



Welcome to Elementary 1

"We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe and are connected with each other to form one whole unity." Dr. Maria Montessori

July 28, 2021

Dear E1 Parents,

The Elementary 1 teachers would like to welcome your child and your family to our classrooms. We are planning an enriching school year and we look forward to partnering with you in giving your child the best educational experiences possible. An important characteristic we want to encourage within your child is a continued interest in life-long learning.

To that end and in keeping with the Montessori curriculum, we will offer stimulating, challenging, and engaging lessons. Our lessons will of course include the fundamentals of academic rigor in reading and math. However, we will also reach beyond these standard subjects to include an emphasis on world geography and the fundamental needs of humans. We will offer a broad study of the biomes of the earth, as well as the people, plants, and animals that make their homes and sustain their lives within these different biomes. Science by way of fun, hands-on experiments is a learning experience the children enjoy because they manage their own experiments and offer their own observations and hypotheses. With our lessons in art and art history, we will bring the children to local museums and introduce them to famous artists and different forms of art production. We offer the children a vast array of cultural studies to meet the unique needs of this age child during this sensitive period of growth from 6-9 years old. The Montessori Cosmic Curriculum is one that our students find captivating and which offers them the opportunity to understand the universe in which we live.

Of course, a vital part of our work is in reading, writing, and mathematics. These subjects are usually taught individually to one child or in small groups. Here, mastery

of skills is emphasized and supported while each child will be encouraged to work to his or her own potential and capabilities. There will be no ceiling or limits, therefore most of our students excel beyond grade and national standards. We believe in and are committed to the Montessori curriculum and its appropriateness for the 6-9 year old child and we are proud to offer this work to your children.

Another important component of your child's education is emotional and social growth, including learning how to problem solve peacefully. We are committed to providing lessons that support the children in their social and emotional development with daily meditations, class meetings, and lessons in conflict resolution. As the 6-9 child ages and works towards independence, we facilitate problem solving and encourage that sense of independence and autonomy for the child over his or her day. Therefore, we will respect the children's privacy in conflict resolution and only notify you when we observe an ongoing issue or when, on a rare occasion, a child has been physically hurt. We appreciate your support and understanding to this end. We also encourage you to communicate with us when your child shares with you an issue at school that has not yet come to a resolution or that we may not be aware of yet.

Because we value your family's time outside of school and will make the most of our time with the children during school hours, we will not burden your child with an overload of traditional homework. We do ask, however, that you monitor your child's recreational reading and be sure that s/he is reading for 20-30 minutes each day at home. Developing the habit of reading for pleasure is critical at this time. To this end, we have a classroom library which includes hundreds of fiction titles from various grade levels. The children may select books for at home reading and may always have one book from school at home. If your child begins a book and dislikes it, please have your child return it to school to exchange for another book that he or she may find more enjoyable. If you are the parent to a 2nd or 3rd year student, please send your child back to school on the first day with their New Practice Readers, along with any AR books if they have them.

We strongly believe that communication between school and home is vital. Therefore, we will send your child's completed work home in a weekly envelope on every Friday. We ask that your child return the empty envelope to school every Monday. We will communicate with parents through a weekly note in the Friday folder email from the office. This weekly note, "It's Elementary, My Dear Parents," includes important information regarding lessons presented during the week, life lesson topics covered in class meetings, announcements of upcoming events, and photos of your children at school. Furthermore, we will send written progress reports throughout the year. Other communication will be sent through e-mail. We host two conference times during the school year and of course are available by phone and scheduled appointments as needed.

The 6-9 child is growing in so many ways and is usually hungry more frequently. The E1 students have a morning snack at 10:30am and eat lunch at 12:00pm. As a reminder,

your child needs a cloth placemat and cloth napkin, as well as any necessary utensils in his/her lunchbox. We do not provide a snack in Elementary 1. Therefore, please pack a healthy snack for your child to eat at our morning snack time and perhaps label it with a post it that says "snack." Over the years, we frequently notice that many children are very hungry at this time and sometimes end up eating most of their lunch during morning snack. Please make sure your child has plenty of healthy foods to sustain him/her throughout the entire school day, as well as After School Care, if your child stays later at school. As a reminder, we do not permit candy, gum, or soda in the lunchbox. After the first 6 weeks of school, we would be willing to have parents join us for lunch with advance communication with the classroom teachers. Because of our experience with Covid, we ask that you send a soft gel ice pack in your child's lunchbox on a daily basis. This will be a safe ice pack that your child can access independently to attend to any minor bumps or falls on the playground, as we will no longer be sharing ice packs from the school freezer. Thank you for your understanding and assistance in this matter.

We will supply all of the children's consumable school materials including pencils, colored pencils, paper, erasers, scissors, glue, and workbooks. Therefore, we respectfully request that the children have no backpacks at school, as there is no need and these provide many temptations and opportunities to bring distractions into the classroom environment. However, if your child has a sleep over, is being picked up by someone else and needs things for after school, or needs materials for the bus ride to and from school, then a backpack can be stored in the school office or Rachel's little reading room for the day. Toys are not permitted at school or for after care. As a reminder, it's important to please label all of your child's sweaters, jackets, and water bottles. We will do our best to make sure these items return home each day at pick up and support the children in becoming responsible and independent in this process.

We enjoy celebrating the children's birthdays with your family in our classes. Please contact Rachel or Giannina to schedule a Celebration of Life as your child's birthday approaches. There will be no celebrations during the first six weeks of school and during the last three weeks in May. But other times can be chosen for these celebrations. Please send photographs for each year of your child's life to keep his/her folder up to date. If you wish, you may bring a special treat for the children for these celebrations. We do ask you try to avoid gooey, sugary, overly iced cupcakes. Fruit juice bars are an example of a good snack. If your child has a food allergy, or your family has specific dietary preferences, please send a container of "safe" snacks/treats for us to keep at school. We will share these safe foods with your child following a Celebration of Life.

We believe that educational experiences outside of school are important to enriching your child's academic experiences and provide wonderful opportunities to practice important practical life skills. We take field trips throughout the school year, usually about one per month. We have averaged the costs of the field trips and

therefore each trip will cost \$15.00 per child. We welcome parent chaperones on these trips with advance notice on the field trip permission slip. We are usually able to cover the cost of admission for parents, however, some field trip venues require that chaperones pay for entry. We will let you know with each field trip permission slip the cost, if any, for chaperones. We will credit your volunteer hours accordingly for chaperoning a field trip and thank you in advance for helping us offer this fun opportunity for the children in our community.

As the first day approaches, we have a few important and fun events scheduled. We have ***E1 Student Orientation for 1st graders and other students new to E1, on Thursday, August 12th from 9am -11am (please send your student with a water bottle) and Friday, August 13th from 9am to 12pm*** (please send your student with a water bottle and lunchbox). This is an excellent opportunity for new students to navigate their new classroom, meet their new teachers and connect with old friends and begin to form new friendships.

We also have a ***Parent Orientation via Zoom on August 12th from 6pm-7pm***. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the E1 environment and your child's educational experiences, as well as our classroom procedures. We look forward to seeing all of you there. We will also hold a Back to School Night in September. Lastly, we are excited to welcome our entire school community back to school at the ***Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 15th from 1pm-3pm***.

We have planned an exciting year for the intellectual, emotional, social and physical development of your child. Our days will be filled with rigorous academics, enriching cultural lessons, and time dedicated to the support of peaceful problem solving. We are looking forward to the new school year and new opportunities, as well as reuniting with the little people we love: your children. We are grateful for your trust in us as we partner with you in your child's education.

We wish you all a happy and healthy school year!

Sincerely,

The E1 Teachers

Janice, Rachel, Giannina, and Melanie

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IMPORTANT DATES:

- **1st Grader & New Student Orientation: August 12th (9-11am) and 13th (9-12pm)**
- **Parent Orientation: August 12th from 6pm-7pm via Zoom**
- **Ice Cream Social: August 15th from 1pm -3pm**
- **First Day of School: August 16th**