

## **CLASSROOM VISITS**

A minimum of at least one parent is required to visit the school and spend time in their child's classroom per year. Parent visits will be scheduled on Saturday mornings rather than during the school week. Information and scheduling will be sent out during the course of the year.

New parents will be offered the opportunity for an "observation peek" through the observation window on the door to the classroom in mid to late October. Classroom observations can also be arranged if there is a specific concern.

We do not allow in-class observations for the first six weeks of school, or until the class has "normalized" in Montessori parlance. We ask you to keep your observation confidential and discuss any questions you may have with the Teacher later that day, preferably by phone. You will be given a written guide with hints for observing both the classroom and your child.. It is important that you observe for one-half hour or longer in order to see your child's work cycles, concentration level, socialization patterns, and choice of activities. The best time to observe is at the beginning of the session, as this is often the most active work period. Your conversation with the Teacher, after your observation period, is most important so you can gain insight into the content of your observation.

### **Observation Guidelines**

- The goal of the observation is for you to see your child during a typical and natural day
- When observing through the classroom door window, please move into the lunch room if your child needs to leave the classroom to use the bathroom
- Get an overview of the room by scanning all areas and then observe individual work.

The Montessori environment is frequently referred to as an "ocean of activity." Activity is indeed the foundation of the Montessori approach: muscles and mind function freely and together. Teachers take great care when they design the classroom environment.

Notice how children interact with each other. Some prefer to work alone while others work in small groups. Children are free to move from one area to another, but need to take responsibility for completing the work they choose.

Observe the adults. Note the language they use with the children. Note the general hum and then pick out individual conversations and focus on social skills being developed by the participants. Are the children using polite forms of communication? Recognize that you may not be able to sort out all the dimensions of the classroom during any given visit. Each visit clarifies your impressions and gives you more insight into how the Montessori Method works.