

Parenting Tip of the Month

September



Lower Elementary Teachers

These words reveal the child's inner needs; 'Help me to do it alone'. -Maria Montessori

"Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed."

-Dr. Maria Montessori

Hello Families,

We would like to take this opportunity to share with you our Montessori philosophy regarding homework in hopes it will enable you to understand our philosophy of homework in a Montessori school. Homework in a Montessori program is considered to focus on the 'process', not the 'product', which is an important cornerstone of our philosophy. We view the purpose of homework as a process, which offers the child an opportunity to develop the skills of responsibility and independence. Two ways in which homework can do this is by encouraging the child to independently remember to complete the homework, as well as to remember to bring his or her folder back and forth to school. According to our philosophy, homework is not meant as an opportunity to teach or practice academic skills, as children in Montessori classrooms work very hard in school each day. It is interesting that our philosophy on homework is also supported by the current trend of the '21st First Century Skills' that we, as educators and parents, are encouraging.

As parents and teachers of Montessori, we believe that children have an inborn ability and great desire to be independent. It is our responsibility to encourage this innate ability through guiding the children lovingly through this process. We begin to let go as the children blossom in their skills...eventually resulting in total independence. It is truly amazing what the children are able to do!

Some suggestions for enabling responsibility and independence for homework include:

*Help your child to determine a regular space in which to keep and complete his/her work.

*Encourage your child to complete his/her work independently, as well as to remember his/her folder by utilizing questions such as, "Do you have anything you need to do for school tonight?" or, "Will you need to bring anything to school with you today?" These types of loving and gently asked questions enable the child to process these thoughts on his or her own, and soon, the children will internalize the habit of remembering on their own!

*Recognize the joy the children experience as they develop these skills, and the confidence and pride it brings! Give authentic and specific compliments as they continue to remember, such as "I see that you remembered your work on your own...doesn't that make you feel wonderful?"

Finally, part of the process of developing independence is enabling children to experience the natural consequences of their actions.... and even, perhaps, a bit of disappointment. As children experience the feeling of disappointment in realizing that they forgot to turn in their Homework Folder, these feelings may enable them to internalize remembering to study, or remembering to be responsible for their folder. Thus, natural consequences can be a very important part of your child blossoming!

This year, our Lower El team together has decided to use a Montessori Homework Program created by Montessori teachers that will match our curriculum and materials as well as the Common Core math book to match the state standard. Our belief is that a Montessori based homework program will best match the DCS Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Our homework program begins in mid-September.

We appreciate your continued support and belief in the Montessori philosophy for your child. We encourage you to bring directly to us any questions or concerns you may have, and value working together with you to best meet the needs of your child. Thank you so much.

Material of the Month

September



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The 6 + 1 Trait Analytic Model For Writing Assessment

1. Ideas

The ideas are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with the details that enrich and develop that theme.

2. Organization

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the logical and sometimes intriguing pattern of the ideas.

3. Voice

The voice is the heart and soul, the magic, the wit, along with the feeling and conviction of the individual writer coming out through the words.

4. Word Choice

Word choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that moves and enlightens the reader.

5. Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear - not just to the eye.

6. Conventions

Conventions are the mechanical corrections of the piece - spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing, use of capitals and punctuation.

+ 1. Presentation

Presentation zeros in on the form and the layout of the text and its readability; the piece should be pleasing to the eye.