



September 2, 2011

Dear Primary Two Families,

We are happy to welcome you, your child and the rest of your family to our family at St. Joseph Montessori School. Our first few days of the 2011-2012 school year have been very busy. Many wonderful experiences are planned for the children, and unplanned one will also a great learning experience for us all. We will be exploring the continents of North America and South America this year. We will begin with North America soon.

Unit of Study for 2011-2012

August/September – “Be the Best You Can Be”

October and November – Native Americans – North and South America

December – December Celebrations

January and February – Peace

March - Weather

April and May – Summer Olympics

Peace Corner Lessons

August/September– Respect and Responsibility

October - Acceptance

November – Self Discipline and Self Control

December - Generosity

January– Compassion and Caring

February - Friendship

March– Good Judgment and Honesty

April - Courage

May –Perseverance

Arrival and Departure

School begins at 8:30 a.m. At this time, the children are either beginning a Special Subject class or are in our Class Meeting. It is important to us and to your child that he/she is on time so that he/she has a good start to the school day. School is over at 3:00 p.m. At that time, children may go home on the bus, be picked up in carpool or go to After Care. All carpool children must be picked up by 3:20. After 3:20, you will receive a call from a teacher to inform you that your child has been taken to After Care.

Lunch

The children eat lunch at 11:30 a.m. They may bring a packed lunch with two napkins and a drink or may order in advance from Wholesome Tummies. If for any reason your child does not have a lunch we will call you. If you are unavailable to bring your child lunch, we will make every effort to see that he/she will have something to eat.

Recess

Recess is at 12:00 p.m. The children are invited to bring in soft balls, jump ropes, stuffed animals, little plastic animals or people, Lego's, small cars, trucks or any non-violent games to play with at recess time. Please leave all electronic games and trading cards at home for they prove to be a distraction at school.

Composition Books

Periodically you will be asked to send in \$1 for a composition book. Eventually your child will have four books to use for his/her schoolwork. We found that the composition books are more durable than the spiral bound notebooks and will be used for 1 or 2 years. The 2nd and 3rd year children may bring in a Writing Journal (Composition Book) or purchase one from the classroom. First year children will have special Writing Journals in October. We will let you know the cost when the time comes.

Special Subjects and Class Schedules

See attached schedule for your child.

Homework

We feel that a small amount of homework is important for children. It helps teach responsibility and prepares them for future years in school.

Spelling- Children in Primary 2 will have spelling homework. The 2nd and 3rd year children will begin with spelling in late September and the 1st year children will begin spelling in October. The children will bring a spelling list home on Wednesday with a homework assignment that will be due the following Wednesday. The children will have a written spelling test and any misspelled words from the test are to be corrected at home and returned to school by the following Wednesday.

Rainbow Library – Primary 2's take-home reading program will begin later in the fall. Children will choose an appropriate book to take home to read to their family, then return the completed books to classroom.

Mathematics – Children in Primary 2 will have mathematics homework in the form of correcting a Math Drill. The 2nd and 3rd year children will begin Math Drills in early September on Wednesdays. The 1st year children will begin Math Drills later in September on Fridays. Any corrections will need to be corrected at home and the math drill needs to be returned to school by the following week.

All children need a homework folder that will travel in their backpacks between home and school everyday. Besides homework, home/school communications will be sent via this folder.

SSR-Sustained Silent Reading

SSR is a part of our classroom's curriculum. The children are asked to read a book that is within their ability for about 30 minutes. Please take some time with your child during the next several days to help them choose two books that he/ she feels comfortable reading. A good rule to follow in choosing a book with your child is if your child misses 5 words on a single page, the book is too hard. Please make sure the books are marked clearly with their name. It is important for the children to have books they have selected for SSR. If they do not bring in books, they will choose books from a special classroom collection.

Birthdays

We would love to celebrate your child's birthday or half-birthday at school! Due to classroom allergies and scheduling, you must let us know at least two days in advance when you would like to bring in a birthday treat. When sending a snack please send in 35 treats that can be served as a dessert with lunch. We encourage simple and healthy treats: fruit, muffins, oatmeal cookies, etc. Please do not send in any item that cannot be simply served to a child individually.

Sharing

Sharing is a time when your child may bring in an artifact, book, collection, etc. to share with the rest of the class. We encourage educational and curriculum-related sharing. Sharing is on the first Monday of each month and our first sharing day will be Monday, September 12th.

Classroom Refrigerator

Our classroom has a small refrigerator for the children to use for small lunch items. Please make sure your child's name is marked on the item.

Changes in Transportation

Please send in a note or email Kathy before 8:00 a.m. or the office after 8:00 anytime your child will be going home by a different means or with someone other than a parent. If your child normally rides a bus, the bus driver needs to be notified too. Please review these plans with your child.

School Policies

School-wide procedures and important information can be found in the SJMS Parent Handbook. Please read it carefully especially the information about Dress Code. Appropriate clothing shows self-respect. A recent addition to our Dress Code is the wearing of flip-flops. Because of safety concerns for the children, flip-flops are not to be worn during school hours. Also, the children are not to use the telephone, except in emergency situations.

Field Trips

An important component of the Montessori Primary class is to enrich learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. We do this by going out and investigating resources in the community on field trips and also through bringing guests into our classroom to share experiences. If you have any suggestions for an interesting field trip, please let us know. We look for field trips that enrich our curriculum, enhance our units of study and are unique! To drive on field trips or to volunteer in the classroom, you must take a class and be fingerprinted. More information can be obtained in the office.

Parent Classroom Volunteers

In past years parents and other family members or friends have volunteered special talents and skills with the class. We have had presentations about hobbies, careers, heritage and trips to other countries. We have also had classroom helpers who have read with the children or helped with art and cooking projects. Still other volunteers have helped drive on field trips and even helped plan field trips! The possibilities are endless and the children benefit greatly from these educational experiences.

Safety

We have a policy with the children regarding opening of school doors. The children have been instructed not to open the doors for anyone. Grace and courtesy are a valuable part of the fabric of Montessori life, yet we as a staff feel that safety takes precedent over this ideal. Children are not being rude when they walk past the door; they are following a safety directive.

Please remember when visiting the classroom during the school day to sign in at the office.

Class News Updates

Please sign up for Primary 2 School Notes update. We post reminders and “heads-up” information, weekly plans and changes in schedule. To sign up go to SJMS Website, “Homework On Line“, then click on “ P2”. Sign up to be notified when something new has been posted.

Curriculum Information

This section of our monthly newsletter usually contains information on what the children are working in the different areas of study. The first month of school we are busy assessing the children’s math and language skills and reviewing lessons with the children and getting reacquainted with the materials and the routine of the school day. New skills will be addressed soon.

We are looking forward to an exciting and peaceful school year. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Kathy and Jennifer

