



Greetings Primary Families from Phoenix Montessori Academy! You have chosen Montessori, in particular, Phoenix Montessori Academy, because you value your child's social, emotional, spiritual and academic development. Therefore, this handbook was compiled to help introduce and guide you through the Primary Level environment. Many of the policies addressed in the *Family Handbook* will be repeated and further defined as they apply to this level.

Dr. Montessori believed, as we believe, that the child's work is to create the person she or he will become. To carry out this self-construction, children have innate mental powers, but they must be free to use these powers. For this reason, a Montessori classroom provides freedom while maintaining an environment that encourages a sense of order and self discipline. "Freedom in a structured environment" is the Montessori dictum that names this arrangement. Patterns of concentration, perseverance, and thoroughness established in early childhood produces confident and competent learning in the later years.

Thank you for allowing Phoenix Montessori Academy the privilege of sharing this Montessori experience with your child.

In Peace,
The Primary Staff

Beverly Pope
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General Information

Initial Goals

After the first five or six weeks of school, we expect each child to be able to:

- Understand the classroom rules of safety and respect:
 - Walking rather than running in the classroom
 - Using a soft voice, - rather than shouting
 - Speaking and acting kindly to others
- Choose work, follow through, and return work to its original place. This helps develop *focus, concentration, independence* and *coordination* in order to move ahead with more advanced activities and feel a growing sense of inner order and calmness.
- Respect the work of others by not interrupting, and by assisting only when invited.
- Respect the rights of others by being able to listen and participate in group activities and take turns when responding to questions or participating in games.
- Cooperate with the teachers by being able to listen to and follow simple directions without ignoring or offering inappropriate feedback.

Your insights into your child's background and patterns can help us in working cooperatively with you to reinforce these basic goals. This collaboration will help your child move forward and freely during the year and have a happy and enriching experience.

See **Enclosure I** for additional goals.

Arrival

Class begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. Punctuality is crucial so as to not disrupt the work period or cause your child unnecessary discomfort. Children arriving later than 8:30 are likely to arrive in the middle of the group time, or during lessons. ***If your child arrives after 8:30, they are to be taken to the Office where they will be escorted to their classroom by the Administrator.***

We ask that all parents say good-bye at the door and do not enter the classroom. This will make for a smoother separation as well as protect the concentration of those children who are already working. We understand that tardiness is sometimes unavoidable due to doctor appointments, etc.

Preparation of the environment is essential in a Montessori classroom. The teachers arrive by 8:00 a.m. in order to ready the environment for your child. Please wait in the hallway with your child until 8:15 a.m. before letting them enter the classroom.

Dismissal

Dismissal for half day students begins at 12:00 and ends at 12:15. Your child will be brought to carpool.

Dismissal for Enrichment and Full Day students begins at 3:00 and ends at 3:15. Your child will be brought to carpool.

Dismissal for All Day students is 5:30.

Attendance

The 0-6 year old child derives feelings of safety through consistency and predictability in his or her environment and routines. Promptness and regular attendance are just two of many constituents of that consistency.

Please notify the school when you know your child will be absent.

Clothing

The Montessori environment provides opportunities for the children to work with activities that may cause them to get wet and/or dirty. Additionally, on occasion a child may have a bathroom accident; therefore we ask that you provide your child with one or two changes of clothing. Clothing should be “child friendly” - children should be able to dress and undress themselves with minimal to no adult assistance. Make sure the clothes are seasonally appropriate. ***Please label your child’s clothing.*** Wet and soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home to be washed.

Occasionally, a child may need to borrow a change of clothes from a friend or from the school. *Please return these items clean and preferably by the next day.*

Footwear

Closed in shoes such as tennis shoes are highly recommended. Sandals, cowboy boots, shoes with heels, and party shoes are difficult to play in, as well as **unsafe** on the playground.

Please provide your child with plain indoor slippers to wear in the classroom.

Outdoor Environment

We like to take the children outside everyday, rain or shine. Please dress your child for the weather conditions. Sunscreen should be applied at home.

Sharing

Children may bring objects to school to share with their friends at group time. Examples of acceptable sharing are family photos, objects from nature, pictures from a family vacation, or educational books.

Please do not allow children to bring, *at any time*, toys, fake or real jewelry, tools or money. They are inappropriate for the academic environment and can become lost or damaged. These items will be taken away and returned at the end of the day.

Lunch

If your child stays for lunch please **label** your child’s lunchbox and include the following items, daily, along with their lunch: **cloth placemat, cup, and any necessary eating utensils.** We would like to cut down on the use of plastic utensils in an attempt to be good stewards of our environment. The children can wash the utensils after each use.

North Carolina Health Department guidelines require that children eat a *healthy, balanced meal, with all food groups represented.* Please help by packing your child only healthy meals. Candy, cookies, donuts, cakes, etc. will be removed from your child’s lunchbox and returned home. All lunches will be refrigerated. Please do not send food that requires heating or cooking.

Family of the Week/Snacks

Since children often get hungry during the morning, snack is part of the daily routine. It is a choice and the children serve themselves. To help with this confidence and skill-building experience, each family will be assigned a *minimum* of one week as **Family of the Week**. At this time, you will be asked to provide the children with healthy daily snacks and a bouquet of flowers for the week. From time to time we will also request napkins, paper towels, facial tissues, etc. You will be provided with a snack list on the Friday before your assigned week. On the following Friday, we will ask that you take home the classroom towels, polishing mitts, etc. for laundering. The assignment will be in alphabetical order, by last name. You will receive a copy of the schedule at orientation or before.

Birthdays

To help us celebrate your child's birthday at school you will be asked to send in pictures of your child – *one picture for each year of her or his life, starting at birth*. They will be used to create a personal timeline to be shared during the celebration. We would like to receive these pictures at least a week before the birthday celebration. Parents are invited to attend the celebration and should be prepared to share anecdotes at each year or stage of the child's life. If you are unable to attend, please write the information on the back of each picture. You may also bring or send in a healthy snack and/or a book for the class library. A reminder will be sent prior to your child's birthday. Summer birthdays will also be celebrated at the parents' request.

Mailbox

Each child will have a "mailbox" for any work that she or he elects to take home. Keep in mind, however, that during the 3-6 years, children are naturally interested less in creating a Product than they are in the Process of their work. Additionally, much of the work in the classroom involves the Montessori Materials and will not result in a paper product. For this reason, your child's mailbox will probably be empty more often than not. Rest assured that your child is working busily and productively throughout the day!

Illness

Please respect the classroom environment by keeping sick children at home. If your child shows signs of illness during school hours, you will be called to pick her or him up. We understand how difficult this can be for working parents to break free during the day, so please make arrangements with a friend or relative in advance, (insert comas) for an out of the ordinary pick-up. ***Children must be fever- and symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school following an illness.***

For the sake of the other children, please inform us immediately if your child has been diagnosed with an infectious illness. Some examples of infectious illnesses include: impetigo, pink eye, ringworm, roseola (any rose colored rash, especially German measles or rubella), strep throat, chicken pox, croup, whooping cough and head lice. Please note this is only a partial list.

If your child shows signs of a fever, nausea, diarrhea, and any other symptom of illness, please do not bring or send them to school. Administering any medication that relieves symptoms of an illness is not the same as being *fever- and symptom-free*.

Field Trips

While 5-6 year old children are more tolerant of change in the environment, the younger children require more consistency and predictability. For this reason, full-class field trips will be limited and will require driver/chaperones. Each year the full class will go on two field trips - one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Any additional field trips will be dependent on how well the class normalizes. **School uniforms must be worn on all field trips.**

Observations

During the first six weeks the children will be working to make the classroom environment their own, and therefore, outside visitors or observers will not be permitted. However, parents are invited and encouraged to observe the classroom after that time! *Please schedule observations a minimum of one day in advance, with the Office Administrator.*

See **Enclosure II** for Observation Guidelines

Items Needed By Orientation

Please refer to the orientation letter received earlier in the summer.

Grace and Courtesy

As adults, let us model grace and courtesy for our children inside and outside of the school environment. We ask that the children and adults use gentle voices and walking feet in class as well as in the hallways of our school. Please help us by respecting and reinforcing these rules when you drop off and pick up your child. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Communication

It is very important to have an open line of communication between teachers and families. However, when children are present in the classroom, our primary focus is *them*. For this reason, you have been provided with other ways to keep us informed. If you need to speak with a teacher, please wait until the afternoon to do so. You may also call the school and leave a message, jot down a note on paper that will be provided outside of the classroom door, send in a note, or via email. Mornings are not a good time for parent communication unless a conference has been scheduled in advance.

All school wide activities, updates, and reminders will be relayed by the School by means of email. Additionally, you will receive email Newsletters from your child's teacher keeping you informed of classroom activities.

In addition to informal dialogue, there are two formal Parent/Teacher Conferences for new and returning students scheduled for the school year. Conferences for children new to Phoenix Montessori Academy will be scheduled approximately six weeks after the beginning of school. Refer to the school calendar for the dates of these conferences. **It is strongly recommended that BOTH parents attend.** A sign-up sheet will be posted outside of the classroom no later than one week before the start of conferences. If these dates are impossible for one parent, please speak to the teacher in advance in order to reschedule for a date when both parents are available.

Daily Schedule

This is an example of our class schedule. Understand that other than the arrival time, these times are approximate. Montessori is child centered; therefore, the schedule is child dependent.

Arrival Time	8:15 – 8:30
Outdoor Time	8:15 – 9:00
Work Period (includes group time and individual snack)	9:00 – 11:45
Personal Hygiene	11:45 – 12:00
Dismissal for Half Day students	12:00 – 12:15
Lunch (Enrichment)	12:00 – 12:45
Enrichment Period	12:45 – 2:45
Clean-up	2:45 – 3:00
Dismissal for Enrichment/Full Day	3:00 – 3:15
Dismissal for All Day Students	5:30

❖ Brief Overview of the Primary Classroom Environment

Children in the Primary Program possess what Dr. Maria Montessori called the *absorbent mind*, the ability to absorb all aspects of one’s culture and environment without effort or fatigue. As an aid to this period of the child’s self-construction, individual work is encouraged. The use of individual materials permits a varied pace that accommodates many levels of ability in the classroom. Because the children work individually with the materials there is no competition in a Montessori classroom. Dr. Montessori believed that competition in education should be introduced only after the child has gained confidence in the use of the basic skills. Each child relates only to her or his own previous work, and progress is not compared to the achievements of other children.

Montessori classrooms are multi-age communities that follow a three-year cycle. Each three-year cycle corresponds with the developmental stages of childhood. Dr. Montessori termed these the “Planes of Development.” The characteristics of each plane are unique. The classrooms are specially prepared and the teachers trained accordingly to serve the developmental needs and interests of the children at each level. Multi-age classrooms

also nurture continuity and strong relationships between students and teachers. The older children have the opportunity to practice leadership skills while reinforcing their knowledge through teaching their younger peers. The younger children have a model of which to aspire.

It is the intension to help the child to develop:

- Self discipline
- Respect for others
- Patience and the ability to share
- Independence
- Good work habits
- Care and respect for the environment and others
- Self confidence and self reliance
- The desire to make a difference in the world

The Montessori classroom consists of the following areas: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics and Culture.

Practical Life

The foundation for all learning is found in Practical Life. It is here that the child acquires *order, concentration, coordination, and independence*.

Using the child's natural inclinations as a point of departure, Dr. Montessori structured various works to help the child to satisfy the need for meaningful activity. For these works, familiar items are used which the child recognizes from the home environment. They are exciting to the child because they allow the child to imitate adults. Imitation is one of the child's strongest urges during the early years. As a child becomes involved in a work the span of concentration gradually lengthens. The child learns to pay attention to detail as an ordered sequence of actions is followed. Finally, good working habits are learned as the child finishes a work and puts that work away before beginning another work. The works or tasks in the Practical Life area help the children to perfect their coordination so they will be able to work, at a later time, with the more intricate academic materials. Concentration and attention are needed for learning to take place.

Sensorial

Young children explore their surroundings through the constant use of their senses. Since the child quite naturally uses all of her or his powers of observation during the early years, Dr. Montessori felt this was the ideal time to give the child equipment which would sharpen the senses and enable the child to understand the many impressions received through them. Each of the Sensorial materials isolate one defining quality such as color, form, texture, size, weight, sound, smell, etc.

The developmental aim of the Sensorial materials is the refinement of the ability to observe, compare, discriminate, differentiate, reason, decide, and solve problems. Sensorial helps with the construction of an internal, cognitive system which is orderly and logical. Another aim of the Sensorial materials is the preparation of tackling work in other areas of the classroom. An example of this would be the knowledge of color and color design which prepares the child for art.

Language

Language is not only a distinct area in the environment but runs parallel with other activities in the classroom. The environment is designed that all activities feed naturally toward the development of the skills required for learning language - writing and reading.

The Primary child is in the sensitive period for language. The absorbent mind is adding new words at a rate that will never be the same. Language development runs throughout, with books, group time activities, conversation, and vocabulary enrichment. The concept of Indirect Preparation was introduced when Dr. Montessori discovered that through the Sandpaper Letters and the Moveable Alphabet the child could simultaneously prepare himself for reading and writing.

The sandpaper letters provide the child with auditory discrimination as well as the muscular memory of each letter. By using the moveable alphabet, the child begins to figure out (in-code) words on her or his own. It is a stimulating and fun learning process that often happens spontaneously. Montessori referred to this process as an “explosion into writing.” Language skills alone are not the whole of the experience in a Montessori classroom. It is of primary importance to develop a love of language and of literature. You can help your child take the first steps towards literacy by emphasizing attitudes and modeling a rich language experience at home. Poems are a wonderful way for your child to develop an appreciation of our language. Re-reading his favorite story with love and patience is another.

Here are a few suggestions to nurture your child's language development:

- Read a story to your child every day.
- Hold your child while you are reading.
- Have a conversation about the book before, during and after you read it.
- Relate the stories in the book to real life events.
- Let your child see you reading for enjoyment regularly.
- Point out examples of words or letters inside and/or outside your home such as signs.
- Monitor your child's TV viewing and talk about the programs.
- Explain unfamiliar words or experiences to your child.

See **Enclosure III** for additional suggestions.

Math

The perceptual skills already acquired through materials in the Sensorial Area lay the foundations for counting and arithmetic.

The mathematics activities help the child to learn and understand the concepts of math by manipulating concrete materials. This work gives a solid understanding of mathematical principles, prepares for later abstract reasoning, and helps to develop problem-solving capabilities. The layout for presentation of the math materials is from left to right and top to bottom (reading presentation) except when working with place values which is right to left as in computations/operations.

Culture

Enriching each child's appreciation of the world is an important part of the Montessori

experience. The Cultural area includes outdoor environment activities, music, art, movement, science and geography. These subject areas are presented as separate subjects lessons that are also carefully integrated into the whole learning experience.

❖ **Suggestions for Preparing a Montessori Home Environment**

It is very important that a child be allowed to participate in the everyday life of the family. It is through this participation that crucial aspects of her personality and intellect will develop. As a child becomes skillful at carrying out everyday household tasks, she discovers the joy of learning and of purposeful activity. She feels that she too, has something useful to contribute to the family. Through working at and eventually mastering these tasks, she develops a sense of order or sequence; she grows in independence and self-control, and her sense of self-respect is strengthened.

The child has a natural tendency for independence. When your child performs some activity which is intended to help take care of the home, or of herself, she gets a lot of pleasure from her own efforts and does not need to depend on your constant praise. Your gracious smile is all that counts! Even if the result is less than perfect by adult standards, *do not redo her project in front of her, and if possible, do not correct any part of it at all.* It is not really important if she puts her sweater on backwards, her shoes on the wrong feet, or her shirt inside out; what is important is that **she has done it herself, without having to depend upon an adult.** With practice, she will be able to carry out the activity more perfectly.

As she practices, too, she will become able to perform the physical parts of the activity with ease; and she will then begin cycles of repetition. She may button and unbutton her coat many times, or she may polish the same piece of silver many times over, even after it is shining. These cycles of repetition may be annoying to adults because they seem unnecessary. However, for the child, the activity is more important than the end result, and repetition helps her to work with interest and, eventually, to develop concentration.

The following are lists of suggestions of items, which would be appropriate in the child's environment to help her on the road to independence. You are not obligated to make dramatic changes at home, but please give the suggestions some honest thought. Do what you think would be helpful to your child and your family.

Room by Room

Living Room

- a small, comfortable chair near a good light
- attractive and interesting objects that the child can safely handle

Bedroom

- a low clothes rod and hooks in closet
- special, reachable place for raincoat, boots, snowsuit, shoes and other clothing
- a low bed that the child can get into and out of by herself

- toy shelves, ample and low (toy shelves are preferable to a toy chest or box because each separate toy can be attractively displayed.)
- a small table and chairs
- a low shelf for the child's books

Bathroom

- a mirror at child's eye level
- toothbrush, toothpaste and comb within reach
- small-size tube of toothpaste for child's use
- towel, washcloth and towel rack within reach
- step-stool at sink so child can turn on faucet and wash hands
- toilet paper accessible to child

Kitchen

- a chair for the child that raises her to a comfortable level at the table (maybe a booster chair)
- some arrangement so the child can get herself a drink of water at the sink when she wants it; for example, a step-stool and a low-hung dispenser for paper cups
- sponges and towels at child's level so she can wipe up her spills
- a low drawer that contains any materials she needs for helping take care of the home

Try to tell your child the correct name of each object she encounters in the home.

Activities Your Child Can Perform at Home

Water

Turning a water faucet on and off.

Scrubbing sinks

Material: a sponge 2"x3", a small container (pepper shaker) of baking soda with only one hole uncovered works very well

Show the child slowly and carefully how to apply the baking soda, turn on the faucet, and scrub the sink with the sponge. Show her how to rinse.

Let her then scrub the sink herself. You may want to apply the baking soda the first few times, but later she can do it herself.

Vacuuming

Material: a vacuum cleaner

Most children love to run vacuums. Show the child how to connect the parts of the vacuum. Show her how to turn it on and off and how to clean different parts of the rug. You may want to make the rule about who plugs it in.

Pouring

Material: a small attractive pitcher (Cream pitchers are a good size)

The child can pour milk, water, and juice for herself and others.

At first, the pitcher should contain only enough liquid to fill a glass or cup two-thirds

full. Later it should contain enough for more than one serving.

Dusting

Material: pretty flannelette cloths cut to 6"x6", a baby's hairbrush or small soft paintbrush, place to put dirty cloth.

Call child's attention to the dust. Ask her if she would like to help you. Show her how to wrap the cloth around her fingers and wipe away the dust in slow, careful strokes, changing position of the dust cloth as she notices dust collecting. The brush is used for carved furniture and inside corners.

The child can dust furniture tops, legs, baseboards, corners, ornaments, and low shelves.

Helping unload groceries

Put bags on floor. Let child hand you things and put away whatever items go at her own level. Some cans are too large to be lifted safely by a child.

Sweeping

Material: a small broom, child-size brush and dustpan

Show child how to sweep dirt into a pile with the broom. Hold dustpan slightly tilted against the floor and sweep dirt into it with the little brush. Carefully carry the dustpan to the wastebasket and empty it.

Setting the table

Child helps parent put out dishes and silver, and carries them to the table one piece at a time. Later, parent sets one place as an example and the child sets a place for each member of the family. Finally, the child sets the table by herself, counting out each piece she needs. Of course, items should be stored within reach of the child.

Sponging off plastic tabletops and counters

Material: small sponge 2"x3"

Show child how to wet and squeeze out sponge from a faucet. The child carefully sponges off counters, etc., putting crumbs in a pile. She can then brush crumbs into a small dustpan.

Putting away toys

This must become a habit. Encourage your child to place each toy on the shelf after she has used it. In any case, when the child is finished playing, all toys should be returned to their places. There should only be 10 toys on the shelves in the play area. This helps with maintaining order, while precluding over-stimulation at play and much frustration at clean-up time.

Other activities you could develop:

- rolling socks
- folding cloths, handkerchiefs, linens
- storing cloths and linens
- folding and putting away his own underwear, socks, shirts, etc.
- weeding
- raking leaves

- watering plants indoors and outdoors
- helping wash a car
- helping wrap packages
- washing and drying dishes (you could begin with spoons, plastic dishes, refrigerator dishes, Tupperware; later, when the child is confident about washing dishes, you could add breakable items of a manageable size like cups and saucers, dessert dishes, cereal bowls)
- sorting clothes for laundry
- polishing shoes
- polishing small silver or brass items

With a little thought, almost any household-maintenance job can be structured so that the child can carry it out or at least help in the doing. It is important to provide the child with small implements that she can easily manage. It is also important to take time to show her how to carry out the activity, using slow, precise movements so she can follow you with ease. Do maintain a friendly attitude and a sense of humor, even if at first the child's efforts seem to make more of a mess than before she began. Remember to praise her (*a little*) for her efforts. Before long, you will find that her help really is help, and that she really is competent in helping to take care of her home.

"We should help the child, therefore, no longer because we think of him as a creature, puny and weak, but because he is endowed with great creative energies, which are of their nature so fragile as to need a loving and intelligent defense."

Absorbent Mind, Maria Montessori

I Did Nothing Today

Author unknown

*When children come home at the end of the day
The question they're asked as they run out to play
Is "Tell me, what did you do today?"
And the answer they give makes you sigh with dismay
"Nothing - I did nothing today!"
Perhaps "Nothing" means that I read a book,
Or...with a teacher I got to cook,
Maybe I painted a picture of blue,
Or heard a story about a mouse that flew.
Maybe I wrote in my journal myself,
Or found a great book on the library shelf.
Maybe I helped a friend today,
Or went to my favorite area alone,
Maybe today was the very first time,
That my scissors followed a very straight line,
Maybe I sang a song right to the end,
Or worked with a special brand new friend.
When you're three, four, or five your heart has wings
And "nothing" can mean so many things.*

Enclosure I

General Goals for the Student

We want each child to:

- work and play together and experience the give and take of cooperative democratic living and learning
- learn to respect each other by showing concern, love, and appreciation
- feel comfortable with accepting adults and secure in a situation away from home
- develop skill in social graces by practicing good manners and courteous behavior
- communicate with confidence and skill by developing one's vocabulary
- express one's thoughts clearly and to express honest feelings
- know, accept, and appreciate oneself as a growing learning person
- learn and develop a sense of self-worth by having many successful experiences
- be able to handle, not repress, frustration, anger, hate, fear, and sometimes failure
- learn independence and self-confidence by developing the ability to care for oneself and one's environment
- learn when necessary rules and limits are followed, there is
- freedom to choose activities, explore materials and work independently or with others
- understand there is a working order for all things, and to find and follow a sequence to reach a logical conclusion
- have opportunities to manipulate and solve problems using good materials kept in excellent condition and order
- develop concentration skills by being allowed to work freely on self-chosen tasks without interruption from adults or other children

To protect the rights of the child, the adult will intervene if the child is DISTURBING others, DANGEROUS to self or others, or DESTRUCTIVE to the environment.

Enclosure II

Observation in the Classroom

Thank you for coming to observe your child's class. For you and your child's comfort and convenience, please observe the following procedures:

- Observation directly in the classroom should begin by the parent coming in quietly and avoiding eye contact with any children.
- Whisper to your child or others who come to you that you came to observe and that you are not allowed to talk or move around. Avoid further conversation.
- If your child is involved in a situation of which you are critical, try to determine what you can do at home to help your child overcome such difficulties. Does she need more encouragement, more self-confidence, more opportunities for concentration and independence? The school is a supplement to the home environment and the children only spend a small portion of their day here.
- Please don't judge the behavior of any one child. Remember you are only seeing them one day and for a small portion of that day. We all have times when we are not at our best.
- If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call or write a note. The teacher will be glad to answer any questions or discuss any concerns you have.

The purpose of the observation is to give you the opportunity and privilege of observing your child and other children in the process of self-construction. Your aim is to objectively watch the children in this process so that you may better understand the needs of your child and all children, and the Montessori philosophy.

What to Look for During Observation

- ❖ An environment that is clean, neat, and as beautiful as possible.
- ❖ A place for everything, and everything in the classroom at child height, readily available to those who can use it.
- ❖ Are there children working independently?
- ❖ Are there children concentration even though there may be distractions around them?
- ❖ Are children caring for the environment: putting work away when finished, picking up what has accidentally fallen, cleaning up their messes, handling the materials with care?
- ❖ Are the teachers pleasant and patient with the children?
- ❖ Do the teachers move calmly and speak softly?
- ❖ Is the teacher the focus of the classroom, directing all activity as in traditional school, or is she there as a "servant", tending to the needs of those children who need her?

Watch and listen for the activity and noise level. As children arrive, the class becomes noisy and restless up to a point. The activity and noise level may rise and fall several times during the morning, but you may notice it rise to a peak sometime between 9:30 and 10:30 and then gradually calm down without interference from the teachers. Noise and restlessness gradually increase near the end of the morning.

Listen and watch Enjoy your visit!

Enclosure III

“Home” Work

Parents can be important partners with the teacher in assisting the child on her journey towards writing and reading. Below are several key “sound games” you can play with your child when you find an extra moment in the day. Many parents have found it easiest to play these games *on the way to and from school, or while cooking dinner*. Five minutes here and there can make a significant difference to your child.

“I Spy”

- If your child is working on beginning sounds, you can say, “I spy with my little eye something that starts with mmmm and it’s yellow.”
- “I spy with my little eye a mmm – aaa – ttt, do you know what it is?” The child tries to guess the object by blending the sounds together. (more advanced)

“Let’s Think Of Words That Start With _____”

- Parent and child try to think of words that start with the sound of ____ (fill in the blank with the SOUND of any letter in the alphabet, i.e. “sss – snake, sit, soup,” etc.)

Please remember that it is NOT important to teach your child the name of the letters of the alphabet for them to begin to write or read; however, they do need to know the SOUNDS each letter makes. This is what the teacher focuses on when presenting the lesson.

“What Sounds Do You Hear In This Word _____?”

Once your child is able to play the sound games with ease, let her start to practice identifying all the sounds in any given word. “What sounds can you hear in the word pig? ... ppp – iii – ggg” (words should be phonetic)

Enclosure III con’t

Below is an example of phonetic sounds for each letter of the alphabet.

a – “apple”

n – “napkin”

b – “bat”

o – “octopus”

c – “cat”

p – “pit”

d – “dog”

q – “quilt” **

e – “egg”

r – “rat”

f – “fish”

s – “sit”

g – “gum”

t – “top”

h – “hat”

u – “up”

i – “it”, “itch”

v – “violin”

j – “jump”

w – “wig”

k – “kite”

x – “box”, “ox” ##

l – “lip”

y – “yellow”

m – “milk”

z – “zebra”

** The sound “q” is pronounced with the “u” that always follows – “kwuh”.

The sound “x” is sounded like a hard “c” (cat) followed by an “s”. Because there are few words starting with the “x” sound, we give words that have the sound “x” in them, i.e. lox, fox, etc.