



MONTESSORI AT
SAMISH WOODS

3-6 Parent Guide

Telephone Calls

Communication with parents is very important to us. However, a teacher leaving the classroom to answer the telephone during class time would be very disruptive for the children. Therefore it is best to leave a message on the school answering machine letting us know what day/time works best for us to call you back during the evening hours. If your child is ill or will be missing school, please feel free to call before school time begins (650-9465, ext. 1).

Parent Visitations / Observations

Separation from your child may be very difficult for you, maybe even more than your child! During the first few weeks of school we will do our best to keep you informed as to how your child is integrating into the classroom, using materials, communicating with the teachers, and connecting with the other students. We are excited for you to observe your child at school, however, we need time to settle in to a routine with your children. Some of the skills we will be working on are helping your child to be calm, confident, grounded, positive toward others and enthusiastic about learning. This takes time to accomplish. In early November we will let you know that the classroom is open for observations and you may set up a time to watch your child in action (please allow 2-3 days for scheduling to ensure we have only 1 visitor at a time).

Holidays

We take a low-key approach to holidays as we have a wide diversity of beliefs and religions within our Samish Woods community. Additionally, as teachers, we see how the hurried schedules, family visits and overall commercialism may cause the children to feel overwhelmed. We like to offer a safe haven for them; a place where they know things will always be the same, or close to it. However, we are always excited to celebrate the seasons with fun classroom activities and art projects.

Birthdays

Samish Woods birthday celebrations are not intended to be traditional birthday parties; rather, they are celebrated in such a way to enhance many aspects of the educational aims of the program, such as self esteem, and the idea of the passage of time. To help the children understand the passage of time, we have a special activity when we observe each child's birthday. We will celebrate at group time and will invite each child's family to attend. If your child's birthday falls in the summer, we will celebrate their half-birthday. To help with this activity, on the day of your child's celebration please bring in photos representing your child at birth and one for each year of his/her life.

Toys

Most children have a special lovey or toy that they may want to bring to school. Because the Montessori classroom materials are available for all the children to utilize, having your child bring in their special toy that cannot be shared or handled by others sends a confusing message to the other children. Let your child know that their special toy will be waiting for them when they return home from school

Clothing

The children will achieve independence by learning how to take care of themselves -- their body, their belongings and their environment. We understand that at the heart of every child is a healthy drive toward independence. Independence is important because it is directly related to high self esteem, competence and cooperation. Therefore, every aspect of the Montessori classroom has been designed with the goal of an independent child in mind. This can be achieved at home as well by helping your child choose and lay out their school clothes the night before. Help them understand what clothing choices are appropriate, such as clothing that they can undo themselves to use the bathroom and shoes that they can put on and take off by themselves. These tasks will be an important part of their independence. And remember, tights are tricky if your child has waited until the last minute to use the bathroom! Learning to tie their own shoes is one of the most difficult

tasks for any child to master. Rubber boots, slip-on shoes, or shoes with a Velcro closures are great options. We have dressing frames at school where they will be able to practice buttoning, zipping and tying. In the meantime, we are unable to allow them the time they need to practice these skills when we are heading outside for playtime. It can be frustrating to continually be the last child out the door while all of your friends are already playing together!

When helping them choose clothing, make sure they are wearing clothes that can get messy. We will offer many opportunities for them to explore painting/art inside the classroom, as well as and digging in and getting dirty outside! Children can feel hampered by having to keep their clothes spotless.

Additionally, dress-up clothing or costumes are discouraged as we have found the children are so excited about their outfit they are unable to settle in to their work day.

Inside the classroom the children will change into inside shoes. These are for indoor use only. Please choose inside shoes without media characters or flashing lights. They can be very distracting for everyone.

In case of spills or accidents, please bring in a full change of clothes, including socks and underwear, for us to have on hand. Please put them in a 1 gallon sized zip-lock bag with child's name written on the outside. We also ask that you **label all clothing** (initials are fine). This includes coats and shoes. You would be surprised how many children arrive in identical clothing!

Snack

Snack is provided by each family throughout the school year for approximately 1-2 weeks depending upon how many students are enrolled in your child's class. We will be passing out the snack schedule during the first week of school. Below please find a few suggestions about how to prepare your snack and healthy snack ideas. **Important: if you child has a food allergy, make sure to let us know right away so we can pass this on to the other parents.**

Our theory at Samish Woods is anything goes as long as it is healthy and easy for the kids to handle. However, due to the rise of students with nut allergies we are asking that you provide snacks without nuts. **A detailed list of nut-free products and suggestions will be sent out prior to each families assigned snack days so you have plenty of time to plan.**

The children count snack portions onto their plates, so make sure snack portions are easily handled and evenly sectioned. For example, if you send in cheese sticks please remove from packaging and place in a ziplock bag or plastic container. As we serve snack on plates, food items that require a bowl would not be an option. We would like the children to have 2 food types available each day: fruit/veggie and grain/dairy product (apple slice and mini-muffin as an example). Below are some ideas, but feel free to use your imagination using the above guidelines. No need to spend a fortune. The in-season fruits/veggies are perfect! Please bring snack for 24 children. **Note: snack can be sent in daily or sent in for duration of snack period (refrigeration is available).** Some examples follow:

Rice cakes	Rice Crackers/Hummus	Cheese & Crackers
Grapes (cut into small bunches or each grape removed)	Tortilla chips with bean dip	Bagels/Cream Cheese
Apple or Orange slices (1-2 each)	Pre-made sandwiches cut in ½	Mini Muffins
Whole Satsuma (in season of course)	Pre-popped Popcorn	Breads w/spreads
Plums/kiwis/bananas	Dried Fruit	
	Vegetables with Dip	

Conferences

We have scheduled 2 parent conference times; one in the fall and one in the spring. This will be a great opportunity for us to let you know what we see from your child in the classroom, and also a time for us to learn what you are seeing at home. It is always exciting for us to be able to discuss your child's strengths, as well as their works-in-progress. We will email an editable schedule for you to choose a time and day for your conference. If the days or times do not work for you, please let us know as soon as possible so alternate plans can be made. There will be no school on conference days, so please plan accordingly for child care.

Special Events

We love to connect with our school community and have set up many fun events to do just that! You will need to bring your own utensils, plates, cups and drinks for each of these events. Most events are held in the large building at Bloedel Donovan Park. We will let you know if there is a change. Please bring a dish to share with 6-8 people. We are always in need of help setting up and putting away tables and chairs for these events.

Talking about School

Parents often ask their children "What did you do today at school?" The reply may be "Nothing" or "I don't remember". Here are a few questions that may help you talk with your child about their school day. For the 3-6 year old child, one or two questions can be sufficient.

- What was on the snack table today?
- Who did you have snack with today?
- Was there something new on a shelf?
- What was your favorite thing that happened at school today?
- What was the hardest part of your day?
- Did anything make you laugh today?
- Did you sing a song today?
- Did your teacher read a story? Can you tell me about the story?
- What is your favorite thing to do on the playground?

Unidentified Objects

We have so many interesting objects for the kids to work with at school. Colorful beads, cubes, dice and many more very tiny objects. Whether it is intentional or unintentional, they may end up at your home. Although they may be small and seem unimportant, they could be the missing piece to a lesson that requires that missing piece to function properly. If you run across something and you don't know what it is, please bring it in to school to see if we recognize it.

School Supplies - What to Bring

These are items that your child will need to bring on the first day of school:

- 1 pair of slip-on rubber soled shoes that cover the toes and heels. These shoes will be worn only inside the classroom. Please no furry animals, cartoon characters, flashing lights, flip flops or shoes that have no heel.
- Small glass mug with your child's name on the bottom. Demitasse sized cups preferred (no adult-size mugs please).
- Full change of clothing in a 1 gallon zip-lock bag (please initial all items in bag).
- 2-3 family pictures for the school album (these will be returned at the end of the school year).
- As our coat and shoe space is limited, please leave backpacks at home. Thanks!