

MS. KAREN & MS. JENIFER'S 6-9 CLASS

THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Ms. Karen Reck, Head Teacher — Email: kreck@tmesnm.com

Ms. Jenifer McQuarie, Educational Assistant

THE SCHOOL DAY (Our 2009-10 class schedule will be posted on the school website shortly.)

The school day begins in the classrooms at 9:00am. Students may be dropped off from 8:30-8:55am. Contact the office for before and aftercare programs, if interested. Please follow school drop-off guidelines and be sure that your child is ready to leave your vehicle to ensure a safe and speedy exit in the drop-off lanes. We appreciate your cooperative efforts!

Students will begin quiet, independent work as soon as they arrive in the classroom. Individual or small group lessons are presented during the morning work cycle. It is important that your child arrives on time to fully participate in our classroom community. Children may be invited to participate in a cultural lesson, sharing time, celebration, community meeting or current event discussion. Our discussions will invite opinion, dialogue, and problem solving. We want every child to be there to participate!

In our class, students are given guidelines for daily work expectations. These include work in math and grammar with Montessori materials, journal writing (question of the day), handwriting, and/or spelling. Students also will also be asked complete follow-up work to their cultural (the sciences and social studies subject areas) lessons. Students may choose how to express their understanding — using writing, drawing and tracings to create small booklets, posters and/or research projects. These extension activities further encourage students to take individual responsibility for their work. Initially teachers will keep track of each student's work; later in the year students will take on more responsibility for this.

The end of our day always seems a bit hectic as the children complete classroom jobs, gather their belongings and come to closing circle. Please remind your child to bring a book to read during waiting-for-pick-up time in the commons area. This will help to make the last half hour of the day much more pleasant for all of us!

OUR CURRICULUM

We focus on the Montessori three-year curriculum. We will begin with the evolution of our solar system, creation stories, geology, chemistry and classification nomenclature. The Montessori curriculum involves self-discovery and invites the child to pursue different areas of study based on personal interests. Parents and teachers are a valuable resource to students as they pursue these interests.

We want each child's learning experience to be positive and fun, and for each to become self-aware, self-motivated, and empowered to take responsibility for her/his own learning. We encourage children to use their reasoning minds and their imaginations, and to work with others with compassion and respect for themselves, others, and the world in which we live.

COMMUNICATION FOLDERS & OUR CLASS WEBPAGE

A Communication Folder will be sent home each day. This folder may include your child's work and any important communication with TMES families. Please share the information in the folder with your child; your child will feel empowered and informed. Notes from home should be placed in this folder. We will check folders daily. We do not check backpacks.

As much as possible, we will be using email and the class webpage at www.tmesnm.com to communicate with families. Click on the "Student Life" bullet and scroll down to the link for our classroom. Class pages are in the process of being updated for this school year and we should be current very soon. We hope to greatly reduce paper use this school year.

SNACKS

The children are encouraged to bring a healthy morning snack. Some children may need an afternoon snack as well. On occasion we may eat snack together outside. On other days, the children may eat their individual snacks when they are hungry. We request nutritious snacks only and have attached a list of snack possibilities and birthday celebration ideas. Please prepare popcorn snacks in advance at home.

LUNCH AND RECESS

Our class has recess/unstructured play from 11:40-12:10pm. This is 50 minutes earlier than our recess was last year. Since it is traditional for a Montessori classroom to have an approximately 3-hour work period in the morning, we have scheduled lunch after recess. Please consider sending additional healthy snack items with your child to accommodate this later lunch period.

Our goal is for students to have **healthy, waste-free, environmentally friendly lunches**, and we need your support. Students should bring their lunch in a lunchbox, and whenever possible, pack foods in reusable containers. Beverages need to be in a thermos or reusable water bottle. (No sodas please.) Include flatware as necessary, **and bring two cloth napkins** — one for a tablecloth and one for a napkin.

Any uneaten food will be sent home in your child's lunchbox (rather than thrown away) so that you are able to monitor what your child is or is not eating. Our school's policy is that students not share food with each other. Please inform your child's teacher of any known food allergies.

BIRTHDAYS

We love to celebrate each student's special day. We will work with families to schedule birthday celebrations on or close to actual dates. For birthdays occurring during summer or holiday breaks, we try to schedule "half-birthdays" (6 months from the actual birthday). Students may bring a special sharing/show-and-tell and are welcome to bring a (preferably healthy) treat to share for 25 children and 2 adults. Please include any necessary serving supplies — napkins, plates, cups, etc.

COMMUNITY JOBS

Children will be assigned jobs to help out in their classroom community. Jobs are generally rotated weekly, and give the child opportunities to be independent and responsible.

CONFERENCES

Two Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are scheduled during this school year. Additionally, we will have Student Led Conferences, where students discuss their work and goals with their parents/guardians and teach a lesson to their adults with Montessori materials. Dates will be listed on our school calendar. Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are usually around 20 minutes long. Student Led Conferences run approximately 50 minutes.

If at any other time a concern should arise, we will contact you to schedule a conference. Likewise, please contact us to set up an appointment should you have concerns.

CLASSROOM HELPERS AND VOLUNTEERS

If you are interested in becoming a classroom helper, first contact the office for information on specific school policy requirements. Check with your child's teacher for current helper/volunteer needs. We will list these periodically on our class webpage. Potential classroom helpers are invited to first schedule a classroom observation, and then take some time to reflect on the learning styles in the class.

There are also lots of things we need help with outside the classroom. Please let us know if this is of interest. We appreciate your helping hands!

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Montessori classroom observations have a fairly specific format. After school has been in session for a few weeks and the children are into their daily routines, we invite interested TMES family members to contact the office for more information.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your children. Thank you in advance for a great year!

SNACK SUGGESTIONS & BIRTHDAY TREATS

- ◆ Fruit — fresh, dried, canned, fruit salad
- ◆ String cheese or cubed cheese
- ◆ Veggies, with or without dip
- ◆ Bagel with spread
- ◆ Trail mix
- ◆ Granola or dry cereal
- ◆ Quesadillas
- ◆ Finger sandwiches
- ◆ Bread with preserves
- ◆ Muffins and special breads
- ◆ Applesauce
- ◆ Whole grain crackers
- ◆ 100% fruit leather
- ◆ Nutritional bar or power bar
- ◆ Yogurt (check sugar and dye content on some products)
- ◆ Nuts

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

- ◆ Small paper cups can be used to make individual servings of any of the above.
- ◆ Fruit kabobs
- ◆ Tiny muffins
- ◆ Special breads
- ◆ Healthy cookies

Be creative, but please keep nutrition first! If you have questions about a particular birthday snack, check with your child's teacher.

Thank you for supporting your child's healthy food choices!