEPTEMBER 2018

FIRST DAY OF THE FALL TERM!

Tuesday, September 4th is the first day of the new fall term. Welcome to all our new and returning students! We look forward to a wonderful year with the children and their families.

As this is our first newsletter of our new school term, we have included information regarding school procedures - both old and NEW - for your convenience. As laws and standards change sometimes our mandated changes in procedures also affect our families. We apologize if our keeping up with these changes cause you any inconvenience at all.

PRO-CARE

New Parents: If you have not yet been registered into the school system, please see the director immediately. It is a state law that you **check your child in and out each** day using your thumb/fingerprint. Please be sure to press "finish" at the end to complete the process. If there is a message or note for your child, you will be notified through Pro Care as you check in/out each day. You may find written notes in the "Parent Box" located on the front desk, filed by your child's LAST NAME. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please let us know!



KEY FOBS

Each family is issued two key fobs upon enrollment. Please be sure to carry your key fob and use it when entering the school. Please help us with security by using the key fob you were issued.

MONTESSORI CORE PROGRAM AND MORNING DROP OFF

Beginning September 4, we will resume our core program of 8:15-3:15 so that our preschool and kindergarten children will have the opportunity for a full 3-hour Montessori session each day. Our morning day care will also once again be in the atrium instead of on the playground. Children will transition to their classrooms with their teachers at 8:15. Our kindergarten children will be counted as tardy when arriving after 9:00.

CHILDREN'S FILES

The STATE requires that all children in attendance have a complete file. All children's files must be complete no later than Thursday, September 6. Any students with an INCOMPLETE file will not be admitted to school beginning on Friday, September 7, and will not be readmitted until that child's file is complete. A list of children with incomplete files and what papers are missing will be posted on the front office window. Please see your director with any questions.

MONTESSORI IS A HANDS ON EXPERIENCE!

New parents often ask us about "paper work" and art "projects" for their children. It is important to remember that good early childhood education stresses concrete, hands on experimenting with various types of art media, construction, and cause and effect activities. There is not necessarily a "thing" at the end of the process! Children at this age are more involved with what they are doing than what they have left over and products are a creation of adult desire.

HELPING YOUR CHILD BEGIN SCHOOL

Each year we are asked by our families for tips they can use at home, information about their child's development, and the Montessori Method and philosophy of education. Since many of these questions can be of interest to many, I will print a few in the newsletters to come. September brings the most questions about drop off time and "separation" when parents separate from their children to leave them at school. Separation from parents can be difficult for some families. When children begin school it is a major milestone and with that milestone comes normal anxiety that is typical for children when there is a change of any kind.

When children begin school it is important for them to know that their parents are "ready for school" and feel comfortable with this new phase of their child's development. This means that children need to hear their parents say "I know you are anxious and that you will miss me but you will be fine. I am coming back and you can tell me who you played with today. I love you, I will see you soon. GOOD BYE!" It is very important that you then smile and walk calmly and happily away. Children get mixed messages when parents hesitate, cling to their children, or look worried. It is like saying, "I know you are scared- so am I!"

We PROMISE if your child is in true distress and not just expressing their anxiety we will call you! We all truly care about children and we want them to be happy. Sometimes, just like for grownups, getting comfortable is a process. We promise to assist them in getting used to us and their new school. As children become used to their new school routine, a process that can take up to 10 weeks, you will begin to hear more about their day. This process is called "normalization".

Another great way to help your child "normalize" is to meet their classmates and other school families. Please plan to attend our annual Spaghetti Dinner at 5:30 on **Wednesday, September 26!** The spaghetti is fantastic, and you will have a very enjoyable family night out. Please note that day care closes at 5:30.



FAMILY "SPAGHETTI" NIGHT

Wednesday, September 26 is the night of our very popular, annual FAMILY SPAGHETTI DINNER NIGHT. This is a great time to meet other Montessori parents and children! Westpark Montessori will provide the spaghetti, tossed salad, garlic bread, lemonade and eating utensils. Parents are asked to sign up to bring in a dessert for six people in a ***disposable*** container and ***sliced/ready-to-serve***. **PLEASE NOTE: All deserts must be NUT FREE.** If you bring fruit, please wash it in advance and have it ready to serve. You may also want to bring a picnic blanket for your family to sit on.

The spaghetti dinner and dessert buffet will be served from 5:30-6:15 only.

Please remember, all children must still be picked up by 6:00 p.m. Please sign out your child and take them with you to enjoy the dinner. We ask that parents picking up their children or arriving at school early for the spaghetti dinner, please be sure to supervise your child as the teachers are busy supervising children who have not yet been picked up.

We are asking parents to register how many people in their family will be attending so that we can have PLENTY OF SPAGHETTI FOR EVERYONE! Sign-ups will be posted in the front office on Wednesday, September 12.

A BIG "thank you" in advance to Chef Cyndi, Miss LaShone, Miss Dona and Chef Oscar for all of the behind the scene preparation, hard work and delicious spaghetti!

Reminder: The school closes at 5:30 PM. Please plan additional time for parking.

WE ARE A NUT FREE ZONE

Due to the possibility of severe or potentially fatal allergic reactions, all peanuts, nuts and nut products are not allowed at school. Please check labels for peanut oil and by products. A handout with snack ideas is available at the front desk. Afternoon snack is distributed from the school kitchen and consists of a combination of two of the four basic food groups. (Example: cheese and whole wheat crackers.) Also note: Due to availability, snacks may vary slightly from the monthly menu. Watch for announcements of changes on the front office menu board.

SNACKS

Our morning snack is a popular component of our parent involvement. As part of your child's "practical life" learning experiences at school, parents sign-up their child to be host(ess) for the day. Your child will bring foods that can be prepared for a special nutritious snack to be shared with their classmates. Food must arrive no later than **8:30 am** to allow preparation time. This is done twice each month during our Toddler-Two years and once each month for our older children. **When you sign up on the posted calendar, please write what items you are bringing for snack that day. (For example- yogurt and bananas) At least two food groups must be represented.**

This exercise supplements your child's practical life activities of various food preparation experiences such as peeling an egg or carrots, orange juicing, and making "tea party" sandwiches. When choosing snack items, please send one protein and one healthy carbohydrate such as cheese and whole wheat crackers or apples. These are foods that the children **prepare during class** and share with their classmates during snack and work times. Other examples of appropriate snacks include WHOLE fresh fruits and vegetables, crackers, cheeses, or healthy snacks or other simple whole foods that can be combined by your child with non-cook recipes to create a snack such as celery stuffed with cream cheese. Please DO NOT prepare foods at home.

Also, accreditation standards state that food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be **either whole fruits of commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers**. The Centers for Disease Control recommends this practice because of the risks in maintaining food safety and potential allergic reactions to ingredients that may not be identified. Thank you for your cooperation in trying to maintain the highest national standards.

Pediatricians advice limiting a child's juice intake, thus please refrain from sending juice as a part of snack. Additional ideas are available at the front desk.

ID EMERGENCY FORMS

Each fall we require ALL parents to complete a new ID Emergency Form (Blue) for each child. We ask this once a year from ALL parents, even those who just started. This ensures that we have the most current emergency contact numbers and information on file. Forms were distributed in Friday folders in late August. If you haven't already done so, please complete your new ID Emergency Form and return it to the front desk as soon as possible. Thank you.

OOPS REPORTS

If your child has an "oops" at school, there will be either a white or blue (wet clothes or potty accident) "Oops Report". Please READ, SIGN AND RETURN the Oops Report to the Front Desk. The STATE of California requires us to keep these on file.

BOOK CLUBS

Book club order forms are now available at the front desk. You may order from one or all clubs, however, please make out ONE CHECK ONLY to **Scholastic** for the total amount due. Last day to order is FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14. Any further questions, please ask us at the front desk.

PRESCHOOL - BEDDING IN A PILLOWCASE

State licensing requires that children's bedding be kept separate from each other. This prevents germs from spreading through contact and helps keep children well. In order to keep your newly laundered bedding clean, please send it to school IN A PILLOWCASE labeled with your child's name. Your child's bedding will be placed back in their pillowcase on Friday. Bedding should include a fitted crib sheet and a blanket, and a "travel" size pillow if desired.

Please note: Children under two years old now need to have bedding changed daily according to the State Licensing Representative that recently visited our schools. Parents of children under two are asked to review the special letter (distributed by your child's teacher) explaining this change of procedures.

PARKING AND SAFETY

PLEASE!!!! Keep your children and others safe in our parking lot by slowing down, being aware and **PARKING IN THE DESIGNATED PARKING PLACES**. Please remember that the front of the school is for ***quick*** drop offs only. Please be sure to park so that your car in the appropriate spaces.

The **RED** curb is for emergency vehicles only; fire and police.

Children are not to be left alone in the car for any reason and again, for safety purposes, please be sure your car ignition is OFF before leaving it.

MEDICATIONS

Please remember that Montessori Schools of Irvine are able to ONLY administer medicine to children with a current prescription or note from the doctor. A form needs to be completed and given to the school director checking the times on the form when medication is to be administered, and the duration for which it has been prescribed. Medications may be given at school at 11:30 and/or 3:30 so that they are given with food and outside of nap time. Please adjust the time medicine is given at home to help us plan for these times.



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Friday, September 15 is the beginning of Hispanic Heritage Month. Any parents wishing to share information with their child's classroom are welcome to sign up with your child's teacher. See this month's menu for special Hispanic lunches.



CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS

Children are welcome to share their birthdays with their friends at school. We celebrate with a special ceremony using the Montessori number rods, globe, and pictures of your child. Parents may also send a special treat on this day. Please check with your child's teacher in advance. This is a treat and is not used as the children's snack as children will be served their snack prior to eating the birthday treat. Toys and birthday favors cannot be distributed. Please note that we suggest that parents send a healthy treat rather than one that is full of sugar. Suggestions and additional information can be found on our birthday handout which is available at the front office.

If you are planning a home birthday party you are invited to use the school roster to address invitations to the children's homes or e-mails. The school **CANNOT** distribute birthday invitations as children who are not invited might be disappointed.

IMPORTANT PARENT NOTES TO HELP US STAY ACCREDITED!

We are an NAEYC accredited school! We are the only Montessori program in Irvine to have achieved this recognition, the highest in early childhood education!

One of the many important tasks we do twice each year is to ask our parents for important feedback to some of the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) questions. These questions sometimes pertain to you as a parent and some others do not - or you simply may not know if we do or don't do something in general! Please be sure to ask for a copy of our school policies which explain how and why we do certain things in our program. You may recall receiving a parent handbook when you visited the school but may no longer have a copy. Your director is happy to share a copy with you.

Close to parent conference time you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Feel free to ask your director for clarification of any questions you may not understand.

We share the results of these questionnaires with parents once they are tabulated by posting them in the front office.

ADVISORY BOARD

Periodically, our Executive Director, Cheryl Ruzat meets with parents for a session called "*COFFEE WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*". These coffees act as our open meeting for parents who wish to participate on our parent advisory board. This is an open forum where parents are able to discuss parenting issues, Montessori philosophy and techniques and share ideas directly with the Executive Director. Watch the newsletter throughout the year for meetings which are typically scheduled each quarter. Parents who wish to participate can sign up in the front office the week before the meeting so that seating and refreshments can be planned.

The first meeting will focus on a typical child's day and being a "Montessori Parent". Meetings will be held September 26 from 10:30-11:30.

STAFF "JEANS DAY"

We may look a little more casual than usual on Fridays and Mondays this semester! Montessori Schools of Irvine has a "Jeans Day" every Friday for our staff members and every Monday (September-December) if they wear our Montessori school spirit shirt. Please feel free to have your child join in our special dress day and wear their Montessori Schools of Irvine rainbow shirts with Jeans every Monday!

MONTESSORI TEACHER EDUCATION CLASSES HAVE BEGUN!

We would like all our parents to know that the University Montessori Teacher Education Program at UCI meets at University Montessori School of Irvine during the academic year. This is a UCI Division of Continuing Education program that trains teachers from all over Southern California to be Montessori teachers. Our carefully selected and gifted co-teachers are encouraged to participate in this program. As we are extremely selective in our hiring practices, we have found that teachers from the Montessori Schools of Irvine typically rank in the top of participating adult learners and demonstrate outstanding capabilities upon completion thus providing our children with an outstanding Montessori environment. The early childhood education program is nationally accredited by the American Montessori Society and the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education.

CA SENATE BILL 792

Montessori Schools of Irvine have always considered the parents of the children partners with us and most welcome at our school at ANY TIME. It is for this reason we have our atrium designed for families to visit with their children.

In case you have not heard about it, California Senate Bill 792 prohibits a person from being employed or volunteering at a day care center if he or she has not been immunized against influenza, pertussis, and measles. A record of these immunizations must be kept on file in the school office. While we understand that parents engaged as volunteers might fall under this law, the State of California Community Care Licensing, under much objection from the child care community, has informed schools such as ours that they interpret CA Senate Bill 792 to mean that **ANY ADULT or parent INTERACTING with children other than their own is considered a volunteer** and licensing will "cite" the school for breaking the law if they walk in and observe or hear of this occurring.

Thus, we apologize, but unless this law changes parents who wish to volunteer in the classroom by reading or helping in any way such as chaperoning field trips will be required to provide Montessori Schools with their immunizations. These will be kept locked in a confidential file. We also ask that parents who enjoy spending time in the atrium ONLY engage with their own children or also provide immunizations if they wish to include their children's friends. Again, WE ARE SO VERY SORRY FOR THIS INCONVENIENCE and we are doing everything we can to inform the state that we feel this was not the intent of this law.

EXTRA CURRICULAR CLASSES

Our schools offer gymnastics, yoga, violin, ballet, and Bollywood dancing Ballet has registration per session, and the other extra-curricular activities are month to month and have registration as openings become available. If you are interested in having your child participating in any of our extra-curricular activities, please check with the school director for more information.

SCHOOL PICTURE DAY

Save Tuesday, October 9 for School Picture Day. Images 4 Kids will be taking our photos again this year. **Images 4 Kids** will be taking both individual and class photos of all toddlers – kindergarten children. Images 4 Kids will take your child's photo and send proofs to the school a few weeks later. At that time, you can choose a package and purchase photos if you are interested.



PUMPKIN PATCH FIELD TRIP- Thursday, October 11th!

We have planned a special field trip to Tanaka Farms Pumpkin Patch and vegetable gardens, located in Irvine. The Tanaka Farms Pumpkin Patch allows children to pick their own pumpkins right off of the vines. The trip also includes a wagon ride to the petting zoo and a corn maze! Look for more information in the October Newsletter. Permission slips will be available in October. Registration is done on a first come/first serve basis and the trip will close once the buses are full. **All preschool children must be accompanied by a parent with immunizations as a chaperone.** Please note, ALL chaperones will be required to turn in a copy of their immunizations for measles, pertussis and influenza (influenza only allows a waiver to be signed.) All children attending must wear their Montessori rainbow shirt!



SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING FIELD TRIPS

As noted above, CA Senate Bill 792 may have an impact on this field trip. We need volunteers to chaperone our field trips to keep our ratios safe. Thus, in order for us to go on field trips, we need parents who will not only accompany us as chaperones, but also voluntarily give us a copy of their immunizations as required by the State. (Please refer to the article earlier in the newsletter).

All parents interested in being a Chaperone on the Pumpkin Patch field trip must turn in a copy of their immunizations ***no later than, Friday, September 21***. After this date, if we are unable to engage enough chaperones under these new conditions, our field trip will need to be cancelled.

***** **KINDERGARTEN "EXTRAS"** *****

JUST FOR YOU!

This section will periodically hold special announcements that are important in addition to the rest of the newsletter. Watch for special "big kid" activities sponsored by the school as well as special visitors and events for our kindergarten and primary children.

HOMEWORK POLICY

As a new school year begins, we wish to clarify our school policy that **NO HOMEWORK IS ISSUED FOR PRESCHOOL OR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN!** Homework begins at the first grade level. Homework is just that – HOME work. The objective is two-fold. It unites children and parents so that parents can encourage and reinforce the idea of studying while keeping parents apprised of their children’s work habits and learning curve. It teaches the children to plan ahead, budget their time, take pride in and be independently responsible for their own learning. We ask that parents encourage their children but **REFRAIN** from doing the assignments **FOR** the child. Assignments are given with respect to children’s abilities and they should be able to complete them diligently and independently. It is also the **STUDENT’S** responsibility to return assignments to school on the day that they are due. A reminder or two might be necessary but it is a learning experience for the student to be responsible!

Homework assignments are sent home on Mondays. Spelling tests and homework are scheduled for Thursdays with longer assignments such as book reports or projects due the following Monday. This allows parents and children ample time for completion as well as the choice of whether or not to use the weekend.

***** **EXTRA NEWS FOR TODDLERS AND TWOS!** *****

September Teaching Theme

"Apples" is The Toddler’s and Two’s teaching theme this month!

SPAGHETTI DINNER



FAMILY "SPAGHETTI" NIGHT

We would like to invite all parents and children in the Infant-Toddler area to join in the Family Spaghetti Night on September 26 at 5:30. School closes at 5:30 on this day. Parking is difficult so please plan a little extra time. See above for more details and information.



DATES TO REMEMBER

September 4	First day of the Fall Term
September 14	Book Club Orders Due
September 23	Fall Begins
September 26	Family Spaghetti Dinner Night -School Closes at 5:30
September 26	Coffee with the Executive Director
October 9	School Picture Day
October 11	Pumpkin Patch Field Trip



STAFF BIRTHDAYS

September 10	Miss Monika
September 17	Mr. Tomas (Facilities Mngr.)



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

Richard and Cheryl! **THANK** our wonderful and loyal staff members! Your dedication and contributions to the children and families you work with are appreciated more than words can express!

September 2	Miss Vannesa	3 years
September 4	Miss Monika	6 years
September 6	Miss Ruby	
September 9	Miss Dinah	15 years
September 17	Miss Mayra	6 years



SCHOOL CALENDAR AND ACTIVITY GUIDE 2018 - 2019

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR THE NEW SCHOOL TERM- SEPTEMBER 4, 2018

HOLIDAY AND VACATION DATES WHEN THE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED

VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 12
THANKSGIVING	NOVEMBER 22 - 23
WINTER RECESS	DECEMBER 24 - JANUARY 4
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	JANUARY 21
PRESIDENTS' DAY	FEBRUARY 18
CESAR CHAVEZ DAY	MARCH 29 (Friday)
MEMORIAL DAY	MAY 27
SUMMER RECESS	JULY 1 - 5
TEACHER INSERVICE DAY	AUGUST 30 (Friday)
LABOR DAY	SEPTEMBER 2

WINTER HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES (2018) (*CHILD CARE ENDS AT 5:00)

Village – December 10, 2018	University - December 11, 2018
Westpark - December 12, 2018	Northwood - December 13, 2018

GRADUATION & YEAR END PERFORMANCE (2019) (*CHILD CARE ENDS AT 5:00)

Village - June 17, 2019	University - June 18, 2019
Westpark - June 19, 2019	Northwood - June 20, 2019

PRESCHOOL THROUGH THIRD GRADE PARENT CONFERENCES (ALL SCHOOLS)

All Day conferences:	November 14, 2018	May 15, 2019
Early Morning conferences:	November 16, 2018	May 17, 2019

THE SUMMER MONTHS

Montessori Schools of Irvine provide a year-round program. During July and August, a special learning theme is selected around which additional field trips, visitors, and projects revolve to provide extra summer fun. Brochures and information about special trips and the summer theme are released each June. Please consult the school office for more details.

TEACHER PREPARATION WEEK (Child Care Only) June 24 - 28 and August 26 – 29, 2019

High caliber teachers continue to develop their skills by learning new techniques, refreshing seasoned ones and taking the time to plan and organize. Montessori Schools of Irvine provide a teacher preparation/in-service week before sessions to ensure your child a teaching staff of the highest caliber. June 24-28, 2019 and August 26–29, 2019 our childcare staff will provide child care only. Montessori classes will NOT be in session.

(NOTE: All schools will be CLOSED on Friday, August 30, 2019)

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL TERM - **SEPTEMBER 3, 2019**



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives