



WESTPARK MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF IRVINE SEPTEMBER 2019

FIRST DAY OF THE FALL TERM!

Welcome to all our new and returning students! We look forward to a wonderful year with the children and your 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 on the first day of our new school term, Tuesday, September 3, 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 and primary grade children will be counted as tardy when arriving after 9:00 a.m.

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 September 5th. Any students with an INCOMPLETE file will not be admitted to school beginning on Friday, September 6, and will not be readmitted until that child's file is complete. A list of children with incomplete files will be posted on the front office window. Please see your director with any questions as to what is missing.

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 beginning school, it is **important for children 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 to their children,

*"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 emotions over this new experience called school, 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 5:00 on **Wednesday, September 25!** The spaghetti is fantastic, and you will have a very enjoyable family night out!



FAMILY "SPAGHETTI" NIGHT / SCHOOL CLOSURES AT 5:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25!

Wednesday, September 25! 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 5:00-6:00 only.

Please remember, all children must still be picked up **by 5:00 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 11th.

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

Reminder: The school closes at 5:00 PM. Any children picked up after this time will be charged a late fee! Please allow 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, parent's 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 once each month for all age groups of 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) It is important for children's nutrition that TWO food groups 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.

In a "nut shell" – nothing with nuts or processed on equipment that processes nuts and no juice please. Whole fresh foods to be prepared at school. Only sealed foods if processed.

ID EMERGENCY FORMS

Each fall we require ALL parents to complete a new ID Emergency Form (Yellow) 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 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 fo*** the total amount due. You can also order online with our school code: HJNJD. Last day to order is FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th 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 need to have bedding changed according to the State Licensing requirements. Parents of children under two are asked to review the special letter (distributed by your child's teacher) explaining this procedure.

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 curb is for ***quick*** drop offs only. Please be sure to park so that your car does not protrude into the drive through area in front of the school so that all cars can move safely through the parking lot.

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.



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.



HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Sunday, 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.

ADVISORY BOARD

Periodically, our Executive Director, Cheryll Ruszat 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 25th, from 4:00-5:00 – right before spaghetti dinner!

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 (through December) if they wear our Montessori school spirit shirt. Please feel free to have your child join in 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.

EXTRA CURRICULAR CLASSES

Our schools offer gymnastics, yoga, violin, and ballet. 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 8th 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 infants – primary 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.

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.

When in the atrium, it is often tempting to engage not only with your own child, but also with their friends. Regretfully, there is a California law (SB 792) which requires all adults interacting with children be immunized against influenza, pertussis, and measles and that a record of this be kept on file at the school office. While as a school WE would understand this law to apply to workers and classroom volunteers, sadly, under much objection from the child care community, the State of California Community Care Licensing interprets CA Senate Bill 792 to mean that **ANY ADULT or parent INTERACTING with children other than their own** with repercussions to the our school unless we enforce this as a policy. We thus apologize and ask for our parents to become immunized so that they can be more active with their children's school experience, including volunteering for class parties, field trips, reading to children or otherwise sharing this exciting school time.

Until then, we 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.



PUMPKIN PATCH FIELD TRIP- Thursday, October 10th!

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. Children under 4 years old must be accompanied by a parent 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

We need volunteers to chaperone our field trips to keep our ratios safe.

Please volunteer to chaperone and bring us a copy of you immunizations!

Thank you for helping us keep field trips alive for our children!

Please note: we need chaperones/immunizations by **Friday, September 20** or this field trip will have to be cancelled for inadequate adult/child ratios.

***** **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.

KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION

There will be a special kindergarten orientation on September 25 at 4:00 pm in Miss Jennifer's class. Parents are encouraged to attend this important meeting to hear about the learning goals and kindergarten routines for the year.

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!*******

TODDLER TEACHING THEME

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

FAMILY "SPAGHETTI" NIGHT

We would like to invite all parents and children in the Toddler area to join in the Family Spaghetti Night. See above for more details and information. Reminder: **School closes at 5:00 p.m. on Spaghetti Dinner Night for all children!**





DATES TO REMEMBER

September 3	First day of the Fall Term
September 13	Book Club orders DIE
September 23	Fall Begins
September 25	Family Spaghetti Night (School closes at 5 pm)
September 25	Coffee with the Executive Director
October 8	School Picture Day
October 10	Pumpkin Patch Fieldtrip



STAFF BIRTHDAYS

September 10	Miss Monika
September 17	Mr. Tomas (Facilities Mngr.)
September 18	Miss Brooke



STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

Richard and Cheryll **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 4	Miss Monika	7 years
September 6	Miss Ruby	3 years
September 17	Miss Mayra	7 years