



A Message From Your Child's Teacher!

9/18/09

Dear families,

We hope this letter finds you excited to have your children returning to school after a wonderful summer vacation. We just want to take a moment to introduce ourselves to new parents, greet returning parents, and explain a few of our classroom routines. We would also like to thank you for allowing us to share in your child's learning experience. We know we will have an exciting year of growing and learning together.

Ms. Susan has taught at The Montessori Elementary School for the past four years. She has an elementary 6-9 certification from the American Montessori Society and a Level 1 Teaching License from the State of New Mexico. She completed her undergraduate degree at The University of Phoenix in business administration, and her graduate degree at The University of Phoenix in elementary education. She is also certified in the *Phonographix* reading program that was developed by Carmen McGuinness (a Montessori teacher).

This year a new Educational Assistant, Ms. Carol Briggs, is part of our classroom family. This is Carol's second year at TMES, but her 8th year as an educational assistant. Five of those years were spent working with special needs children. We are very fortunate to have Ms. Carol with us this year.

The first few weeks of school will be spent learning the routines and procedures of the classroom. Ms. Susan will also be assessing the children in reading and math.

We have enjoyed seeing returning students and getting to know new students. In order to help us do that, we are asking you, the parents, the ones who know your child the best, to take a few minutes and jot down a short paragraph about your child. You might wish to include his or her strengths and favorite activities. Also, please include something we can work on together this year to help your child improve (second and third grade parents may want to set some new goals, too!). Now is your chance to brag! What would you like to see your child accomplish? **Please send this letter with your child on Monday, August 24.**

The following pages contain information about classroom procedures:

THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day begins in the classrooms at 9:00am. Students may be dropped off as early as 8:30 a.m.. 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. **Daily morning circle begins at the start of our school day. It is important that your child arrives on time to fully participate in our classroom community.** In morning circle the children may participate in a cultural lesson, sharing time, celebration, or current event discussion. Our discussions invite opinion, dialogue, and problem solving. After circle, students are dismissed to work independently and to attend individual or group lessons.

Each child will keep a daily work proposal. This proposal will vary based on the individual needs of the students. The work proposal guides your child to set realistic expectations and organize her/his day accordingly. It empowers the child to take individual responsibility for her/his daily work.

COMMUNICATION FOLDERS

A Communication Folder will be sent home **every day**. Please make sure your child **returns this folder to class every morning**. This folder will 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 will not check backpacks and we will not send information home unless we can place it in the communication folder.**

CLASSROOM ITEMS

Please provide your child with a **re-usable water bottle** to use throughout the day. This will help eliminate germs throughout the school year.

SNACKS

The children are encouraged to bring a healthy morning snack. Some days 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 posted a list of snack possibilities and birthday celebration ideas suggested by the state of New Mexico. Please prepare popcorn snacks in advance at home.

LUNCH AND RECESS

Lunch recess times may vary slightly throughout the week due to our schedule of Fine Arts classes and other factors. Students will have time to enjoy unstructured play after their lunch.

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. To allow for more time eating lunch we will be allowing your child to warm up their lunch for 30 seconds only. Any uneaten food will be sent home in your child's lunchbox (rather than thrown away) to insure 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.

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.

BIRTHDAYS

We love to celebrate birthdays! Please feel free to bring in a healthy snack. Please see the posted suggested guidelines from the state of New Mexico for nutritious birthday snacks. At this time, we do not know of any allergies in our classroom. Please let us know as soon as possible if your child has a food allergy. We will revise this list upon your notification.

Your child may also bring in a favorite item to share on the assigned day. If the birthday falls on a week-end, we will celebrate on Friday.

CONFERENCES

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are scheduled three times this school year. Dates are listed on our school calendar. Conferences are usually 20 minutes long.

If at any other time a concern should arise, we will contact you to schedule a conference.

Likewise, please contact the office to set up an appointment with Ms. Susan, 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. Please check with your child's teacher for current helper/volunteer needs. We plan to send home a list of these periodically. 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!

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

Sincerely,

Ms. Susan and Ms. Carol