

## A GUIDE TO CLASSROOM OPEN HOUSE

We are delighted to welcome you into the classroom for Open House. We hope that the following guidelines will enable you to participate in this event with your child and maximize your learning about how the Montessori classroom works, and how your child is working in it. It is a special opportunity for parents to work along-side their children.

### PURPOSE

The Open House is an opportunity for your child to share with you a dynamic picture of what life is like in his or her Montessori environment: friends, teachers, and materials. Please note that as there will be other parents in the classroom, the regular routine and atmosphere that is “home” for your child during his or her regular working day will be slightly disrupted. Your child will be excited to have you there and show you material which he or she is particularly proud to work with – and may or may not have yet mastered. In order to help your child and others in the class, please observe the following guidelines and hints for interpreting what you see.

### PROCEDURE

**As there are many parents in the class on the Open House, we do ask that you are prompt for your time, and that you do not stay past the time allotted, as other parents are waiting to come into the class.** During your time with your child there will be many other children working who are waiting for their parents to arrive or who have just said goodbye.

When you enter your child’s classroom you will be greeted by your child, and he or she will introduce you to a material or an area of the classroom which is of particular interest. You may learn all of the rules for snack, or the names of the continents, or where the art aprons are kept.

When you enter the classroom for the Open House, you may feel free to respond to the other children if they approach you, but **please do help the children to re-engage** by quietly asking them to show you what they are working on. The children have been told before this Open House that you are coming to watch them working and they will understand your response to them in this context.

Ask your child to show you a lesson and enjoy! Keep in mind that the process is more important than the product and that your child is working on the materials that he/she chooses to show you. You can encourage your child by acknowledging his/her actions, without any praise or criticism. For example, "You moved ten brown prisms to the mat!" or "I see this is how you set-up the materials for Washing a Table, what is the next step?"

If your own child cries or clings or is silly or ignores you completely do not be surprised – we are not. Children respond differently to having their parents in the classroom than they do in the normal course of the school day or at home. It is the talent of the classroom teacher to deal with your child's response and it is fine for you and your child to spend the Open House watching the class together if he or she is not able to leave your lap. This is especially true for the younger children, and the classroom teachers will try to help with this dynamic.

A gentle reminder that during your visit, the work cycle is in session and your child's classmates are working. As such, **please do not take photos** during the Open House because this disturbs the children's environment. We will continue to share in-class photos of the children engaged in work on a regular basis.

**The teachers will be working with all of the children, and will try to take special time during your slot of the Open House to work with your child. You may feel free to speak with them at this time, but please respect the other parents and children in the room, and the teachers' need to manage the entire classroom in an elevated state of excitement.** If questions occur to you while you are attending the Open House, which the teachers cannot answer at the time, please write them down. **Your child's teachers will be glad to answer these questions with you later by email, telephone, or in person.**

Please watch the time, as the classroom teacher will remind you when your Open House period is over, and **it is best if your goodbye to your child is brief and positive.** It is helpful if you prepare your child for the fact that your visit to the classroom is limited and that you will leave and then see him or her at the usual dismissal time. **Some children will take your leaving in stride and others will cry and want to leave with you. Rest assured that even the most agitated child will calm down very shortly after you leave.**

Enjoy your time with your child at the Open House!