



## WESTPARK MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF IRVINE SEPTEMBER 2020



### **WAIVER for IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION!**

We are pleased to share with all of our families that our school waiver has been approved:

"Montessori Schools of Irvine - Northwood, Village, Westpark, & University Campus School Waiver Application  
Thank you for submitting a TK-6 Elementary School Waiver application. After both local health officer and California Department of Public Health Review, your waiver request has been approved."

Stay well,  
Clayton Chau, M.D. PhD  
Agency Director  
405 W. 5<sup>th</sup> St. Suite 700, Santa Ana, CA 92701

### **FALL TERM HAS BEGUN!**

Welcome to all our new and returning students! We look forward to a wonderful year with the children and your families.

### **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, we will include a few in the newsletters of the coming months.

September brings the most questions about drop off time and "separation" when parents separate from their children to leave them at school a common concern for parents of young children starting school. This is a major milestone and a closer look is actually one that should cause pride of parenting! Children "cling" to parents at a new situation because this helps them feel safe when a new and unknown circumstance confronts them. They naturally look to their loving parents for guidance!

Montessori school provides enriched experiences for these all-important early childhood years when it is most impactful on development and learning. It has been our experience that the more ready the parent is to provide this for their child, the more quickly the child becomes immersed in daily fun and routines like drop off. Why? As the child looks at their parent for reassurance, they gauge their own anxiety by what is mirrored by their parent's expressions and composure. When the parents indicate that they feel safe and happy about what awaits the child, the child is more likely to look upon this separation with anticipation rather than anxiety.

Acknowledgement of your child's worries, a smile and a goodbye with reassuring words like "*I know you that you will miss me but you will be fine. I am coming back and you can tell me what you did at school today. I love you; I will see you soon. GOODBYE.*" It is at this moment that it is very important that you then smile and walk calmly and happily away. Lingering and acting worried is like saying to your child, "Sure you are scared – so am I!"

On our part? 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 we call "normalization, you will begin to hear more about their day and drop off time becomes easy.

## **UPDATES FOR CONTINUING (RETURNING) 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.

## **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 10. Any students with an INCOMPLETE file will not be admitted to school beginning on Friday, September 11, 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.

## **ID EMERGENCY FORMS**

Each fall we require ALL parents to complete a new ID Emergency Form 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. We are attaching a copy of the form to this email. Forms also went home with each child. Please COMPLETE AND RETURN TO SCHOOL as soon as possible. Please note: It is VITAL that we current phone numbers and email addresses on record! These are used to contact you in case of emergency, and also to email you any important information.

## **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.

## **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. Please do not send any foods into the school that contain nuts.

## **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 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 ONLY able to 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 afternoon snack treat and a happy birthday song. Please plan ahead with your child's teacher. Due to COVID some small modifications have been temporarily put into place. On this day the school will provide popsicles to the children in the class in lieu of parents sending birthday cupcakes or other treats from home. This is a treat and is not used as the children's snack as children will be served their nutritious snack prior to eating this birthday treat. Please refrain from sending toys and birthday favors as these often are lost or broken causing sadness instead of fun.

If you are planning a celebration such as a drive by of your home, 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.

## **ADVISORY BOARD**

Our schools have an advisory board made up of parents, teachers and other community individuals who can provide input regarding school events and topics that are pertinent to the high quality functioning of the program. This meets formally twice each year with those who are on the actual board.

Periodically, our Executive Director, Cheryll Ruszat, meets with parents for a session called "*COFFEE WITH THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*". These meetings act as an open meeting for any parents who wish to know more about Montessori or have ideas to share about school events or related topics. This year, due to COVID these will be ZOOM meetings and thus hopefully convenient for many of our parents to participate. Watch for the dates and times of these open forum "coffee" zoom meetings in the newsletters to come. We will ask you to sign up with the directors with the best email to send your zoom invitation to.

## **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. For the fall quarter, this class is being held on-line. 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.

**\*\*\*\*\* 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 – ZOOM**

There will be a special Kindergarten orientation on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup> with Miss Jennifer at 5:30 pm. Parents are encouraged to attend this important meeting to hear about learning goals and changes in school routines for the kindergarten children. Keep your eyes out for a zoom invite!

**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! Look for some fun art projects this month.



**DATES TO REMEMBER**

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| September 1  | First day of the Fall Term                |
| September 4  | <b>SCHOOL CLOSED-</b> STAFF INSERVICE DAY |
| September 7  | <b>SCHOOL CLOSED-</b> LABOR DAY HOLIDAY   |
| September 23 | Fall Begins                               |



**STAFF BIRTHDAYS**

|              |                              |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| September 10 | Miss Monika                  |
| September 17 | Mr. Tomas (Facilities Mngr.) |
| September 18 | Miss Brooke                  |
| September 21 | Miss Corey                   |



**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 17 | Mis Mayra         | 8 years |
| September 4  | Miss Monika       | 8 years |
| September 23 | Miss Stephanie F. | 6 years |