

Observation Guidelines

Welcome to Adventure Montessori School. We are pleased that you are taking the time to visit and observe one of our classrooms. We have a high regard for the children's classroom environment and take great care not to interrupt their concentration and focus. We ask that you stay seated in the classroom and try not to engage the children in conversation. A polite "hello" and a direct response about who you are would be appropriate.

Below you will find guidelines to assist you in ensuring that your experience is as valuable as possible. Attached is a list of questions for your use while observing the classroom as well as space to take notes. If you have questions while observing, please write them down. The teacher is often unable to take time away from their classroom duties during the course of an observation. If you have questions about something you observed please contact the following person by e-mail:

Lafayette Campus

Head of School: Wendy Charles wendy@adventuremontessori.com

For questions regarding enrollment, please contact:

Kristiane Weeks, Kristiane@adventuremontessori.com

Enjoy Your Visit!

Classroom Atmosphere

A great deal of effort and thought is devoted to the "prepared environment" of a Montessori classroom. Each piece of material has been placed on the shelf to help the child independently develop a particular skill. Students of different ages are intermingled so that they might help and learn from one another.

Each of our classes is divided into the following multi-age groups:

Infants: 8 weeks to 18 months old

Toddlers: 18 months -3 years old

Primary: 3- 5 year olds

Lower Elementary: 6-9 year olds (1st, 2nd & 3rd grades)

Upper Elementary: 9-12 year olds (4th, 5th & 6th grades)

Degree of Self-Direction

Notice that the students learn in different ways. With some types of materials you will see groups of students working cooperatively, and with others you will find an individual student working intently. Still other students may be walking through the classroom seemingly not engaged in any direct activity. Very often, this last type of student is engaging in absorbing the other students and materials through observation.

Role of the Teacher and Assistant

The teacher is the facilitator of the children's autonomous learning processes. S/he prepares the environment and gives students the tools to utilize the materials. Sometimes the teacher provides direct encouragement or indirect appreciation and at other times judicious absence. There is a basic respect for each individual student's particular style of learning in the Montessori classroom.

You will notice that the classroom assistant may not be actively involved with teaching. S/he is another calm and gentle presence in the classroom, quietly helping to maintain the environment and unobtrusively supporting the teacher in her work with the students.

Sociability

Watch the ways in which the students offer assistance to one another-- with the materials and with everyday tasks. Note how the younger students absorb the older student's work simply by being near them and how, conversely, the older student will assist the younger ones with work that they have already mastered. The student's natural desire to form friends and be part of an ongoing community is ever present in the Montessori classroom.

Things to Look for During Classroom Observation

The Environment

Is the room attractive?

Are the materials in good condition?

Are the materials visible and easily accessible to the students?

Do the materials seem to be logically arranged?

Is the room neat and clean?

The Teacher and the Assistant

Does s/he seem comfortable and relaxed in the room?

Does s/he seem to be aware of what is going on in the room?

Does s/he respond to the children appropriately?

Does s/he treat each child with respect and courtesy?

Does s/he contribute to keeping order in the room?

Does s/he present lessons clearly and seem aware of the student's response?

Does s/he maintain classroom limits (by intervening when necessary)?

Does s/he give the student's freedom to work and explore their classroom environment independently?

The Students (Please choose one or two students to observe, plus the class as a whole)

Do they seem comfortable and relaxed in the room?

Do they follow the ground rules?

Do they ask for help when they need it?

Do they seem happy at school?

Do they follow instructions willingly?

Do they work well together and get along?

Do they concentrate for extended periods of time?

Do they choose work independently?

Do they finish their chosen work?

Is their work orderly and are materials returned to their original locations?

Notes: _____
