

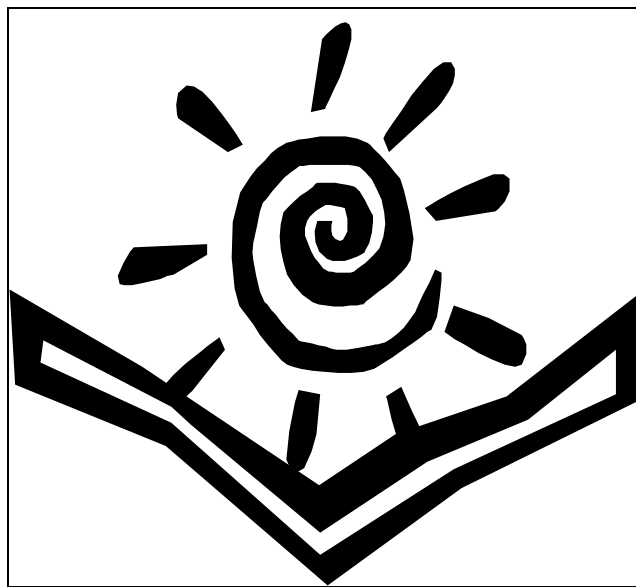
KIM School

"Kids in Montessori: Preparation for Life."

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*The education of even a very small child...
Does not aim at preparing him for school, but for life."*

- Dr. Maria Montessori



An International Montessori School

Dear Parent,

We hope that through our Orientation you and your child will feel comfortable and “at home” at KIMS. The KIM School Parent Handbook has been prepared to help you more fully understand the way we do things. Please read it carefully. It will answer such questions as “When can I observe by child in the classroom? What is a Thanksgiving Feast? and, How do you celebrate birthdays at KIM?”

Before your child begins, it is a good idea to read about the Montessori method. The Parent’s Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline Wolf is a “quick read,” and it is available at KIM School. Other good books include Montessori: A Modern Approach by Paula Polk Lillard, The Absorbent Mind and The Secret of Childhood by Maria Montessori, all available at the public library and at KIM School.

In order to make your child’s first days at KIM successful, a brief cheerful goodbye works best. We recommend that a child stay with us only about 1 – 2 hours the first days, if your schedule allows. A brief goodbye and a brief stay during the first days often helps children who have separation problems adjust more easily. Bringing a carrot for one of the animals or an apple for the teacher also helps. It takes the focus off the separation and puts it on something constructive and interesting for the child.

Parent nights are scheduled throughout the year to further familiarize you with the Montessori method and other topics related to parenting. We expect all our parents to participate in these events each year because children pass through different phases as they develop. What seems inconsequential one year suddenly becomes very important the next!

As your child’s KIM adventure begins, we want to thank you for choosing our school for your child. We look forward to getting to know your family.

Sincerely,

Ronda Schaefer, M.Ed.
Director



“We adults should always act toward the child in such a way as to answer his unspoken prayer,

‘Help me to do it myself.’”

--Dr. Maria Montessori

INTRODUCTION

Because the family is the primary source of love and guidance in a child's life, no school experience is complete unless the home is involved. It is our goal to enhance your relationship with your child and to work with you in planning for your child's education.

To help build a bridge between your home and KIM, we have prepared this handbook which contains detailed information that will be useful to you during your child's years with us. This is the second edition of the **Kids in Montessori School Parent Handbook** and we are open to suggestions for future revisions.

In addition to this handbook, parents are encouraged to attend at least two parent nights during the school year, and we encourage parents to read several books about parenting and the Montessori Method. All of these books listed below as well as many others are available in our library.

A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom by Aline Wolf

Is an excellent overview of Montessori philosophy and explanation of the classroom materials. It is a "quick read" and very informative.

Montessori: A Modern Approach by Paula Polk Lillard is a more in-depth explanation of the Montessori Method.

The Secret of Childhood and **The Absorbent Mind** by Dr. Maria Montessori gives wonderful insights into the young child and his development while offering a glimpse into Montessori's unique world view.

Children: The Challenge by Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D. while dated in terms of the roles mothers and fathers play in the family is a valuable tool for parents who want to implement the same discipline structure at home that is used in the classroom at KIM.

Positive Discipline by Jane Nelson, Ed. D. is an updated version of the Dreikurs approach. A must for parents and teachers.

Throughout the Handbook both the pronouns “he” and “she” are used in order to give equal time and to make the text easier to read.

THE KIM PARENT HANDBOOK

Absences: In the event your child will be absent for the day, please call us between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. If your child will be arriving late (but before 10:00 a.m.) it is not necessary to call.

Accreditation/Affiliations: KIM School is accredited by the Association Montessori Internationale. KIMS is currently the only internationally accredited Montessori school in rural Missouri. KIMS is a member of the North American Montessori Teacher’s Association and the Association Montessori Internationale.

Animals: Our animal program is a very important part of our school. Just a few years ago, most children had a relative who lived on a farm. Now we find that a very small number of children have access to farm animals on a regular basis. At KIM, we have had dogs, goats, sheep, chickens, guinea hens, ducks and perhaps someday soon, a pony. Our students help in the care and feeding of the animals. One of the early morning activities will be filling the water trough or feeding. A word of caution if you and your child have a treat for the animal: **Please do not hand-feed them!** If you have a treat for them, please just drop it inside their enclosure. Hand-feeding the animals gives them the idea that at the end of every appendage on a human being is something good to eat which can cause them to nibble at us when we are trying to pet them! In addition to farm animals, we also have a number of animals indoors as well. We try to maintain a representative of each of the classifications of animals in or indoor environments so you will usually see birds, fish and mammals. In addition you may find a reptile and an amphibian depending upon the skill of the caretakers in the classroom. Frogs and snakes escape their confines more easily than the other three.

Arrival/Departure: Please do not arrive at KIM more than five minutes before your scheduled time of arrival and please arrive promptly at departure time. It is very difficult for teachers to supervise and care for the children before and after class when there are other duties to perform. When arriving with your child, please give hugs and good-byes outside the classroom entrance. Likewise, when picking up your child, please wait outside the classroom for your child to be dismissed. Please remember that KIM is a “children’s house” and even the presence of an adult just by his mere size can be a distraction to children working in the environment. Also, please help us keep our classroom peaceful by speaking softly. When leaving the playground with your child, please ask him to shake hands with the teacher before departing. Not only does this reinforce a courtesy, but it also lets the teacher know that you are now in charge of his safety. **Children must be accompanied by an adult during arrival and departure.** During registration, a Release Authorization Card is filled out by parents which lists those persons other than parents who have permission to pick up the child. Release of your child to anyone not authorized by you will require written permission. (See also Coat Rack and Parking Lot Safety.)

Backpacks: Each child brings a backpack daily. It is for storing personal items such as her comb and brush, or perhaps an item brought from home such as a book. As the child matures, she will occasionally produce written work which may be found in her backpack at the end of the day, however, Montessori programs are not “end-product” producing programs. The young child is much more interested in process rather than product. The product of a Montessori classroom is the child, not the written work she produces so do not rush to the child’s backpack each day anticipating evidence of the work she has done. Most of the activities do not produce a piece of paper. So remember, an empty backpack does not mean that your child had an empty day. Quite the contrary. Your child may have ironed 10 napkins, discovered which objects float in water, scrubbed a table, prepared her own snack and learned the phonetic sounds of four different letters. None of which would be reflected in the contents of her backpack. You will need to be patient as your child gradually reveals her newly acquired skills and knowledge. Observations, conferences and parent nights give you more information about your child’s growth in the classroom.

Birthdays: At KIM birthdays are very special. Our children bake their own birthday cakes, a portion of which they share with their friends during their birthday celebration at KIM and a portion they take home to share with their families. It is not necessary to provide refreshments for your child’s celebration. Instead you may want to donate a

book or a plant for the classroom, or a tree for the playground in honor of your child. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions. A few days prior to your child's birthday, please **send one photo of your child when she was a baby and another more current photo**. These will be used to make a special birthday banner to have on display in the classroom during the day and at your child's birthday celebration.

VERY IMPORTANT: *Any plans, invitations, and gift giving for birthdays must be done outside school to avoid hurt feelings. Invitations may not be put in backpacks or cubby's for this reason.*

Hints for a successful birthday party: Wait until the child is at least four (maybe five) to have a party. Invite the number of children that your child is old, e.g., a five year old would invite five friends, a six year old, six. The younger the child, the fewer the guests, the shorter the party. **KEEP IT SIMPLE.**

Bulletin Board: At the entrance to the classroom or the main entrance to our school, you will find a bulletin board. These will keep you informed about specific classroom news as well as general school information. Notices of items for sale, coming events, or other announcements may be posted there.

Carpools: After your child feels comfortable about coming to school, you may wish to become part of a carpool with other KIM families. The KIM Directory located in the office is available to parents for help in finding addresses and phone numbers of those who may live in your neighborhood who attend KIM.

Clothing: Please dress your child in comfortable and appropriate clothing which is easy for him to take off and put on. Please avoid clothing with belts, tiny buttons, or difficult closures. There is nothing more frustrating for a child than to be trapped in his clothing when nature calls. Also, please save the latest super-hero clothing for non-KIM days. Experience has shown us that it leads to very aggressive play on the playground. With our barnyard of animals and our outdoor play area, non-dressy, functional clothing is best. Murphy's Law of the Montessori Classroom states that "the child with the most expensive, or newest clothing will get the dirtiest." Please remember that the business of learning is often messy! Also, jewelry or stick-on tattoos should not be worn at KIM. If your child has just recently been toilet trained, please send a bag full of extra underwear and several sets of clothing (including socks) along with plastic bags in which to put the soiled articles. Do not send your child to school in diapers, plastic pants, or pull-ups.

Coat Rack: Children are encouraged to hang up their own coat and put away their own backpack and materials. The greeting process differs slightly depending upon when the child arrives. The teacher greets each child at the classroom entrance with a handshake between 7:30 and 8:30. After 8:30, the child may independently enter the classroom and go to his teacher, who may be involved in giving lessons, to receive his greeting.

Communication: In the event that a significant change occurs in your home, please inform us. All information will be regarded as confidential. Common causes of distress are either or both parents being away from home, the illness of a relative, any hospitalization, accident, or death in the family, a recent move, or death of a pet. Children often act as barometers of family well-being. So that we can offer a little extra TLC when an occasional upset occurs, please keep the lines of communication open. If you have a question about enrollment, waiting lists, or scheduling, please see Ms. Ronda. Information or questions about tuition payments can be directed to Ms. Ruth. Her hours are 7:30-9:00. If you cannot speak to her personally, please leave a note in the school mailbox and she will give you a call. Questions concerning school philosophy, classroom staffing, school policy, class placement, building repair, wall color, or animal maintenance, see Ms. Ronda. Our door is always open, and we welcome your ideas and input.

Our energies must be focused on children and their work in the classroom during the day, so the best way for you to communicate with the us is with a phone call to the school (573/638-5467), which we can return before the end of the day, a phone call at home, or e-mail (KIMSchool@aol.com). By visiting outside of the class time, the safety of the children in the classroom or playground is not compromised. If you wish to leave a message or instructions regarding dispensing medication, simply write your message and leave in the school mailbox.

Conferences: Two conferences are scheduled each year regarding your child's progress. Both conferences are conducted by your child's teacher. Parents may reserve a conference time by registering one to two weeks prior to the conference on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Beyond these two scheduled opportunities each year, parents may ask for a conference at any time with their child's teacher.

Cultural Presentation: Often, as an extension of the Geography Area of our classrooms, we invite people to share information with us about other cultures. Presentations are sometimes given either by parents who are native of another country or by friends. If you are a native of another country, please consider sharing your culture with the children in the classroom.

Discipline: The program offered at KIM is one, which seek to minimize teacher control by facilitating the growth of self-discipline in the child. To this end, the children are directed into work, which is appropriate for their ability and interest. (A busy child is a happy child. She is not a discipline problem and develops self-knowledge, choice-making abilities, and this self-discipline through work.) Natural and logical consequences of activities and choices are seen as the best guidelines to self-direction. Children respond in different ways and at varying rates of progress depending upon a combination of factors, such as background, experience, personality, temperament and life circumstances. Parents are invited to attend our parent nights throughout the year to gain further insight into the type of structure which is provided for the child at school. Two books we highly recommend for parents on discipline are Rudolf Dreikurs' Children the Challenge and Positive Discipline by Jane Nelson. Both are available in the office/library at KIM.

Dress: (See Clothing).

Emergency Closings: During bad weather, please watch TV-KOMU(8) or TV-KRCG(13). We will close KIM if the public schools are closed. If public schools dismiss early due be inclement weather, so will KIM.

Evaluations: (See Conferences.)

Field Trips: Our class participates in one or two field trips each year. Instead, we invite people to KIM School and have them bring their "stuff" with them; e.g., a fireman might come for a visit and bring the ladder truck. When a field trip is planned, a notice is posted on our bulletin board, or a note is sent home with your child. A driver sign-up sheet is also posted at that time asking for help in transporting children. A seat belt is required for each child over 40 lbs. and a car seat for children under 40 lbs. Both an Emergency Care Release form and a Field Trip Authorization were given on the Enrollment Form, however, if this information needs to be updated prior to the upcoming field trip, please contact Ms. Ronda to update these authorizations. These forms along with the rules and regulations of travel are given to each of our drivers to protect the safety of the children. When funds permit, a bus may be chartered for field trips.

Food: (See Menu)

Food Preparation: Children are introduced to food preparation in the Practical Life area of the classroom. Throughout the year, your child may bring bread, bananas, cheese, apples, green beans or carrots for cutting. Check with your child's teacher as to which food is appropriate for your child's skill level. Foods should be brought to school in a disposable bag. We also use food preparation for morning and afternoon snacks.

Footwear: Three types of footwear are required at KIM School.

1. **Shoes** which are easy for the child to put on and take off and which offer good support for the child's growing feet. For very young children, shoes with velcro fasteners work best. Please do not send your child to school in cowboy/girl boots, suede hiking boots, or fancy patent leather pumps. High top tennis shoes may only be worn by children who can easily put them on, tie them, and take them off. When a child wears shoes that he can put on himself, his self-confidence increases.
2. **Boots** are a necessity at KIM School during wet and/or snowy weather (which is actually year 'round in Missouri). Please fit your child with boots that she can easily pull on and off. Ones that must be pulled over shoes are very difficult for children.
3. **Slippers** are worn in our classroom. Because we use our floor as a work surface, it is important to keep it as sanitary as possible. The slippers should be simple and functional; easy for the child to put on and small enough to fit into our slipper tubs (5"x8"x12"). Please put your child's name on each slipper so that mix-ups do not occur. (Unnamed articles can be lost.)

Found Objects: If perchance a piece of school equipment shows up at home, please send it back. Because all of our Montessori apparatus is imported from either Holland or Italy, it is very expensive and difficult to duplicate. Some things that seem inconsequential are really an important part of the material best loved by your child, and out of fascination, children often want to take a piece of KIM home with them. Please do not scold, or embarrass her. Just slip the object in an envelope and give it to a staff member.

Health Services: Early Childhood Screenings will be conducted per Department of Health and Senior Services recommendations. These include: Vision, Hearing, and when age appropriate Scoliosis screening. Realize these are screenings. It is always possible, and common, that when recommendations are made for physician evaluation, children are fine. However, if any child, upon the recommendation of the School Nurse has an evaluation by a physician, and areas of concern are noted, this is a benefit to you the parent, and the child.

Each year, immunization records must be submitted to the school, at the beginning of the Fall/September start or at the onset of your child beginning attendance. The immunization requirements are in accordance with regulations established by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. ***If they are not submitted and complete, your child will not be allowed to attend until they are received and reviewed.*** If there are Religious issues related to vaccines, it must be documented by your physician and submitted for our file. In that case, you are required to sign a release of liability, recognizing if your child is exposed to an illness you are aware of any potential complications that may result.

Information will be provided regarding updates on Flu issues, recommendations for vaccines, or any health related issues that may occur seasonally.

Illness: If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, please phone between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. (638-5467). Should your child become ill, or sustain a minor injury at school, you will be notified immediately. We request you have provisions in place to pick up your child, if needed, within one hour of notification, per your parent application. In this regard, make sure to notify the school regarding any changes of information in a timely manner, (phone numbers, changes in designated people to pick up your child, etc). If there are Religious/Cultural issues that may affect emergency care, we must have documentation on file signed by your physician. You will be required to sign a release of liability.

If your child is taken to an emergency room for any reason a minimum of 48 hours prior to their attendance, we require written information, and a copy of the physician report. (high fever, stitches, etc).

The following information is provided to help parents regarding certain conditions that require exclusion from school.

Children will be excluded from school for reasons including but not limited to the following:

- *Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- *Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *Head Lice, Scabies,(treatment must have been completed in entirety)
- Undiagnosed Rashes
- Fainting
- Red, inflamed eyes, (pink eye) until diagnosed and treated if necessary
- Impetigo, (a contagious skin condition)
- Ringworm
- Common childhood diseases-**State Regulations**
- Chickenpox, **(excluded 7 days from onset of rash)**
- Strep-Throat, **(following a positive culture, the child must be on antibiotics without fever for 24 hours prior to returning to school)**
- Drainage from the ear

***Children with elevated temperatures, vomiting or diarrhea, are asked to be kept at home until they are symptom free for twenty-four (24) hours.** Many children are sent home ill one day, return the next, needing to be sent home again.

We appreciate parents sharing the diagnosis and treatment of children sent to physicians so we can be alert to possible problems in other children.

Lunch: Each child coming to KIM School will bring his or her own lunch. The lunch should consist of a well-balanced, nutritious, variety of foods. Children's nutritional needs vary considerably, so it is perfectly acceptable for parents to include supplementary breakfast snacks in the child's lunch box, or separate snack to prepare in the Practical Life area. In planning lunches and snacks, please try to keep refined processed foods to a minimum and the sugar content low. If dairy or refrigerated items are included in the lunch box, please include a cold pack due to limited refrigeration space. Each morning, the child will greet his teacher and then proceed to put their lunch box in the designated place. Lunch boxes should be the types that hold a thermos inside. If your child has food allergies, please compile a list of foods that he cannot eat and give it to the teacher. On occasion, food is shared among the teacher and children, so it is very important to know if food allergies are a concern for your child. Arrangements will be made for substitutions at snack times.

Medicine: We can dispense medication to your child if you sign a Medical Authorization form giving us permission to do so and a written note telling us the days you would like the medicine administered. We cannot give medicine without a written consent.

Medication Administration: Medicine should never be sent with the child, (as in their lunch box or school bag). They must be transferred to our staff directly by you the parent. Any drug which may be lawfully sold over the counter without a prescription may be administered in compliance with the written instruction and consent of the child's parent/guardian. Administration of a prescription drug requires written instructions from a physician, dentist, etc, to include any possible side effects, and written consent from the parent/guardian. Prescription medications must have the original label. You will be required to provide written consent for us to apply topical antibiotics for a minor scrape, cut, etc.

Nap/Rest Time: Children who spend such a long day (some stay 10 hours) in such a stimulating environment need time to rest. Some children require a longer rest than others. They are called Nappers. Those children who require less rest time are called Resters. The children relax in the classroom after lunch and recess on mats listening to music, story tapes or books, or teacher read books and get up after about an hour.

Nap/Rest Gear: All children bring a child size blanket, or beach towel sleeping/resting gear. Our floors have radiant heat and heavy blankets are too warm. We find the blanket and mat offer the most comfort for the child as well as the floors keeping him warmer during the winter months. Please label all nap/rest gear with your child's name.

Newsletter/E-mail: Parents receive a KIM Newsletter about once a month. Everything from the latest additions to our barnyard menagerie to hints on parenting appear in our editions. Also, the teacher periodically sends our special notices to let you know about events specifically to our classroom. In addition to the newsletter, a weekly e-mail is sent out to all parents of current events at KIM's. Check their backpack often, as well as your e-mail (please make sure we have your current one), so you don't miss any news!

Normalization: The basic goal of the Montessori classroom is "normalization" of the child so that he becomes well-balanced, spontaneous and able to utilize his capabilities to the fullest. Some of the characteristics of such a child are the following: ability to concentrate, sense of personal dignity, independence, self-motivation, love of order, enjoyment of repetition, ability to work alone, self-discipline, desire for freedom of choice, pleasure and fulfillment in work for its own sake; no need for reward or punishment, obedience, preference for work over play and love of learning. Normalization is a slow process—a point of arrival, not of departure in the classroom. The activities of the Practical Life area of the classroom aid in this process and are some of the first presentations given to the child. As the child spends more time in the classroom working with the materials his movements become more coordinated, he develops a sense of order, he lengthens his concentration span, and he develops independence. Meanwhile, the parents are curious about what the child is doing at school. Asking the child "What did you do

today?" is like asking an adult "What did you eat for lunch last Thursday?" A lot has happened since last Thursday, and for the young child who perceives minutes as hours and hours as days, a whole morning can seem an eternity. Because he is absorbing, categorizing, and processing as he learns, and because his concept of time is not fully developed, his answer will most often be "I don't know," or "Nothing," or "We played outside." (Not exactly what a parent wants to hear.) The best way to get a window into the child's world at KIM is to first read a book such as *A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom*, and then attend a parent night about the classroom. After your child has attended KIM for several weeks, come for a visit. We will arrange your observation in such a way that your child is not aware of your presence. That way you can see him as he truly is in the environment. Then, instead of asking your child for information, watch for clues: "I know how to button my own coat!" or "I can make my own sandwich," is a child who is telling you about his day. These are all answers to the question "What did you do today?" It is just that you have to be patient and know that your answer will come in many forms.

Observation: Observation is one of the most valuable tools available for learning about Montessori and your child. By sitting back, removed from involvement in the action, you can gain insights which are often clouded by everyday events at home. Observation is an ideal way of discovering what your child most enjoys doing in the classroom as well as how independent and self-directed she is in her work. Observation is especially meaningful just before or just after conferences. Please let us know a few days in advance so your visit does not conflict with others, and we are available to answer any questions you may have.

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION

The teacher might not be available to talk with you when you arrive, since she will be busy with the children. Please note the following suggestions:

1. We ask that you do not bring children to the school during observation.
2. Observations may be approximately 30 minutes in length.
3. Remain sitting (or standing) at one location while observing.
4. Keep interactions with the children brief. A brief answer if approached by a child is appropriate. Please do not initiate a conversation with a child or adult while in the classroom.
5. During the work period the teacher will not be able to answer your questions and will ignore your presence so that the children will do likewise. Please make note of anything you wish to ask at the end of the session. At the end of the session, the teacher will be available to discuss your questions and comments. *
6. Be aware of the following aspects of classroom life.

ENVIRONMENT	Aesthetics Materials—type, arrangement, accessibility Specialized areas of the room
ADULTS	General attitude Relationships with each other Interactions with the children
CHILDREN	Levels of concentration, coordination, order, independence, initiative, creativity, pleasure, respect, interactions
ATMOSPHERE	Movement, structure, discipline, noise level, mutual respect

* SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS: This is not a conference time with the teacher. If a conference is needed, please schedule it with the teacher before or after school hours.

Orientation: Prior to each new session, KIM staff members conduct an orientation for new families. This meeting is about an hour in length and is a special time for first-time students and their families to meet the teacher, take a tour of the building and outdoors, and to become familiar with the program.

Outdoor Play: We go outside every day at KIM School unless it is raining, snowing, or extremely hot or cold. Children need outdoor exercise and the opportunity to expend energy. If your child spends more than a half day at school, it is a good idea to leave an extra wrap for her at KIM, especially as the seasons change. It is often a few degrees colder on our playground than in town, and often the weather can change drastically through the day. What

may have been a warm sunny day in the morning can turn into a cloudy, cold day by afternoon so make sure your child has an extra sweater or jacket at school. During inclement weather, the children will be permitted to play games and participate in other activities such as movement activities, family and role-play, arts, crafts, block building, stimulating toys and games, etc.

PAC Meetings: Parents are asked to serve on one of KIMS Committees (PR/Communications, Maintenance, Construction, Finance, Administration/Personnel, Fundraiser, etc.). Several meetings are held each year for parents to organize and serve.

Parent Education Meetings: Our first gathering of the year is one devoted to an orientation of the Montessori classroom materials and how the child works in the environment. Others on “What is Montessori”, “Montessori in the Home,” give information about how to set up activities at home that foster independence and self-reliance. Subsequent parent nights deal with such topics as parenting, discipline and in-depth presentations on Math, Language, Geography, Science, or Art. New parents are strongly encouraged to attend the first few parent nights of the school year. All parents are encouraged to attend as many get-togethers as possible throughout the year.

Parking Lot Safety: The increasing number of automobiles plus the faster pace at which we live our lives make our parking lot a dangerous place to be if you are an unsupervised preschooler. To insure the safety of our children, please follow these guidelines:

1. Please accompany your child into the building or from the playground (if her class is outside) and make contact with her teacher before departing.
2. Please do not leave younger siblings unattended in your car.
3. Please do not leave your car engine running while you take your child into the building, unless there is another adult in the car.
4. Please make contact with your child’s teacher, assistant, or late afternoon teacher before leaving with your child either through a handshake by your child, or a word of goodbye so that the adults involved know that their responsibility for your child’s safety and well being has been transferred to you.
5. When picking up your child, please keep her with you as you leave the building and get into your car. We want to discourage children from getting to the parking lot ahead of their parents. Some of our children can open the door themselves so parents must stay with their children as they leave. Holding a child’s hand can help further insure a safe departure.
6. Please use a seat belt and/or car seat when transporting a child.
7. As we arrive and depart each day, we often see friends with whom we would like to visit. Unfortunately, unless your child is already in the classroom, adults locked in a conversation can be one of the most dangerous things that can happen during transition times at our school. Our children sense when adults are not focused on them, and left unsupervised, may do things they would not normally do at home, or in the classroom at KIM. This can include using a loud voice inside the building, running in the classroom, or finding their way to the parking lot. To insure the safety of our children, please keep conversations brief and your child safe by holding his hand during departure.
8. At 1:30 and 3:30 some of our children wait with staff at the front entrance to our building to be picked up by parents. Parents picking up children at this time do not need to come into the building. Staff will escort your child to the car.
9. When approaching school at the top of the hill, go straight. The circle drive goes in a counter-clockwise direction. Please yield to drivers coming up the hill when exiting the circle drive.

Separation: Another aspect of your child’s adjustment to school is his separation from you. A smooth, easy transition is as important to us as it is to you and your child. For this reason, we invite parents to join their children for their first visit to KIM. Then on the first day of school, we recommend that children stay about 1 hour if possible. This way the child can have an opportunity to establish the ritual of saying goodbye, to work for a short period and to meet some of his new friends. When the parent returns, he realizes that his parent will be picking him up. Ideally this pattern should be repeated for several days, each day increasing the period of time the child stays. Some time during their preschool career, every child experiences separation anxiety. If your child cries upon being brought to school, you should put on a good face, treat her objections as a matter of fact as possible, assure her that you will return soon, bid goodbye kindly, but firmly, and leave quickly. Tears are rarely long-lasting and often a method of testing your resolve. Once class begins, curiosity usually overcomes anxiety and the child becomes actively involved in

the classroom. Leaving a crying child at school can be a heart-breaking experience (as all teachers who are parents know.) If you are still distressed when you arrive at work, or home, please call the school. We will be glad to let you know how your child is doing. 99% of the time the child is playing happily, and the parent is the one who is miserable. Relax. Trust us. Your child will have great days at KIM.

Sharing: While we do not conduct a “show and tell” session at our group times, flowers for the table, a carrot for one of our animals, or specimens from nature are always welcome. These are pleasant ways of becoming a contributing member of our classroom community. Toys, dolls, money, candy, jewelry, cosmetics, gum, or stickers should remain at home.

Slippers: (See Footwear).

Thanksgiving Feast: A Thanksgiving Feast is always scheduled the day before the Fall Thanksgiving Break at the lunch hour. Parents provide the ingredients for the recipes, and the children spend several weeks preparing food for this very exciting event. Watch fall newsletters and notices for details.

Tornado/Fire Drills: Emergency evacuations are practiced regularly by our classroom. Drills are conducted every 2 months.

Winterwear: At KIM the outdoor temperatures are often lower than those in town. Because we go outside every day, warm clothing is a must. PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL EVERY PIECE OF OUTERWEAR WITH YOUR CHILD’S NAME!

- hat or hood which covers ears (stocking caps are great)
- scarf or coat with collar that keeps the cold out.
- mittens or gloves
- down or poly-filled coat with a big zipper (washable)
- snow pants which are easy to put on. Zippers at the end of legs for easy dressing with boots.
- Shoe boots, only. No over-boots, please

Writing: Before children enter elementary school they show an interest in writing letters. Parents often show their child how to write using block, or capital letters.

This is unfortunate because children will practice creating these letters many times and later these old habits are hard to break. In public school, children use the D’Nealian alphabet until about third grade when they make the transition to Cursive. At KIM we use the Cursive Alphabet from the start. Below are some of our reasons for doing so.

1. There is less confusion between cursive forms of b, d, p, and q as there is with the manuscript.
2. Cursive writing is a more natural way of writing because then pencil flows along the paper without frequent stopping within and between letters. The circular movements natural to cursive writing correspond developmentally to the stages of a young child’s artwork.
3. The child who can read cursive can also read manuscript, but the reverse is not true.
4. In printing, the child often confuses and interchanges lower case and capital letters. For example, AndY instead of Andy. This is rarely a problem in cursive.
5. Since cursive writing is used primarily throughout one’s life, it should be learned when interest is greatest. Many older children and adults who were taught manuscript first have not made the transition to cursive, and continue to use the slower and more awkward manuscript.
6. In the primary classroom, children learn to associate the sound, not the name with the letter. For those children who have previously learned the alphabet/name, introducing the cursive forms with sound offers less confusion.

If a child attends a Montessori elementary she will simply continue to use cursive, however, if the child attends public school after KIM, the D'Nealian alphabet is practiced during the last semester of attendance. The transition from cursive to manuscript is much easier for the child than manuscript to cursive.

PLEASE ... DO NOT FORCE YOUR CHILD TO BEGIN WRITING EARLY. Only use these guidelines below IF your child wants to know how to form letters:

1. Practice making the letters yourself before showing your child.
2. Pay careful attention to how the letters are formed and in what direction the stroke is made.
3. Show your child how to hold the pencil correctly. Gripping the pencil in the proper way is just as important as forming the letter correctly.
4. Please do not force your child to write if he is not interested.

Written Work: The product of a Montessori classroom is the child, not the written work she produces. The growth within the child occurs during the process of an activity. Thus, the quantity and quality of the written work that only sometimes accompanies these activities may or may not reflect the true growth that has taken place. Our classroom may send home written work occasionally. When written work does come home, let your child know you value the effort and learning that went on behind the scenes, rather than just the product you see before you. Critical comments can be very destructive and pressure for more and harder work takes the joy out of discovering and working spontaneously. The end result of pressuring a child or expecting them to produce is that she sometimes loses interest, or is “turned off” to learning. The best approach is to encourage her and be always aware that your child’s biggest developmental leaps are often intangible.

“A child’s work is to create the man he will become. An adult works to perfect the environment, but a child works to perfect himself.

-Dr. Maria Montessori

“Who touches the child touches the most sensitive point of a whole which has its roots in the most distant past and climbs toward the infinite future.

“Who touches the child touches the delicate and vital point where all can yet be decided, where all is pulsating with life, where the secrets of the soul lie hid.

“To work consciously for the child and to go deep down, with the tremendous intention of understanding him, would be to conquer the secret of mankind, just as so many secrets of Nature have been conquered in the world about us.

“The activity of the child has always been looked upon as an expression of his vitality. But his activity is really the work he performs in building up the man he will become. It is the incarnating of the spirit.”

-Dr. Maria Montessori

“Keep away from the wisdom that does not cry, the philosophy that does not laugh, and the greatness which does not bow before children.”

- Kahlil Gibran