

Schoolhouse Scribbles

Olive Room

October 22, 2017

Highlights of the Week

Our classroom is buzzing with activity. It is such a delight to see the children interacting with the work and each other. They are all getting much better at completing the work cycle: to choose work, complete it, make it ready for the next person and put it away where it belongs.

This week the children are busy working in all areas of the classroom. This week I presented many Practical Life Works. All of the Art activities seem to be popular. The children are coloring, creating with play dough, using scissors to cut paper strips, pin punching apple shapes, and using glue to make collages. They are all working and developing their fine motor skills and concentration. Children learn from choosing their own work. After they receive presentation they are free to use that work.

The child's Interest: One of Montessori's most significant discoveries was that children have a tremendous ability to choose appropriate work for themselves. Children gravitate to certain activities at certain times and are able to concentrate on those particular things to a very profound degree. When children are given the ability to choose their work based on their interest they are much more likely to learn from it and concentrate on it. Developing concentration and independence is key to all academic learning.

Handwriting: This week the children are learning all about geometry. They are using the Metal Insets to trace and identify shapes. The Metal Insets are a series of shapes and frames designed to directly prepare the child's hand for writing. I enjoy this activity in the classroom and appreciate the writing skills it helps develop, specifically lightness of touch and keeping the pencil within limits. As with other Montessori materials, a sequential order of further lessons are introduced to the child as each presentation is mastered. The children are learning to identify these shapes, Circle, Square, Triangle, Rectangle, Oval, Ellipse, Pentagon, Curvilinear Triangle, and Quatrefoil.

When Should a Child Learn to Write?: A child can begin to write if he or she is ready and interested. This notion of "readiness" is very important as children are all different and may not reach the stage of readiness at the same time. If a child can hold a pencil or pen in a steady, comfortable three-finger grasp, then this may be a sign that he or she is ready to form letters. A younger or less mature child may have difficulty with a three-finger grip, and still be at the stage of "clutching", in which case a larger mark-making implement may be more appropriate, such as a crayon, paintbrush or jumbo sized chalk. For other children, it may be appropriate for them to explore prewriting patterns and shapes using squirt bottles or writing in a sand tray. All of the children love to use play dough. The use of play dough helps strengthen finger muscles, prepares the child for pencil grip and handwriting.

Word of Maria Montessori

"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."

Reminders:

Please remember to take home and bring back your child's daily folder. It provides important messages and communications.

- Curriculum Night September 22nd
- Blake's Apple orchard field trip forms due date September 29th
- Blake's Apple orchard field trip October 6th
- Whole School Portraits October 19th

Home/School connection

The fall weather has arrived! For full day children, appropriate weather gear is a must. We will have recess daily, weather permitting.

Also, due to the cooler weather, now would be a good time to send an exchange for your child's extra clothing for articles that are more suitable for the season.

Leaves are falling and turning colors. It is a great time to name the different colors leaves turn, collect leaves for a collage or to make leaf rubbings. It might also be fun to learn the names of the parts of the leaf.

Play dough Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- Food coloring by drops

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a pan and stir. Cook over low heat, stirring until a ball forms.
2. Add food coloring and mix thoroughly until desired color.
3. Cool on foil. Store in covered container.