

Welcome to Third Grade! I am so excited about working with your children this year. Developmentally, third graders experience a growing confidence in their abilities and the need to share their knowledge. The Montessori environment is the perfect opportunity for children to shine! I have included some information that will help you understand the protocol and policies of our classroom. While teachers have different styles of teaching and expectations, my classroom philosophy includes an environment with a high work ethic and a strong foundation in academic excellence. I am a *firm*, yet loving teacher. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me. I value your opinion as your child's very first teacher! Please read through this document and bring any questions you may have to our meeting in August.

Protocol and Policy

- Communication is key- Please let me know any concerns that you have ***right away***. I can't help or clarify a concern if I don't know what is happening. Please do not discuss issues with other parents or in front of your child as that promotes a sense of separation between home and school life which can be very conflicting for children. Your child needs to feel like you have left them in a safe, positive environment. Let your actions and your words reflect that. As many of you know, I am the mother of three (all grown) with three lovely granddaughters as well, and it is from that viewpoint that I approach every child in my classroom. Yes, I am a teacher, but I understand how precious each and every child is. It is through that lens that I teach.
- Get in the habit of checking the class website at a minimum of once a week. There you will find resources, current lessons (if your child is out sick just follow along), homework assignments, notices, and other important information. If we go to a virtual format due to state-mandated closures, the website will be the place assignments are listed, etc. I list the most current information on the homepage. Check that first!

- The best way to reach me is by email. Typically, I check email in the morning before school starts as well as throughout the day. If I need to send a note home, I will do so via email and not the take-home folder. If you need to report a tardy or absence, please do so via email. You do not have to call the school office. I don't usually check email on the weekends.
- A special word about Tardies- **School begins at 7:40 am** this year. This is a new change to our schedule due to the staggered start approach. Please set your child up for a successful day by arriving on time! As adults, you know how it feels to begin your day late and rushed. I begin instruction promptly at the beginning of the school day. Keep in mind, if your child is tardy, they will lose valuable instructional time. It is during this time that I give instructions for daily assignments as well. Additionally, the classroom is quiet and if your child arrives late, they are disturbing others around them as they go about unpacking, etc... Please be considerate of others. Thank you!
- Loss of Recess Time- Here's the bottom line... if students are *playing* during *work time*, then they are going to have to *work* during *playtime*. This philosophy is a natural consequence in life. We are training students to manage themselves in regards to behavior, tasks, and work ethic. These qualities are **as** important as academics. During the first weeks of school, students will be given one warning about the loss of recess if they are *off task* but from that point on, they know the expectations. Students will also lose recess time for not doing turning in homework or talking during instructional time. Again, the same philosophy is in place. Third Graders should be accepting responsibility for their actions at school and at home. Remember, we are guiding children to become students who are self-regulators! **It is better to help a child learn how to navigate situations and accept consequences than to be "rescued" repeatedly.** If a child learns early that they will have no consequences for their actions, they will

become less productive and more dependent. Naturally, there are *occasional* exceptions, please email if: Great Grandma Betty is in town and has never met little Johnny so Johnny didn't get his homework finished because they went to Olive Garden.

- At this age, many children desire to be independent in various routine tasks. Allowing children to do that enhances self-confidence. Students in third grade should not need reminders from parents about what to bring to school..etc, Please do not ask students if they have everything in their backpack or fill up the backpack for them. Some students even start packing their own lunchbox at this age. The average third grader should be able to do on his/her own without parent prompting:

1. Make sure the "take-home" folder is in backpack each morning.
2. Pack up homework materials for the next day.
3. Pack any books brought home from school.
4. Make and pack lunch.

If your child is unable to manage him/herself with these tasks at the beginning of third grade, develop a system to help him/her achieve these goals (morning routine chart, homework checklist, evening routine chart, etc...). Your goal is to assist them in becoming self-reliant so that they will be able to manage themselves as responsibilities and work increases as the year progresses.

Academics

- You can expect your child to: develop research skills, participate in project based learning (both individual and group), cultivate a greater sense of personal responsibility, manage textbooks, study for and take tests, discover what helps him/her learn better (auditory, visual, kinesthetic experiences), determine how to find the answer independently, learn how to persevere through any work that is challenging, and be excited about not just the product of work but the process involved in mastering it.

- Students will do a lot of project based learning- you will not see poster boards, trifold boards, shoe boxes, cotton balls, or miscellaneous items on the supply list but you will be asked to provide those items throughout the year.
- At this level, we are encouraging students to be innovative, independent thinkers when they have a problem or don't know the answer. I use guided questioning to help your child arrive at an answer. This process of gaining the ability to figure things out independently is a process that takes a substantial amount of time. It may be challenging to students who are used to being provided an answer. You may hear your child say things like “ I asked the teacher for help but she asked me questions or she didn't tell me *what to do*” . This does not mean I am ignoring your child, it means that I am providing students with the tools needed to solve their own problems. This builds confidence! If your child needs specific help and re-teaching, of course, I will be working with him/her individually until he/she understands.
- Most instruction occurs in small groups or individual lessons. All lessons move from *concrete* to *pictorial* to *abstract*. Learning exists along a spectrum from *initial understanding* to *developing* to *abstract mastery*. Depending on the skill and your child's individual learning style, your child may spend a great deal of time in one phase or just a little. Papers and notes home with work samples attached often reflect just where your child is at in that process so you are kept informed. You might see a paper that comes home that states “Improving-Stamp Game Division” or “Abstract-Addition of Decimals”. Additionally, you might see a note that states, “*Please work with your child on addition of fractions with like denominators.*” That means while we are working on this in school, your child would benefit from additional support at home, if possible. That does *not* mean that your child is failing or below grade level. It means they are in the developing process. For every child in my class, I know which part of

the process they are in for every subject and provide instruction accordingly.

- Research Skill Development- iPad/laptops can be brought to school each day. Students are allowed to use electronic devices under the supervision of teachers. Students are not permitted to “read books” on the electronic device nor are they allowed to play games or send messages. Use of electronic devices is a privilege. Please discuss these rules with your child. Students who use electronics inappropriately will not be allowed to use them at school. **Cell phones are not allowed in the classroom.** If your child must have a cell phone at school, they must keep it in their backpack on silent.
- Tests- Typically, math tests/quizzes are on Thursdays (or when a chapter is finished) and Spelling tests are on Friday. Reading comprehension passages will be given daily and the grade reflected on the progress report will be the average grade of daily work. You may see a percentage grade on some papers as it is sometimes easier for parents to see where a child is at in terms of percentages.
- Math Curriculum/Homework- We use a combination of Modern Curriculum Press Mathematics, Saxon Math, and Montessori Math Materials for curriculum in math instruction. Various math worksheets may also be used. Students should keep all math papers from one chapter together so that they may study for a test. You might want to get a separate math folder to keep at home and use.
- Easy Grammar Workbook materials- The majority of this work is classwork. When there is a unit test, students are reminded to bring home the book to study during the week of the test. If you would like to see your child’s progress in the workbook, encourage them to take it home occasionally. If the Easy Grammar text is brought home, it needs to be returned to school the very next day as we work in it daily. The workbook reflects transition or mastery of the abstract skill.

- Language Arts Skills- Reading is done in small groups using a variety of the classics as well as specific skills instruction using Evan Moor Reading. Students are exposed to various genres and comprehension strategies. Writing instruction is done in “units”. We focus on various types of writing such as, “How-To”, Compare/Contrast, Expository, etc... The Spelling curriculum is Modern Curriculum Press.
- Montessori Materials- We use many Montessori materials in the classroom. Montessori materials are used for all the subject areas.
- Often you will see a unit based approach to social science/science concepts. For example, if we are doing a study on plant/animal cells you would see work such as the following: building models of plant/animal cells, create drawing of plant animals cells, write a paper about the differences between plant/animal cells, examine the history of cell theory and investigate what was happening in the world at that time and how that influenced life, read materials related to the topic, research prominent scientists, etc... Usually, nothing is taught in isolation as all the subjects areas are interrelated.
- Learning does not just take place in our classroom space. We will have class in many different areas on the school premises. For example, if it is a nice day outside, we might have reading under the trees or we may utilize the tables out front for an art or social science lesson. You may find us downstairs in the resource room or in the kitchen doing a science experiment.

Happy Learning!

Mrs. Danio

