



## **The Power of Parent-Teacher Communication**

I am sure, like many parents, you greet your child at the end of the school day and ask, "What did you do today?" and you might not get the answer you expect. You may hear about the playground, what your child had for snack or that he worked with a friend, but the work escapes his memory. Considering much of the work in the classroom is process focused, as opposed to product focused, you may not see any "paper" product to help with your question. This, of course, may be frustrating.

This leads to the importance and power of parent-teacher communication. At Westmont, one of our goals is to provide opportunities for clear and continuous teacher-parent dialogue. Although you may see your child's teacher at drop off and pick up, there is not always time to discuss your child's day, apart from a few words. Parents who park and walk their children to and from Extended Day or class do not have this short opportunity to connect. We know it is important for you to know what is going on with your child and how he is navigating his school day, and we have avenues to help this happen.

Our Montessori Compass communication is designed to give you ongoing information regarding your child's time at school. It is not a replacement for conversation with your child's teacher but a means to connect with your child regarding his day or week. Reading the weekly memo from your child's teacher, as well as exploring the photographs posted weekly, will support conversations with your child regarding his day, his friends and the work in his class. The words from the teacher and the visual prompts will promote questions that can spark memories and interactive conversation.

All of our teachers have email and voicemail. You are welcome to contact them at any time and they will respond to you in a timely manner. You can send a note, call or ask for a meeting, if needed. Sometimes a few minutes with the teacher is enough to clarify a question or concern. No question is unimportant; if it matters to you it matters to your child's teacher.

We also host parent-teacher conferences three times a year. On November 9 and 10, we will be holding in-person parent-teacher conferences. School will not offer regular classes on those days so that teachers can meet with parents face to face and discuss each child. Our sign-ups for these conferences are designed to help you plan the optimum time for you to meet your child's teacher(s). During these meetings, you will have the opportunity to hear about your child's transition to the school year, his progress to date, his strengths, as well as discuss mutual goals. In February, we will offer phone conferences and supply a mid-term report regarding your child. At that time, teachers can answer any questions you have. In May, we will once again provide in-person meetings to review your child's year, and provide a progress report detailing areas of growth and personal achievement. Conference times are ideal times for you to ask questions, provide feedback and strengthen your relationship with your child's teacher.

Ultimately, strong and effective partnerships between you and your teacher will support your child's success by keeping expectations clear and dialogue open. Understanding your child at school, how he learns, what motivates him, and how he likes to spend his time, will strengthen the parent-child relationship. It is important and comforting to know that your teacher knows your child, cares about your child, understands how he learns best, and provides optimum opportunities for continued growth and development.

Please note that Extended Day is open from 7:30 to 6:00 during conference days in November and May and is free of charge during your conference time for your child or siblings 18 months to 8 years old.

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