

learning - how to live - together



Primary Program

2015-16



"The hand allows the mind to reveal itself"

Dr. Maria Montessori

Primary Program

Entrance into the Primary class is based on readiness. Children usually enter the class between 2 1/2 to 3 years old. Therefore, most children spend 3 to 4 years in the Primary class, inclusive of the "Kindergarten Year".

The First Year is an introduction to the new environment and social acclimation. A secure foundation of self-discipline, independent functioning and self-confidence is formed.

The Second Year is a consolidation of skills and knowledge and a growth in competence and self-assurance.

The Third and Fourth Years are ones of unfolding and mastery. This is the time when the traditional types of learning, such as reading, writing, and math computations are visible. The skills are actually a byproduct of the more important foundational characteristics, such as independence, self-motivation, and concentration that the child has internalized and will possess throughout his /her lifetime.

Successful completion of the Montessori Primary program amply prepares the child for the challenges ahead in the first grade.

Classroom Snack

The Primary classes have a snack in the traditional Montessori manner. The snack procedure is designed to incorporate several lessons as well as provide a variety of foods. The children help prepare snacks and learn manners and the social graces associated with having a snack with others. Each day children will have available fresh fruit and vegetables.

Classroom Lunch

If your child stays past 12:00 p.m. lunch must be brought from home. When preparing lunch remember that your child can help prepare and choose what she/he likes to eat. Simple, fresh, and nutritious foods should be sent in the lunch box. State requirements of lunch for children at school requires every lunch to contain at least one serving of fruit, vegetable and a protein source.

Guidelines:

- Village Montessori is a nut free environment.
- Please no highly processed foods, squeezable food, or foods with high sugar content such as: muffins, cake, cookies or candy.
- Any inappropriate items will be sent home.
- VMS provides 2% organic milk and water. Do not send drinks
- Do not send cutlery

- Any items that require refrigeration must be packed with an ice pack. We cannot refrigerate all lunch boxes and the state requires food not to get above 45 degrees F.
- **Unconsumed Food** – Any portions of food or drink which are served to children or placed on the table for service and not consumed at that meal or snack by the children to whom the portions are served shall be thrown away.
- VMS recommends **re-useable containers**, for ecological reasons. Please label all containers with permanent marker.
- Lunch boxes must be **labeled on the outside** so they are easily identifiable by staff.
- Please send your child's lunch in a **plain lunch container**, without distracting logos or commercial cartoon images.
- No "fast food" is allowed.
- Children will be given ample time to complete lunch and then be asked to clean up. Staff may encourage your child to eat, but will in no way force your child to finish or feed your child.
- Please send nutritious food you think your child will like to eat.

Toys, Games and Other Items

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, games and other personal items to school. VMS provides an extremely interesting variety of daily activities for all students. Personal items such as toys brought from home are distracting and disruptive. Of course, if your child has an item related to a current topic of study, such as a book, etc., he or she may bring it in. If you are in doubt as to whether an item is appropriate, feel free to ask your child's teacher. Village Montessori is not responsible for items brought from home.

Nap/Rest Time

A nap/rest time is provided for children according to DHR regulations. Each nap child will have a small storage bin for his/her rest/nap items. This bin is small; we ask that you send in small blankets, pillows, and stuffed animals. These items are for nap time only. Please label all items. Items will be sent home on Fridays (or the last day of the school week). Please remember to return on Mondays.

Dress Code

Clothing:

- Items depicted on clothing should be of reality – no cartoons, kid characters or other distracting images.
- Solids, prints, or patterns are the least distracting in the classroom setting.
- Straps must be three fingers in width – no spaghetti straps
- Shorts and skirts must be fingertip length
- Shorts are recommended to be worn under skirts and dresses

Footwear:

- Flexible, practical shoes are recommended.
- Comfortable sneakers or leather shoes are most appropriate in a Montessori learning environment.
- No open toe shoes, slip-ons, flip-flops, sandals, or Crocs. **No light up shoes**
- No boots of any kind this includes as cowboy and rain boots

Accessories:

- Umbrellas are allowed
- No jewelry with the exception of pierced earrings
- Hats are for outdoor use only
- No belts or suspenders (elastic waistbands work best for children 2 1/2-5 yrs. Zippers and snaps can often be difficult)

Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing for a change of clothes. You will need to send in different clothes for winter. The winter break is a good time to change out the extra clothes that are kept at school.

Children play and work outdoors daily weather permitting. They will go out even for a short time in cold weather. Select clothing accordingly and remember to make sure your child has a warm coat, hat and mittens for cold weather.

Mark all clothing, including coats, mittens, and underwear **with your child's name**. Children use aprons for some exercises, such as painting, gardening, polishing, etc. However, clothing is likely to become soiled. Please keep this in mind when selecting school clothes. All clothing should be easy for the child to manipulate to enhance toileting independence.

Birthdays

Birthdays are momentous events in your child's life, and the classes like to celebrate the special day with the student and his/her parents. **About two weeks prior to your child's birthday, please inform the teacher** and she will tell you what you will need to celebrate this special day. Each classroom has its own traditions, which the children love, and your child's teacher will tell you about them during the year.

The teacher will acknowledge the occasion by a special Montessori Ceremony simulating the earth revolving around the sun. For the celebration, you are encouraged to send or bring a poster with a picture of your child at birth and one picture for each year of her/his life. You may also bring in **fresh fruit** as a simple treat for each student. If your child has a summer birthday and you wish to allow him/her to celebrate during the school year, please contact your child's teacher to arrange a special time. **Please do not send in goody bags, gifts, or birthday invitations.** Village Montessori will not distribute birthday party invitations, gifts, or thank you notes at school.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Please refer to our school calendar for conferenced dates. The teachers will determine how to divide the conferences to the greatest benefit of the children. Conference schedules will be given out two weeks prior to conference dates. If you cannot make your scheduled conference times, we ask that you try to switch with another parent and inform your child's teacher at least two days in advance. Please make every effort to schedule a conference during the designated conference days. Conferences are very important meetings which occur only twice a year for parents and teachers.

Parent Education Events and Study Groups

Individual conferences are held to discuss the individual child's experiences and progress. To understand these experiences and to learn more about the Montessori classroom it is important to attend parent education events and study groups. This will enhance your understanding at our personal conferences. Parents have found that study groups and parent education events improve parenting skills because suggestions are often given on discipline, preparing your home environment, and enhancing your child's learning experience at school.

Family of the Week

Opportunities for each child's family to provide fruits, vegetables and flowers will be offered a few times during the year. Your teacher will give a schedule for the year during the first few weeks of school. A reminder is given on the Friday before your week. The snack items are for the entire class for the week and should not be prepared in any way. **The children prepare the snack daily as part of the practical life lessons.**

Flower cutting and arranging is another wonderful part of the Montessori environment. The children love to walk in with a special bouquet of flowers. They get to cut the stems and arrange the flowers into small vases around the classroom; a classroom is always brighter with fresh cut flowers. A simple bouquet (no thorns please) from the grocery store or your yard is all that is necessary.

In the Classroom

Most of the work in the Primary class is not written. The children are working with concrete materials in the classroom. As a child gets older more and more written work will be brought home. Please remember in the Montessori classroom process is emphasized over product. Accuracy of results comes with practice. Some of the work coming home may not always have accurate results (e.g. misspelled words, incorrect mathematical answers). It is best not to point out errors, as your child is learning the process and may be discouraged from practicing if the work is not yet "perfect". When the teacher notices consistent erroneous results, he or she will correct the process. Please contact the teacher to discuss with the teacher if you have questions regarding the contents of your child's take-home work.

Advancing into Montessori Lower Elementary Class

Continuing her insightful work into the mind and development of the young child, Maria Montessori developed an excellent curriculum for the Elementary years. As with the Primary program for ages 3-6, the Elementary program is based on individualized instruction uniquely designed to meet the developmental, social and educational needs of the child from 6-12 years of age. It centers on an integrated vision of knowledge, emphasizing the inter-relatedness of fields of study while allowing each child the time and space to explore in-depth at his or her own pace.

The prepared Montessori environment maximizes independent learning and exploration on the part of the child. Each child works in an individual way with his own store of knowledge, allowing him to progress at his own pace. Montessori individualized instruction deals in the concrete, making use of manipulatives that materialize abstract concepts.

All subjects are introduced in the Elementary classroom. These include language arts, mathematics, geometry, botany, zoology, Spanish, geography, the physical sciences and the arts. Children are given key lessons that allow for open-ended, unlimited exploration in areas of specific interest to the child.

At Village Montessori Elementary is divided into two groups; Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary. The Montessori Elementary program is however, a six year program and is not complete until the 6th year. Not every child is ready to enter the Elementary program at age 6. Some children are better served in Primary until age 7. Each child will be evaluated by our Elementary teaching staff. The child's Primary teacher will work with an Elementary teacher to determine readiness for the Elementary program. Parents will be invited to observe in Elementary classrooms and attend Elementary parent meetings prior to the child's advancement to Elementary.

See the Village Montessori Handbook for our Discipline Policy and other matters not covered in this Primary Addendum.

Please sign and return this page to your child's teacher on the first day of class.

Please print your child's name _____

I _____ have thoroughly read the 2015-16

(parent signature)

Village Montessori Primary Addendum. I understand and agree to abide by the guidelines within.

Date: _____