



WEEKLY UPDATE – 10.20.17

Head of School Message - Ms. Martha

It is really helpful to understand some of the language that the Montessori Teachers use with children to see if you can replicate them at home. The most successful students I have experienced are children whose families are in alignment with Montessori philosophy. I wish to share this post from Motherly:

Montessori can be hard to sum up in just a few words—it is a philosophy on education and child development that runs deep. It's a way of seeing the world. I think one of the easiest ways to get an idea for what Montessori means is to listen to the language that Montessori teachers use. Montessori teachers use language that respects the child and provides consistent expectations. Words are chosen carefully to encourage children to be independent, intrinsically motivated critical thinkers.

Here are seven common phrases you'd probably hear in any Montessori classroom, and how to incorporate them into your home life.

1. "I saw you working hard."

The focus on process over product is a key tenet of Montessori. We avoid telling the children "good work" or "your work is beautiful" and instead comment on how they concentrated for a long time, or how they wrote so carefully and their work could be easily read by anyone.

Praising your child's hard work, rather than his results, helps instill a growth mindset where he believes he can improve through his own efforts.

Instead of telling your child, "You're a good boy," tell him "I noticed you being kind to your little brother yesterday when you shared your truck." This shows him you see his good behavior, without placing judgments on him. Instead of telling him, "You're such a good artist," try, "I noticed you kept working on your picture until you got it just how you wanted it."



2. "What do you think about your work?"

In Montessori, the child is his own teacher. The teachers are there as guides to give him lessons and help him but he discovers things for himself through the carefully prepared environment and materials.

Self-analysis is a big part of that discovery. When your child asks you, "Do you like my picture?" try asking her about it instead of just saying you love it. Ask her what she thinks about it, how she decided what colors to use, and what her favorite part is. Help her start to evaluate her work for herself, rather than looking for your approval.

3. “Where could you look for that?”

Independence is another key value in any Montessori classroom or home. Our goal as teachers is to help the children do things for themselves. So while it’s sometimes easier to simply answer a child’s question about where something is or how to do something, we often answer questions with another question such as, “Where could you look for that?” or “Which friend could you ask for help?”

If your son loses his shoe and you see it peeking out from under the bed, try asking leading questions, rather than just handing it to him. “Where were you when you took your shoes off? Have you checked your room?” This may take a little more time, but it will be worth it when he starts taking more initiative and coming to you less.

4. “Which part would you like my help with?”



In a Montessori classroom, children are responsible for many things, including taking care of their environment. Children often take great pride in this responsibility, spending time arranging flowers to put on tables, watering the garden, and happily washing the windows and tables.

Sometimes though, a job is just too big and overwhelming. In these cases, we ask the child how we can help. We don’t want to swoop in and “save the day,” sending the message that the child is not capable, but we also don’t want to leave the child overwhelmed. For example: If your child is tired, but needs to put her Legos away before bed, all of those pieces can be overwhelming. It doesn’t have to be all or nothing though. Try “which color would you like me to put away” or “I’ll put away the yellow pieces and you put away the blue” to show that you’re in it together.

5. “In our class, we” (Or at home— “In our home, we...”)

This little phrase is used to remind the children of any number of classroom rules and desired behaviors. Phrasing reminders as objective statements about how the community works, rather than barking commands, is much more likely to elicit cooperation from a child. “In our class, we sit while we eat” is less likely to incite a power struggle than “Sit down.”

Like all of us, children want to be a part of the community, and we simply remind them of how the community works. If you have a rule about walking in the house, instead of “stop running,” try saying “we walk inside our house” and see if you get fewer arguments.

6. “Don’t disturb him, he’s concentrating.”

Protecting children’s concentration is a fundamental part of the Montessori philosophy. Montessori classes give children big blocks of uninterrupted work time, usually three hours. This allows children to develop deep concentration, without being disturbed because the schedule says it’s time to move on to learning something else.

It can be tempting to compliment a child who is working beautifully, but sometimes even making eye contact is enough to break their concentration.

Next time you walk by your child while he’s focused on drawing a picture or building a tower, try just walking by instead of telling him how great it is. You can make a mental note and tell him later that you noticed him concentrating so hard on his creation.



7. “Follow the Child.”

This last one is an important one. It’s something Montessori teachers say to each other and to parents—not to the child. We often remind each other to “follow the child,” to trust that each child is on his or her own internal developmental timeline, that he is doing something for a reason. We search to understand. This reminds us to search for the reason behind the behavior. It reminds us that not all children will be walking by one or reading by four—they haven’t read the books and couldn’t care less about the milestones they are “supposed to” reach.

Following the child means remembering that each child is unique and has his own individual needs, passions, and gifts, and he should be taught and guided accordingly.

If you can’t get your child interested in reading, try watching what he does love—if he loves being silly, it may be that a joke book is what piques his interest, not the children’s classic you had in mind. Remembering to “follow your child” can help you see him in a different way and work with him instead of against him.

One of beautiful things about Montessori is that it is *so much more* than a type of education—it is a way of seeing and being with children.



Deer Season

It is the season for color changes on the trees, playful turkeys in the fields and deer in, well, everywhere! Please use caution as you travel the backroads as the “rut is on”!

Bonfire Bash Events

We would be remiss if we didn’t thank the incredible volunteers who have helped out this week and are scheduled to work tomorrow at the Bash. We appreciate you all so very much! The entire event lasts from 2 to 6 pm, but for those looking to schedule their time around naps and other appointments, here is a brief schedule of the events for tomorrow:

Magician Act (gym) 3:00-3:45
Tractor rides and Pumpkin Picking 2:00-2:45 and 4:00 to 5:30
Food 2:00-5:00
Face-Painting, Crafts and Games 2:00-6:00
Bonfire and S’mores (including Gluten Free!): 4:00-6:00

More details will be handed out, along with your vouchers for a free pumpkin, will be passed out at the welcome table near the front doors of the school. See you tomorrow!

Survey

The first part of our school’s accreditation self-study is to clarify our identity, mission, vision and core values through our mission and vision statements. To ensure our statements truly reflect our entire community, we ask that the RPMS community (including families, board members and staff) complete this survey to tell us what resonates with you.

The survey closes October 28.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LDYX9B5>

Missed the Toileting Seminar?

Not to worry! For those Toddler Parents (or other RPMS community members) working toileting with their toddlers, we have placed materials online for your to view at your convenience. Please go to our [website](#), under Programs - Toddler House. On the right hand side of the page, you'll find several articles on toileting including an interesting historical perspective on toileting through the ages!

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent Teacher Conferences appointment slots have been posted on SignupGenius. This is a great time to celebrate your child and discuss their progress with their teacher. **Kindergarten student parents are asked to sign up only for the kindergarten conference time; your child's morning progress report will be included at that time.** Please also note that conferences are being done during the **entire day** of Wednesday, November 1 (no school day) and the **evenings** of November 7-9 (depending on class). Due to our scheduling change this year, these are the only times offered for formal conferences this Fall.



[Click here](#) to sign up for Ms. Stacy's Conferences

[Click here](#) to sign up for Ms. Tracey's Conferences

[Click here](#) to sign up for Ms. Ellen's Conferences (non-Kindergarten students)

[Click here](#) to sign up for Ms. Mary's Conferences (non-Kindergarten students)

[Click here](#) to sign up for Ms. Monica's Conferences (non-Kindergarten students)

[Click here](#) to sign up for a **Kindergarten Conference**

[Click here](#) to sign up for an Elementary **GRADES 1-3 Conference**

[Click here](#) to sign up for an Elementary **GRADES 4-6 Conference**

Remember to log this time for volunteer hours!

EVENTS

Finding Events

Besides our weekly update, events are also posted on our [online Parent Google Calendar](#).

Coats for Kids Winterwear Donation Drive – Sept. 22-October 16 (bin in the lobby)

Toilet Training Meeting - October 12, 6:30 pm

Apparel Orders Due - October 15 (<https://www.companycasuals.com/rockprairie/start.jsp>)

Catalog Orders Due - October 18

Bonfire Bash - October 21, 2-6 pm

RSVP at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-bonfire7

STEM Session 2 begins - October 24

Elementary Word Parade - October 31

No School / Conferences Day - November 1

All Montessori Compass photos will be deleted on June 1, 2018 to plan for the next school-year. Throughout the school year please download any photos you would like to keep.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Family Volunteer Hours

RPMS families are asked to contribute 10 volunteer hours before the end of April 2018. Parent meetings, parent education events, and conferences are included in these hours; double attendance means double the hours! Always refer to the Weekly Update for volunteer opportunities. Families can log their volunteer hours in the binder found in the school foyer, or online at: <http://bit.ly/Vol1718>. *Any unfulfilled hours will be invoiced at \$10/hour after April.*

Bonfire Bash

The time is set for our annual Bonfire Bash: **Saturday, October 21, 2-6 pm**. We'll have tractor rides, food, games, the bonfire and even a magician! In order to pull off this event we need some help, either by helping with one-hour volunteer shifts or by donating items to earn volunteer hours. To view the list and sign up, please go to: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-bonfire6

Selling Scrip Cards at School

We need volunteers to sell Scrip cards on school days, during the busy times of day. This helps us stay in compliance with the IRS in having the majority of the program run by volunteers. Tasks include taking orders for inventory/non-inventory stock, taking money, and distributing in-stock cards. Help is always right across the hall in the front office! **Don't worry if you can't commit to every single time for your time slot that month. Whatever you can make would be great!**

To sign up for shifts in October, please go to:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-scrip2

To sign up for shifts in November, please go to:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-scrip3

Culvers Scoopie Night

We have four Scoopie Night fundraisers for the year, and we are looking ahead for adult servers to help at these events, with **one-hour shifts**. And of course, your kids are welcome to help! This is a fun way to get your volunteer hours in and get some pics for the memory books! Even if you can't volunteer, swing by for dinner or a dessert, and part of the proceeds go back to RPMS. Yum!

To sign up:

For Monday, Nov. 13 event:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-culvers11

For Wednesday, Jan. 24 event:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-culvers12

For Tuesday, April 24 event:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/10C0D4DA8AE2BA2F94-culvers13

