September 6, 2019

Dear Parents,

We were happy to welcome the children back into the classroom after the long Labor Day weekend. Everyone quickly, happily, and busily settled back into our routine of rigorous academics in the mornings and cultural studies in the afternoons.

In addition to our academic lessons and studies, the children have lessons on grace and courtesy, as well as lessons in peaceful problem solving during our daily class meetings. Dr. Maria Montessori observed children over many years and throughout many cultures. Her observations led her to divide the children's educational and psychological growth and development from childhood to adulthood into four planes of development, divided into stages of 6 years. Therefore, the 6-9 year old child enters the Second Plane of Development. Montessori observed that this age child is in a sensitive period for:

- social order and peer relationships
- moral justice and fairness
- preference of working in groups
- strong sense of moral justice and fairness
- more cognitive thinking
- reasoning skills beginning to develop
- wanting to know cause and effect
- appreciating diversity and developing a sense of community and culture
It’s Elementary, My Dear Parents!

For these reasons, we focus highly on peaceful problem solving skills to meet the needs of this age child. We follow Dr. Jane Nelsen’s format for class meetings with Positive Discipline and Dr. Ross Greene’s Collaborative Proactive Solutions for understanding the child’s perspective in solving the problem.

For problem solving, the children have several choices:

1) Choose to solve the problem directly with the classmate.
2) Ask a teacher for help in problem solving.
3) A child may choose to ignore the problem (because some problems are small and we can turn the page).
4) Students may choose to put the problem on the class “agenda.” During the morning meeting, problems on the agenda are solved with support of a teacher and the help of the group (if invited). Any child with his or her name on the agenda for a problem knows that “no one is in trouble” and that we are “looking for solutions and not blame.” The children have a respectful dialogue to use in problem solving. Students are also not required to problem solve in the group if they would rather solve it privately. A teacher then helps to facilitate the problem coming to a resolution.
5) Problems that have been worked on but not solved/resolved may also be put on Ms. Janice’s desk to be solved with her at a later time.
It's Elementary, My Dear Parents!

The 2nd and 3rd year students will hold a class meeting demonstration at the Back to School Night, which will be held on Thursday, September 19 from 7:00pm-7:45pm. The 1st year parents will meet from 6:00pm-6:45pm without their children present. All parents are invited to attend the class meeting demonstration. We will also be sharing more about the Montessori philosophy and how it relates to our plans for a fabulous school year for your child during this meeting. Please mark your calendars for this important event, as we have so few meeting times to share during the year.

Finally, please know we appreciate your communication when problems arise. The children will seem completely happy at school, but then may share issues with you at home about school. Please feel comfortable letting us know - it takes a village! We will work hard to support your child in finding a resolution.

We wish everyone a happy weekend!

Sincerely, The E1 Teachers