



# Observation Checklist

This is your checklist. Take it with you when you observe a classroom at St. Joseph Montessori School. Then, take it with you when you observe at other schools. This tool will help you decide the best school for your child.

		SJMS	School #2	School#3
OBSERVATION DATE:		_____	_____	_____
<b>Notice These Things...</b>				
<b>The Classroom and School Environment</b>	Are there work areas/tables designed to facilitate interaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are there comfortable learning areas and multiple "activity centers"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is there an open space for gathering?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the room filled with good books, art supplies, animals and plants, science apparatus; is there a "sense of purposeful clutter"?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is it appealing? Is it a place where children would want to spend time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are students' projects displayed in the hallways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the library well-stocked and comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Classroom Work Atmosphere</b>	Are there different activities taking place simultaneously?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Are activities frequently completed by pairs or groups of students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is there freedom to work and move around, balanced with structure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is there a balance between independence and dependence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is there a high level of respect between all members of the classroom for each other, their work, and the materials they are using?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>On the Walls</b>	Do the walls proudly display students' projects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you see age-appropriate information for parent, as well as, student use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you see information about, and personal mementos of, the students who spend time together in this classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>The Students</b>	Do students appear eager and engaged, yet relaxed and comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do students often address one another directly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do students work calmly and quietly and in a cooperative fashion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do students ask questions at least as often as the teacher does?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sounds</b>	Do you hear the frequent hum of activity and ideas being exchanged?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you hear students discussing work, rather than a teacher lecturing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Teacher</b>	Is the teacher not at the "front" of the class, but working with students or sitting on the floor, so it takes a few seconds to find him/her?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Is the teacher's voice respectful, genuine, and warm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>When you walked in...</b>	Was the office staff welcoming toward visitors? In the classroom, teachers may not be able to acknowledge you initially, but did you feel welcome?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In the classroom, were students comfortable with the idea of having an observer? They should not be fearful or overly concerned with your presence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>