



GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION

Welcome to the Arlington Montessori House! Please take a minute to read and absorb the following guidelines for observations in our classroom. We want you to get the most out of your visit, without disrupting the children's work.

Procedure

Please, turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering the classroom. When two people are observing together, please refrain from conversation until you are out of the classroom.

A chair will be provided for you in the classroom. It gives you a good vantage point into our three main rooms. Most visitors spend no more than fifteen minutes observing in each classroom. Then, we invite you to take a brief tour of the rest of the school by walking down the hallway and peeking into the bathroom, library and coatroom.

The best way to observe is to sit quietly in one place trying to blend into our environment. Look at various children and their activities. If a child talks to you, by all means, say hello or briefly answer a question, but please don't encourage conversation. You'll find that if you follow these suggestions, you will get more out of your short visit to our classroom.

If you have any questions, please jot them down. Someone will be available after observations and who can answer most of your questions, or our directress can telephone you after school. You may also e-mail any questions you may have from your observation to office@arlingtonmontessori.com and a response will be sent back to you.

Hints On Observing

◆ *Learning*

Notice that children learn in different ways. You'll see groups of children working cooperatively and individuals working intensely. You may also see a child walking seemingly aimlessly. Often this child is actively watching the other children and absorbing information through observation. Watch the ease and joy with which the children work.

◆ *Child-Child Interaction*

Listen to the way children talk to each other. Try to hear the level of respect and politeness as well as the normal pushes and pulls of childhood. Watch younger children learn from older ones, and see older ones blossom with self-confidence as they teach the little ones.

◆ *Teacher-Child Interaction*

Our teacher is a guide – she facilitates the child’s learning by preparing the environment, giving the child the necessary tools and then allowing the child to proceed without assistance. She encourages autonomy. Listen to her tone of voice and hear how she engenders respect.

◆ *Sociability*

Watch the children interact with each other. See how they offer help to one another. Fast friends form quickly, and the children are very aware of their own community.

◆ *Independence*

Observe the independence of the children as they choose their own work. Notice how each child chooses his own work, completes it and returns it to its proper place so the next child can use it. The structure of Montessori provides children with as much time as they need to complete their own tasks, and success is their primary reward.

◆ *Materials*

Notice the Montessori equipment. It’s attractive in color, size, shape, cleanliness, even its placement on the shelf. Much of it is sensorial equipment allowing children to learn abstract concepts first by touching and manipulating the objects.

Thank you for taking the time to visit us. We are happy to share our warm and creative environment and hope you will return.