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Purpose

The Parent Handbook is designed as a reference tool for you to access information about our school's policies and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns about the information included in this handbook, please feel free to contact us any time.

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Our Mission

Fostering Values and Attitudes

Riverstone Montessori Academy is a community of learners—parents, children and staff—actively engaged in what Dr. Maria Montessori called “an education to life.”

Although we represent a rich diversity of backgrounds and opinions, we share a commitment to the values underlying our special approach to learning.

In a climate of mutual respect and support we strive to develop and support these values and attitudes in ourselves and others.

ATTITUDES TOWARD WORK AND LEARNING

To be self-directed, able to initiate activities, set goals, organize time, and complete projects.

To have the determination to try, to be capable of working to the limit of one's ability in everything one does.

To be persistent, to struggle with difficult work for long periods of time with few visible rewards, to take disappointment in stride.

To think logically and rationally, to evaluate information and seek out different opinions and facts before making a decision.

To be creative, using imagination to generate fresh and new ideas in all areas.

To love learning, to find knowledge interesting in itself, to pursue interests with enthusiasm .

ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF AND OTHERS

To recognize one's self as being special and to acknowledge the unique character of every other person.

To be self-evaluative, to have realistic knowledge of one's own strengths and weaknesses, not ignoring nor dwelling on them.

To have a sense of humor that does not rely on the belittling or putting down of others.

To develop a personal code of ethics and to remain true to these values under emotional or group pressure.

To be able to work with others to accomplish a goal, to learn to contribute ideas, to listen to others, and to compromise.

To be responsible, not only in the sense of being reliable, but also able to take into account the effect of an action before performing it, and then being answerable for it afterwards.

To balance development in emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical areas.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIETY

To understand the inter-dependence of humans, animals, plants, and the natural systems of the Earth.

To have knowledge of and respect for the different ways humans have met their physical and spiritual needs over the ages and in different contemporary cultures.

To be able to communicate clearly and comfortably with individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

To be courteous, caring, and respectful toward others, and to know how to behave appropriately.

To be able to use a variety of effective non-violent techniques for resolving conflict.

To accept responsibility for making a contribution to benefit future generations.



We are a smoke and firearms free campus

RMA does not allow firearms to be carried or displayed on campus, on field trips or at any school function.

Firearms in vehicles must be securely stored and locked while on campus and must be removed and stored off-campus if transporting students for any activity.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS

Children are expected to arrive on time in order to protect the classroom work cycle. Frequent tardiness and irregular attendance disrupts the class and limits the children's opportunities for social and academic growth.

We ask that you schedule family vacations & medical appointments during our regular vacation times, helping us to preserve the classroom dynamics and work cycle.

Eight tardies count as one unexcused absence. Attendance is taken on a daily basis.

The record of attendance can have ramifications. For example, if your child has 7 or more absences, we may not be able to offer re-enrollment contracts and/or recommendations for enrollment at other schools. RMA must adhere to the state of Georgia's attendance requirements and reporting mandates.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

A carpool primer is updated and provided electronically each summer before school begins.

Students should arrive in time to be in their classrooms, ready for work by 8:30 a.m. when classes begin.

Students should be picked up promptly at their scheduled time by authorized individuals. A written communication is required for individuals not previously authorized, before your child will be released. We prefer that you send this note in with your child when they arrive in the morning. Please include the following information: your immediate contact information (so we may verify this request if necessary), the individual's full name as it appears on their ID, the date and your signature. When the person arrives, he/she will be required to show a photo ID. Any last minute pick up arrangements or changes must be communicated to the office as soon as possible.

Children who are not in the All-Day (before & aftercare) program and are still waiting after carpool will be placed in the aftercare program until they are picked up. There is an additional charge of \$30 for late pick-up OR early drop-off. If you are not enrolled in the All-Day Program and find that you need childcare, please call the office to coordinate. The fee is \$20 if we are notified at least two hours before dismissal.

Children that are not claimed by the closing of the campus - 6:00pm, will incur an additional fee of \$30. Local ordinances require us to call the police if a child is unclaimed for more than 60 minutes after the campus has closed. Failure to pick up your child by 6:00pm three times may result in disenrollment from the All Day/Aftercare Program.



Communication

Open communication is an important aspect of life at Riverstone, and we believe in maintaining an atmosphere of support and understanding. We encourage parents to talk with teachers whenever they have a question or concern.

A teacher's time during school hours is reserved for the children, so please plan to call or meet outside of class time, even for a short discussion.

Teachers and staff members will do their best to return phone calls and/or set appointments in as prompt a manner as possible. Our goal is that no more than 24 hours pass before you receive a response.

COMMUNICATION

TUESDAY NOTE

The Tuesday Note, a weekly electronic newsletter describing upcoming events, announcements, and notices will be delivered to your e-mail inbox each week. **Please read this newsletter in its entirety, as it is our main form of communication with you.**

School related forms or announcements originating with parents or committees must first be routed through and receive approval from RMA. If you are affiliated with a school activity and wish to put a flyer or form in the Tuesday Note, the office must receive it for approval no later than the Thursday of the prior week.

TRANSPARENT CLASSROOM

This is the main site for record keeping and required paperwork. An additional popular feature of this site is the ability to send families pictures via text or e-mail of activities happening at school.

INCIDENT REPORTS

Incidents Reports are used to inform families of accidents or behavioral incidents.

FRIENDLY NOTES

Friendly Notes are used to inform families of good news, fun observations, and reminders.

WEBSITE

The website is designed for prospective and current parents. You can visit us online at www.RiverstoneMontessori.com for general information about the school as well as updates. All of our calendars, handbooks, and forms that you may need, etc., are available on this site. Most of these documents are also available via links in the electronic Tuesday Notes.

OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

RMA has Twitter, Facebook and Instagram links located on the front page of this document, on our website, and in the Tuesday Note. Please follow us! As social media is constantly changing, our choices of vehicle may also change. These accounts are largely geared towards sharing general information about Montessori and marketing our school.

We request that our staff maintain professional privacy and not friend, follow, etc., parents or students on social media, nor share personal phone



Notes on Photos

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Individual and class pictures are taken each year and the dates for these are provided on our calendar.

Photos are also used in our electronic media. We request that our families respect the right to privacy that we all desire. Please do not share photos or videos of any student other than your own.

School Closings

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We follow Cobb County's School schedule for closings due to inclement weather or local disaster. Please use their announcements in local media as your guideline in these situations. When possible, we communicate closings via our electronic newsletter and social media sites.

numbers for texting, or e-mailing. The technology of social media is fast moving and convenient, but our channels for communication as a school function best when our personal accounts are not involved. Often, these forms of communication can be confusing and result in miscommunications that need to be sorted out. We more clearly express ourselves when we communicate face to face or via telephone. We have one main e-mail account : info@riverstonemontessori.com, which can be used for basic information such as messages about carpool, absences, etc., and to request meetings.

EMERGENCIES

All staff is trained in safety procedures to be implemented in emergency situations. Information and evacuation routes are posted within each classroom. If we have an emergency school closing mid-day, school personnel will contact you via the school closing procedures listed above and may text or call you as well.

DIRECTORY

A directory is available on the Transparent Classroom site. Families select the amount of contact information they wish to share with our general community. We ask that you respect the privacy of the parents listed in the directory, and use these numbers only for school-related purposes, children's social events, and carpool arrangements.

Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of students and their parents may not be released for commercial purposes and must remain confidential. RMA reserves the right to restrict access to individuals and families who violate these guidelines.

COMMUNICATING CHANGES AT HOME

Please let your child's teacher know of any significant changes to your child's life, such as marriage, divorce, family hospitalization, travel, move, death in the family, or the anticipated birth or adoption of another sibling. These events may cause a child to act differently in class and teachers will be better able to respond to a child's behavioral changes if this information is provided. This information will remain confidential.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information pertaining to a child's academics or behavior while enrolled in the school is considered confidential and may not be released by school staff without first obtaining written permission signed by the parents. Relevant information in this regard may be shared among the appropriate school faculty and staff. In emergency situations, information about a child's medical status, allergies, family situations, authorized adults to pick up a child, medical release forms, and any relevant information may be shared by school staff as needed with persons authorized by Bright from the Start or with other appropriate persons. All other information in the student files is accessible as governed by local, state, and federal ordinances.



Our focus is on the inner person

RMA's uniform policy is an important part of this dynamic; it forces children to focus on who a person is on the inside and not be distracted by outward appearances or displays. RMA will strictly enforce its uniform policy throughout the year:

https://www.uniform-source.com/school_category.php?school_id=105

UNIFORMS

Details of our uniform policy can be found here: https://www.uniform-source.com/school_category.php?school_id=105

Children who do not come to school in uniform will have their parents contacted to bring a uniform to school, OR if available the school will provide a uniform from the uniform swap.

We ask that all families provide a 2nd set of uniforms to keep on campus. Please label all personal belongings and clothing with your child's name.

SHOES, SOCKS, OUTERWEAR AND JEWELRY

Comfortable closed toe sneakers/tennis shoes are to be worn to school without exception. *No sandals or flip flops. Ballet flats or crocs are only appropriate as indoor shoes.* This is to ensure the safety of our students during morning exercise, while they play outside during recess or on PE days.

Socks, tights, and leggings with fun patterns may be worn with the complete, appropriate uniform. However, characters or media driven images/messages, noisy or bulky embellishments, or holiday motifs are not allowed.

Jackets, sweaters, or cardigans worn on the playground and for arrival and departure from school during the cold season are not required to bear the school logo. However, any outerwear worn in class during the school day must be part of the school uniform and bear the school logo (ie; RMA sweatshirts, RMA sweaters or RMA jackets only).

Any jewelry worn to school must be subdued and unobtrusive. No large hoop earrings, big bracelets, or long necklaces will be allowed. These items could break, get lost, or cause injuries to children while playing on the playground or during PE. They can also be the source of distraction during the work periods in class.



Cell Phones at School

If your child needs a phone for an after school event with a family member or friend, etc., we will require the phone be given to the lead teacher. The phone will remain with the teacher and can be retrieved at the end of the school day. Any unauthorized electronics will be confiscated and either held for a 24 hour period or returned to the parents at the end of the school day.

SCHOOL LIFE

TOYS, ELECTRONICS AND MONTESSORI MATERIALS

Montessori materials are not toys, even though children find their work with them to be great fun and of particular beauty. It is not uncommon to find tiny beads, puzzle pieces, or cubes in children's pockets from time to time. Please be sure to return these items, even if you are not sure what they are. The Montessori materials require each piece for effective use, and because of the precise craftsmanship involved in making these special materials, the equipment is extremely expensive. In many cases, the piece cannot be replaced except by ordering a whole new set.

If you should find such a "treasure" in your children's pockets, please help them return it with minimal fuss. A simple explanation that it belongs at school and needs to be returned so that all the children (including him or her) can enjoy it should suffice.

If it is determined by staff that a student intentionally damaged school property, including classroom books and/or materials, the child's family will be billed for repair or replacement costs.

Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school. This includes all electronic games and devices. These items will be confiscated and sent home at the end of the day.

Electronic devices brought from home are not allowed at RMA. The students in the Adolescent Program are required to have laptops for use in class for school work only. There is a specific technology contract and orientation for these students and their families.

At Riverstone Montessori Academy, we strive to provide a safe and peaceful learning environment for our students. When students are allowed to have these unauthorized devices at school, it is difficult for the faculty and staff to be available to monitor and guide the children regarding any unsuitable content they might encounter. It also allows them to become distracted with social networking or texting which might take focus away from their school work.



Observations

Parents and/or Guardians are required to observe in the child's classroom at least once a semester. Observing provides an opportunity to better understand your child's daily experiences in the Montessori environment. Beginning in mid-September and continuing through early May, families may call or visit the office to arrange a time to observe. Teachers receive weekly observation schedules and will be expecting you at your scheduled time.

Conferences

Parents and/or Guardians are required to attend all Parent/Teacher Conferences. At conference times, you will receive a report detailing your child's progress. Beginning in elementary, children attend their conferences and present detailed work portfolios.

GRADES AND TESTING

Riverstone Montessori Academy does not place children in the artificial designation of grades (1st grade, etc.) nor assign grades (A, B, C, D, F) as a measure of achievement. Montessori classrooms allow children to work and learn at their own pace - which is commonly considered above "grade level" in a conventional setting. Stratifying children by age or grade would merely lower expectations and slow the child's progress. The assignment of grades is well documented to be a disincentive for learning and achievement, *regardless* of the types of grades earned. Children thrive when they work for mastery and hold themselves to standards that are real and challenging, not arbitrarily imposed.

FIELD TRIPS AND GOING OUTS

All RMA children are involved in in-house field trips and supervised outings. These events may be small groups or class wide and while enjoyable, are strictly educational. Most outings require extensive preparation and research on the part of the student and are an earned privilege. At the Elementary and Adolescent Program levels, these outings take on particular importance as part of their educational and social development. Occasionally, students may not be allowed to participate if they do not complete work related to the event or are not demonstrating responsible behavior.

Under Georgia law, the owner of a vehicle is liable for anything that happens to anyone riding in that vehicle. In the event of an injury or death in an automobile on a field trip, the automobile owner is personally liable. Anyone who volunteers to provide transportation for a field trip should take note of this personal liability; details are included in the required Safe Driver Application.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Eating food that is enjoyable as well as good for you is a nutritional habit that we wish to help develop in our children. We provide our students with a tasty, well-balanced lunch that is made with fresh lean meats, fruits, and vegetables!

This is no ordinary school lunch; each meal is prepared by local chefs and delivered to our school daily. Meals are designed for nutritional content and are mindful of most allergens. Each meal is served with milk and vegetarian and gluten free options are available.

We insist that any snacks or foods provided throughout the school year be healthy and nutritious in order to maintain this high standard. (i.e. yogurt, fresh fruits, cheese, whole grain breads, etc. No chocolate, candy, chips, artificial fruit snacks, or artificial food coloring, etc.) Please help us maintain

Readiness

Children in the Primary Classrooms are expected to be fully independent in the bathroom and able to dress themselves.

Readiness for moving into Elementary and the Adolescent Program is determined in collaboration with the family and teachers at the current and upcoming level of enrollment. Montessori focuses on the development of the whole child; therefore, moving up based solely on age or academic ability is inappropriate in our environment. We look for academic, social and emotional readiness, to ensure that each child has the opportunity to experience the greatest benefits of our programs.

Romance

An environment must be safe before it will encourage intellectual risk-taking. RMA is too small an environment for romantic involvement between students. Therefore, we insist that students maintain collegial relationships. This will ensure a dynamic environment in which they may be brave and open with their thoughts and emotions.

this standard by complying with good nutritional choices in all food brought by your child to RMA. Foods that do not meet this guideline will be returned home at the end of the day.

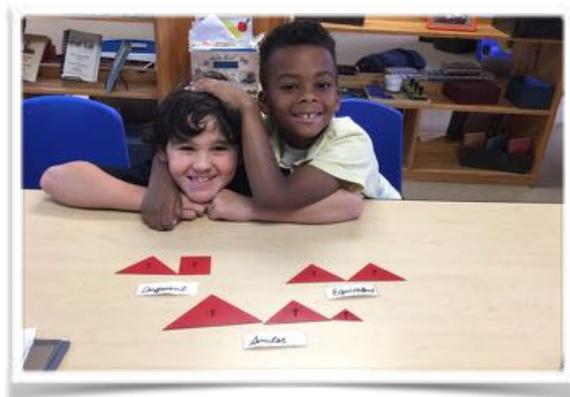
With a national epidemic of obesity in our youth, we consider nutrition a critical component of your child's experience at Riverstone. Our likes and habits related to eating are formed in our childhood, and we do everything we can to encourage the development of eating in a healthful manner. In addition to the healthy lunches we serve each day, all of the snacks consist of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and lean sources of protein (hummus, cheeses and yogurts, etc).

CELEBRATIONS

In order to maintain the integrity of our classrooms and ensure that the maximum amount of class time possible is dedicated to educational activities, we do not celebrate commercial or religious holidays. We are a diverse population and these personal events are best enjoyed at home.

This does not mean that cultural and historical studies are unwelcome. We wish to learn about other cultures and traditions as part of our curriculum; however, it is important to protect our classroom time for learning and to offer an environment in which children of differing backgrounds can feel safe, comfortable, and welcome.

Birthdays are acknowledged by the children being invited to share a picture timeline of their life with their classmates. At the Primary level, children are also welcome to walk around the "sun" (a lit candle) representing each year of their life.





Nuts

Please, do NOT send any type of nut or nut products into the RMA community as we have children with nut allergies throughout the school.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

The required forms and information are included in the enrollment documents on Transparent classroom. **If your contact information changes during the school year, please advise us immediately.**

DISPENSING OF MEDICATIONS

All medication must be hand delivered to the office, in the original package, by an adult. Parents are responsible for keeping up with supplies and expiration dates. These are mandatory guidelines of the State of Georgia.

The parent must provide the following before any non-prescription or prescription medication is administered to a student:

1. A *Medication Authorization* form completely and accurately filled out and turned in to the Riverstone office.
2. Your child's medication in the *original container from the pharmacist*. (If requested, the pharmacist will give you two original containers.)
3. Must be hand-delivered *directly* to a Riverstone staff member by an adult. **Please do not put medications in backpacks or send it in with your child, etc.**
4. If your child is to receive medication for *longer than two weeks*, Riverstone must have a letter from your child's doctor stating that your child will be continuously medicated.
5. Chap stick and lip balms should be labeled with the child's name and given to the teacher or administrative staff. They will be kept on hand in the classroom.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Notices of communicable diseases and highly contagious maladies such as chicken pox or lice are sent by email to families in the affected classroom as soon as we are aware of the situation.

Riverstone's lice policy requires the child to remain home until completely nit-free. We have a separate *Lice Primer*, which will help you identify, treat, and control a lice infestation.

If your child develops a fever, you must keep him or her home for at least 24 hours *after the fever subsides without medication*.

If antibiotics are required, the child must stay home for at least 24 hours *after beginning treatment*.



Medication Authorization Forms

Medication Authorization Forms are available on our website or in the office. **We cannot dispense medication without this completed form.**

Because of the possible need for extra preventive actions or care for other members of the Riverstone community who may have been exposed, we ask that families let the office know as soon as possible if the child has a communicable disease. This information will be shared only with the child's teacher. If notice of the illness needs to be communicated to other members of the Riverstone community (e.g., other parents), notification will be sent in generic terms (e.g., "A child at Riverstone has a diagnosis of ...") in order to protect the child's privacy.

If all families keep sick children at home, everybody's children - and teachers - will stay healthier.

WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME

Because infections spread easily from one child to another, please keep your child home if he or she has any of the following symptoms:

Fever

Temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm with sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, mucus that is not clear in color, irritability or confusion, **or** a temperature of 101.5°F taken under the arm, with or without other symptoms

Diarrhea

Three or more watery stools (BM, poop) in a 24-hour period

Vomiting

Two or more times within the past 24 hours

Rash

Body rash, especially with fever or itching

Sore Throat

With fever and swollen glands

Eye Discharge

Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pinkeye

Not Feeling Well

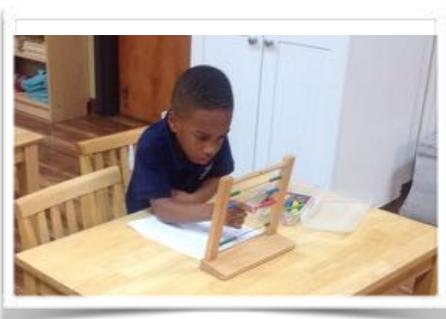
Unusually tired, pale, lack of appetite, confused, or irritable

Head Lice

Must be lice and nit free to return to school

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

The State of Georgia requires schools to retain proof of immunization for every child (unless you prefer to file an exemption and then we need a copy of the exemption). Children are unable to attend school if this information is not up to date and in our files.



.....
Dr. Montessori’s advice that we “follow the child” is meant as specific, practical advice, not as an idealistic goal.
.....

Through her own scientific observations and the observations of Montessori teachers who followed her, children’s stages of development and their developmental needs were discovered. These discoveries have been repeatedly borne out by recent studies of brain development. “When we say that we must learn to trust children to do what they need to do in order to create who they want to be, we are speaking literally.”
.....

SUPPORTING YOUR MONTESSORI STUDENT

It can be challenging to understand everything about Montessori. We do, however, expect parents to learn about Dr. Montessori’s vision of childhood.

Doing your part to enter into the parent-school partnership by helping to unify your child’s experience at school and at home is important. This is not to say that the home and school environments should be the same. They shouldn’t be, but they need to be grounded in the same philosophical beliefs. When this is in place, parents and teachers support the child’s independence. Here are some ways parents can work with the school to assist their children:

- Encourage solid work habits by bringing children to school on time.
- Encourage independence at home.
- Take family vacations on breaks, not when school is in session.
- Provide a healthy diet and plenty of opportunities for exercise.
- Limit screen time to never (our preference) or weekends only.

GET INVOLVED!

Attend Family Information Nights.

These meetings are open to family and friends and focus on the Montessori curriculum and child development. We discuss the importance of supporting a child’s natural need to be increasingly independent at every point in their lives.

Read Dr. Montessori’s Books About the Montessori Method.

You may borrow many of these in the front office. Please refer to the recommended reading list in the appendix.

Commit to the Montessori Continuum Through the Adolescent Program.

This is a rich environment that supports the long-term development of the child. Our expectation is that families will commit to keeping their children at Riverstone through the Adolescent Program so that they can reap the full benefit of the Riverstone Montessori environment.

Focus on the Process

Your child is engaged in a long-term process, characterized most typically by bursts or explosions of progress rather than steady, predictable and sequential steps. Our focus is on the developmental process, not on the product. In other words, there may be periods when the exterior manifestation of the child’s progress is minimal and not much is being produced on paper. This lack of physical evidence can cause anxiety in adults. Often, much is happening that we can not see on the surface, but



Communicate with Your Child's Teacher

Talk with him/her as soon as you have a question or concern. This is the person that is most intimately knowledgeable about your child's progress and school experience. At Riverstone, we are committed to direct communication and effective problem-solving in our commitment to work together.

when we remember to trust the child, as well as the training and expertise of the teachers, these fears can often diminish. The success of this approach is evident in many ways; the majority of our students test well above grade level and are happy, confident and enjoy learning.

Observe Your Children.

We want the best for our children and think we know what is best for them. Observing our children and getting to know who they are, is the first step in understanding them and their true needs. Scheduled observations begin in mid-September. Call the office to schedule an observation. On the day of your scheduled visit, you will receive a clipboard with information about observing without disrupting the children's concentration.

Talk with Your Children.

Children communicate better when they feel part of a dialogue. Tell them what was best about your day; ask what was best about theirs. Find ways to share and avoid asking them to account for themselves. It may be difficult for children to remember precisely what they did. Young children are most likely to remember significant human interactions ("She's not my friend anymore") rather than details of a lesson. They also remember social occasions – snack, lunch, and recess – with more clarity than tasks they were engaged in alone. The photos you receive via Transparent Classroom are excellent conversation starters. Simply asking, "What was happening in this picture?" can open up an interesting conversation.

Participate in Apogee.

Participate in the Georgia Student Scholarship Tax Credit Program. Rather than multiple, mandatory fund-raisers throughout the year, RMA asks all of its families to participate in this program which allows our families, their friends and businesses to allocate all or a portion of the Georgia State Income Tax directly to RMA to fund scholarships. Unlike other fund-raisers, there is NO ADDITIONAL OUT OF POCKET EXPENSE because you are allocating funds from the Ga Income Tax you are automatically required to pay annually. This applies to many Georgia businesses as well. This is also a 501.c3 program, so it is tax deductible and eligible for matching employer contributions and is treated as a charitable deduction on your Federal Income Taxes which can save you additional money. RMA rewards participating families with a partial tuition credit toward saving money on their own tuition. The funds we receive allow us to do great things as we help at-risk students share in the academic benefits of a high-quality education.

Volunteer your Time and Talent.

Broad participation of parents in the various activities of the school helps build an inter-generational community that values and supports all children. Obviously, every family can not participate in every activity, but a



commitment by Riverstone families to be involved in some way enriches their experience. Educator Roland Barth said, "The relationship among the adults who operate the school affects the character and quality of a school and the accomplishments of its students more than any other factor." Your generosity of spirit is greatly appreciated.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Sign up to bring *healthy* snacks
- Do a little gardening after you drop off your child for class
- Coordinate a special event or volunteer to help out
- Share a skill or talent with our students
- Provide transportation on Field Trips or "Going-Outs"
- Organize the Uniform Swap shelves
- Make classroom materials
- Sign up to care for the farm animals and classroom pets

Volunteering

There is a certain strength that comes from a community constructed from the idea that our first priority is the children.





ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

EARLY INTERVENTION

Current research clearly reinforces our view that early intervention in childhood challenges is critical. For example, the National Institute of Health's 20-year research on reading suggests that 60% of children will face challenges in learning this skill. If proper support has not been given, by the time a child reaches 4th grade, the possibility of catching up is very low. The report recommends that problems in reading must be identified and addressed early to ensure the success of children in all content areas where reading is crucial. Because reading is such a critical skill in our culture, the high number of children who are not currently reading at an adequate level has actually resulted in a public health issue.

At RMA, we have seen the positive results of alert observation and immediate intervention. Sometimes adults take a "wait and see" approach, thinking that the difficulties are simply developmental and will not become real problems. Experience has taught us at Riverstone that it is better not to wait. Children who receive the support they need become successful learners regardless of what issues they are struggling with. Children who are supported in this way also maintain a sense of confidence in themselves and are positive about learning. Sometimes discerning the kind of support needed is difficult. Parents and teachers must work in partnership and try many different approaches; some may work out and some may not. However, in our experience, every time parents were willing to persevere in finding the best support, children found success. On the other hand, children who are left to struggle without intervention and support feel very discouraged about school and themselves. When that happens, emotional problems add to the learning difficulties.

We want to ensure that every child has a successful school experience. Gaining necessary skills and building positive self esteem are vital to this successful experience. These two goals urge us to take a proactive stance in responding to a child who is having difficulty with his or her intellectual, social, or emotional development. We explain to parents what we observe in the classroom and join them in exploring intervention possibilities.

Occasionally, an evaluation from a trained professional is required to provide expert advice as to how to best meet a child's needs. When this is necessary, RMA will request access to this information as it relates to the child's ability to successfully function in the classroom environment and their continued enrollment. All such information is kept confidential.



DISCIPLINE

Montessori classrooms are open environments that allow students to have freedom of movement. With this freedom and the responsibility for their own work, students are held to a high standard of behavior. In most instances, the natural consequences that result are enough to correct poor choices. Montessori students are familiar with appropriate means of interacting in caring and appropriate ways, handling materials carefully, dealing with frustration, and resolving disputes with others in a peaceful manner.

In instances where children refuse to cooperate with staff in addressing their behavior or who express themselves in a salacious or threatening manner, either physically or verbally, the family will be contacted and required to immediately pick up the child from school.

CONCERN RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Parent Concern about Child/Teacher

1. Meet with teacher (with or without Director of Education)
2. Meet with teacher and Director of Education
3. Meet with teacher, Director of Education and School Administrator
4. Director of Education and School Administrator make final decision

Teacher Concern about Child/Parent

1. Meet with parents (with or without Director of Education)
2. Meet with parents and Director of Education
3. Meet with Director of Education and School Administrator
4. Director of Education and School Administrator make final decision

GROUNDS FOR DISMISSAL

To ensure the safety and integrity of our school community, RMA administrators reserve the right to dismiss a student and/or their siblings for cause which includes but is not limited to the following:

Inability to function in the Montessori classroom. Occasionally, a child needs specialized help for physical, emotional or educational needs. Parents will be informed if the teacher feels a problem exists and cannot be resolved with our resources.

Habitual absences and/or tardies (either arriving late or leaving early) that negatively impact the child's ability to function in the classroom as determined by the lead teacher or by Georgia State Guidelines.

Failure by the parent to attend required parent/teacher conferences and/or informational meetings.

Lack of parental involvement and assistance in support of the classroom

Working Agreements

Joined by common beliefs, purposes, and values, Riverstone Montessori Academy and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire school community. Working in partnership, parents and school professionals model relationships based upon respect, civility and honesty. Good faith practices that focus on our common ground and good intentions are the essential underpinnings of effective working relationships.

The relationships between parents, faculty, and administration are formally governed by the school's written enrollment contract and *Parent Handbook* in which the school's policies, procedures, and expectations are clearly defined. Parents with concerns about the school or about its decisions are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's *Support and Resolution Procedures*. Parents can best support a climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. While parents may not agree with every decision made by the school, in most cases the parents and the school will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship.

and the school.

Failure to pay tuition and/or other monies owed within 30 days of original date due.

Parent behaviors that are neither respectful of nor conducive to our community, including irresolvable differences regarding school policies. Riverstone Montessori Academy believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the school and a student's parents or guardian is essential to the fulfillment of our mission.

Riverstone Montessori Academy reserves the right not to continue enrollment or not to reenroll a student if **RMA reasonably concludes that the actions of a parent or guardian make a positive and constructive relationship impossible** or otherwise seriously interfere with the school's accomplishment of its educational purposes.

Behavior by any student or family member of a student that threatens physical, emotional or financial harm to any member of the RMA staff, student body or RMA as an institution.

Possession of any illegal substances or weapons by students and/or their family members on the RMA campus or at RMA sponsored events.

A parent or guardian convicted of a crime or moral turpitude.



SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Riverstone Montessori has two Heads of School

The School Administrator (Scott Akridge) and the Director of Education (Korinne Akridge) work together to supervise and manage the daily operations of the school. In consultation with teachers and AMI advisors, their primary responsibility is to maintain the integrity of the school's Montessori educational vision and to ensure that the school remains viable to serve future generations. Requiring fiscal integrity in the present and future, is integral to the responsibility of preserving the vision.

AMI/USA consultants evaluate the school, classrooms and staff every three years for AMI accreditation.

AMI-trained consultants observe, evaluate, and support classrooms on a regular basis. New teachers receive support and mentoring by coordinators and colleagues. Only AMI-trained professionals are fully qualified to evaluate Riverstone's programs and faculty. Our expertise and commitment to the Montessori philosophy is one of the defining qualities of Riverstone Montessori Academy and is what attracts and retains parents who are strong supporters of our community.

In addition to our AMI accreditation, RMA is also accredited by the Georgia Accrediting Commission and Bright from the Start

CLASSROOM INTEGRITY

The standards of excellence for Riverstone Montessori Academy are set by AMI (Association Montessori Internationale).

AMI was founded in 1929, by Dr. Maria Montessori to further her life's work in its original integrity and completeness and to guide its development and application in the interests of all children. AMI consultants visit AMI-recognized Montessori schools every three years as part of the accreditation process. Adherence to distinct philosophical and operational characteristics is necessary for a school to meet the AMI recognition criteria.

We are committed to supporting each child to develop his or her fullest potential. One way we do this is to help children develop focus and concentration by respecting their work and work cycle. The Montessori environment fosters independence and self-esteem by providing opportunities to practice the life skills inherent in managing social interactions and participating in conflict resolution techniques. We meet the standard established by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), which include:

- Appropriately trained teachers, adhering to the AMI guidelines
- AMI consultations at a minimum of once every three years
- A complete set of AMI approved materials in each classroom



AMI USA

AMI/USA represents the Association Montessori International in the United States, bringing the principles of Dr. Montessori to the education of children. Founded in 1929, AMI maintains the integrity of Dr. Montessori's approach and life's work. Visit the AMI USA website at <https://amiusa.org/> and click on the About Us link to learn more about our approach, mission, values, and objectives.

AMI/USA
206 N. Washington Street,
Ste. 330
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 746-9919
montessori@amiusa.org



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Students Love to Learn in an AMI Montessori School!

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The term "Montessori" is not trademarked and as a result, not all Montessori schools are the same. The AMI Montessori curriculum and class structure of Riverstone employs the original format designed by Dr. Maria Montessori. It is used world-wide and is the most complex and advanced system currently in practice. Not only does it help students develop the ability to advance (both academically and socially) more rapidly than traditional educational methods, it also provides important training in research, organization and presentation skills. This combination of professional and personal development prepares students for future success in any advanced academic environment.

- Mixed age classes (3-6, 6-12 or 6-9, 9-12)
- Classes balanced by age and gender
- Classes run five days a week with uninterrupted work periods each day:

Primary

3 hours in the morning
1 ½ - 2 hours in the afternoon

Elementary & Adolescent Program

3 hours in the morning
2 – 2 ½ hours in the afternoon

The AMI Team

AMI teachers, the Director of Education, the School Administrator - make all the decisions regarding pedagogy, programs, and classrooms. Parent education, school activities, and long range plans are reviewed by the AMI Team to be sure they are keeping with the Montessori philosophy.

A clear vision and shared values comprise the bedrock that supports Riverstone Montessori Academy's decision-making process.

Three characteristics of that process ensure Riverstone Montessori Academy's continued success:

- The proven ability to keep the child, the Montessori philosophy, and Riverstone's mission at the center of every decision.
- The retention of gifted professionals and parents with shared values who are committed to the Montessori philosophy and who work together to make decisions that reflect the community's values and commitment to AMI principles.
- A commitment to excellence and on-going school improvement.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Who Does What?

Off-Site School Administrator

- Responsible for the Operation of the school along with the On-Site Administrator. Communicates on a daily basis with the On-Site Administrator and/or School Coordinator to discuss details of school operations and meets regularly with our marketing team, AMI Administrators
- Group and AMI/USA & AMI/International.

On-Site School Administrator

- Takes care of the day to day operations of Riverstone.
- Works closely with the Off-Site Administrator



AMI Teacher Training

The training an AMI Montessori teacher (even in pre-school) receives is considered a Master's Level education when administered in a University setting.

This is an important distinction from many educators who may be "certified" or trained in general education principles, but not trained for the administration of the specific curriculum they are using. AMI Montessori teachers can teach in all subject areas and are employed in most countries throughout the world. Our Primary curriculum extends into the 3rd grade of traditional education, and our Elementary and Adolescent Program curriculum extends into traditional High School and College studies. No child is left behind in AMI Montessori.

- Coordinates school communications and student documentation for families.
- First stop for non-classroom related questions or concerns
- Represents the school at off-site functions and the AMI Administrators Group
- Carries the full weight and confidence of the Off-Site Administrator in his absence

Director of Education

Responsible for ensuring that all classes run according to AMI guidelines, observes in each classroom on a regular basis and offers practical advice for implementing the AMI experience for every child. If there is a concern that cannot be resolved after meeting with your child's teacher, The Director of Education will facilitate a meeting to resolve the issue at hand.

Admissions Director/Administrative Assistant

Coordinates all school events and meetings; she is also our parent volunteer coordinator. Keeps faculty and staff all lined up with the Bright From the Start trainings and regulations to ensure the safety and security of RMA's children and families. Handles the admissions process from start to finish.

Lead Teachers

Teach! We protect this function as much as possible so that all of their energy is free to focus on the children and offering an exceptional experience. Teachers receive support from an administrative structure that frees them to offer the best AMI Montessori experience for our students.

Classroom Assistants

Help keep the classrooms running smoothly. They maintain the materials in the classroom, keep supplies stocked and help the lead teacher as directed to meet the needs of the classroom and the children.

Spanish Teachers

The Spanish Teachers present their lessons in small groups based on ability and readiness. The children are grouped and regrouped regularly so that they can move forward at their own pace.

Enrichment

Riverstone Montessori Academy offers a changing array of optional enrichment opportunities focused on academic, social and artistic development. In the Montessori tradition, these classes are multi-age and open to all prepared children. In addition to our all-day Montessori program, Riverstone enrichment classes are held after the afternoon academic work period, for the convenience of parents

Looking for a Carpool Partner?

We are happy to help families who want to share carpool driving find each other. Please call the office and we will be happy to share your information.

CARPOOL

A carpool primer is updated and provided electronically each summer before school begins. Please refer to this year's Primer for detailed instructions by class on all carpool procedures.

TIPS FOR A SMOOTH CARPOOL DROP OFF

Carpool is designed to help children start their school day in the best possible way. Encouraging the child to leave you from the vehicle, rather than you leaving them, sets a different psychological tone that is helpful for children.

Familiarity and consistency are the hallmarks of happy students. Please do not offer bribes or rewards as this can set a precedent that is difficult to end. Make the chance to meet new friends and learn new things be the reward. Follow the carpool routine every day, without exception and your child will soon anticipate and accept this routine.

You set the tone; if you are anxious or worried, these feelings can affect your child's attitude. Talk about how happy you are that they are going to such a wonderful school and that you look forward to hearing all about it when you pick them up at carpool.

Make goodbyes short and happy: one quick kiss and one good-bye, then let your child be removed from the car and drive away.

Teary eyed children can make separation challenging for parents. However, once these sad students enter the classroom, the tears dry up almost instantly. If you are feeling anxious about your child, please feel free to call us and check in. We will be happy to give you an update during this transitional period.

It's beneficial for our youngest new students to practice carpool procedures ahead of time. Go through the steps with your child and practice saying goodbye before the first day of school.

Looking for a Carpool Partner? We are happy to help families find each other. Please call the office and we will be happy to share your information.





Georgia Cell Phone in School Zone Laws

Cell phone use is NOT ALLOWED during carpool drop of and pick up. This is mandatory for the safety of your children.

It is illegal to use a cell phone while driving in a school zone!

Georgia Car Seat Laws

- Children under the age of eight must ride in an approved safety seat or booster that is suited for their height and weight.
- Children eight years of age or younger must ride in the back seat. If the back seat is occupied by other passengers, your child may ride in the front seat provided he or she is secured in a booster or child safety seat.
- Kids between the ages of eight and 16 must wear a seat belt.
- Any child over 4'9" may use a seat belt in lieu of a booster seat.

Tips Regarding Lunch and Picky Eaters

Sometimes children are picky eaters. This is a normal part of development, but it is important that they are consistently presented with healthy choices and are not indulged in a diet with no expectation of trying new foods or revisiting foods that were previously disliked, as our tastes change throughout life. Below is an article with suggestions related to picky eaters.

Win Over Picky Eaters

Is your child a picky eater? Well, there's some comforting news. According to Dr. Leann Birch, Professor and Head of the Human Development and Family Studies Department at Penn State University, "Most children who are perceived as picky eaters probably have adequate diets. What parents often perceive as picky eating simply reflects their children's normal response to new foods." Children are naturally "neophobic," which means they have an innate fear of trying anything new or foreign, and this includes food. It is normal for children between the ages of 2 and 5 years to resist eating new foods and have about four to five favorite foods that they readily accept. Learning that this is a natural part of their children's development can help you relax a bit about what your child chooses to eat or reject.

So if your child is a picky eater, what can you do? While it can be frustrating when your child will only want to eat French fries for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, be patient. You should know that there are some effective ways you can help make healthy foods like fruits and vegetables all-time favorite choices in your home. Birch claims,

"Children should be allowed to decide what and how much they eat, but it's the parents' responsibility to make healthy foods available to their children to choose from and eat."

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

Earlier is better.

It's important to expose your child to healthy fruits and vegetables at a young age. Food preferences that children develop in their early years remain fairly stable and are reflected by the food choices they make in later childhood.

Be patient and keep trying.

Parents who get discouraged by children who are picky eaters often stop trying to give them new foods, which could lead to future health problems. Research has shown that in most cases, parents can help their children learn to like new foods through multiple exposures (between 5 and 10) to new foods and opportunities to learn about food and eating. Just offer new foods often, asking your child to try a bite in a positive and supportive way. Although it doesn't always happen, studies have shown that children will eventually learn to like the new food.

Be a role model.

A recent study found that 2 and 3-year-old children's food preferences are significantly related to foods that their mothers liked, disliked, and never tasted. So the more excitement and enjoyment you express about fruits and vegetables, the more likely your child will want to eat them too!



Don't restrict certain foods.

Research also shows that not allowing children to eat certain foods only raises their desirability for that food. So help children learn that healthy foods like fruits and vegetables are “all the time foods” that they can eat anytime, and that foods like candy and desserts are “sometimes foods” that they can eat once in a while.

Make healthy foods available.

As long as you keep healthy snacks like fruits and vegetables around, your child can learn to like and choose them!

Prepare foods in healthy ways.

Small modifications in the way you prepare meals and snacks can make a big difference in improving your child's diet: Bake instead of fry, choose foods with whole grain or whole wheat instead of refined grains, give your child water or milk instead of juice or soda, etc.

Make it fun!

Snack and meal-time activities should be introduced and reinforced in creative, colorful, and playful ways. There are suggestions below for some fun and easy ways you can make fruits and vegetables an all-time favorite with your child. While you do these activities, allow your child to explore the various properties of fruits and vegetables by touching, tasting, smelling, and hearing. Don't forget to talk about how they are good for the body too!

- Try something new. Allow your child to try a new fruit or vegetable. Jicama! Zucchini! Bok choy! Mango! Papaya! These foods may sound silly, but they taste great and they're good for you.
- Do a taste test or a crunch test! Dip carrots into three different flavors of dressing or try a crunch test with three different kinds of vegetables to see which vegetable crunches the loudest!
- Play a guessing game! Prepare several foods for your child to taste while he or she is blindfolded. See if your child can identify each food. Help your child use words to describe what he or she tastes, such as salty, sweet, crunchy, smooth, warm, cold, etc.
- Play “What can we make with this?” Talk about how a certain fruit or vegetable, such as an apple is good for the body. Then talk about the various foods they can make with an apple.
- Bake carrot or zucchini muffins together. Discuss how carrots have special vitamins that are really good for eyes.
- Where do foods come from? With your child, visit a farm to explore where foods come from and how they grow. Can you try planting your own fruit and vegetable? How about a tomato?
- Make a healthy snack. Have your child pick a variety of fruits to make a fruit salad. As he/she adds each new fruit to the bowl, talk about the colors of each fruit and how they help the body stay healthy in different ways.
- After grocery shopping, play a sorting game by grouping various fruits and vegetables by different categories – color, taste, texture, food group, etc.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AT HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MONTESSORI KIDS BY AGE

Three to Four-ish

Packs own lunch (with help in selection and preparation, when needed)
Dresses self in morning
Helps to choose own clothing for the day according to the weather
Shakes out rugs
Waters plants and flowers
Sets table
Washes windows and mirrors
Brushes hair

Five and Six-ish

Packs own lunch
Dresses self in morning
Chooses own clothing for the day according to the weather
Shakes out rugs
Waters plants and flowers
Peels vegetables
Prepares simple foods (sandwiches, boiled eggs, toast)
Prepares own school lunch
Helps hang and fold laundry
Gathers wood for fireplace



Rakes leaves
Pulls weeds
Takes pet for a walk
Ties own shoes
Responsible for minor injuries
Cleans out inside of car
Straightens or cleans out silverware drawer

Seven-ish

Cares properly for bike and other outside toy equipment.
Oils and cares for bikes and locks it up when unused
Takes telephone messages in a polite manner and writes them down
Runs errands for parents
Sweeps and washes patio or deck area.
Waters the lawn
Washes the dog
Trains pets
Carries in grocery sacks
Gets self up in the morning and to bed at night without assistance
Is learning to be polite and courteous, to share and to respect others
Assumes responsibilities such as carrying own lunch money and notes back to school
Leaves bathroom in order, hangs up clean towels
Mops floors
Does simple ironing of flat pieces of fabric/clothing

Eight and Nine-ish

Folds napkins properly and sets table properly
Mops or buffs the floor
Cleans Venetian blinds
Helps rearrange furniture. Helps plan the layout

Runs own bathwater
Helps others with their work when asked
Straightens own closet and drawers
Shops for and selects own clothing and shoes with an adult
Changes school clothes without being told
Folds blankets
Sews buttons or rips in seams
Cleans up animal “messes” in the yard and house
Begins to read recipes and cook for the family
Cuts flowers and makes a centerpiece
Paints fence or shelves
Writes simple letters
Writes thank you notes
Helps with cleaning of the refrigerator
Feeds the baby
Helps bathe younger siblings
Polishes silverware, copper or brass items
Cleans patio furniture
Dusts, polishes furniture

Nine and Ten-ish

Changes sheets on the bed and puts dirty sheets in hamper
Operates washer and dryer
Measures detergent and bleach
Buys groceries using a list and comparative shopping
Prepares dishes from simple recipes
Prepares a family meal
Receives and answers own mail
Makes fruit juice, lemonade, etc. from concentrates and

powders
Waits on guests
Plans own birthday or other parties
Simple first aid use
Sews, knits or weaves, uses sewing machine
Does chores without a reminder
Learns banking and to be thrifty and trustworthy
Washes family ca

Eleven-ish
Earns own money (chores, baby-sitting...)
Handles sums of money honestly
Able to navigate a city bus or Marta route
Proper conduct when staying overnight with a friend
Packs own suitcase
Responsible for personal hobby
Able to handle self properly when in public places or alone with peers

Twelve-Fourteen-ish

Joins outside organizations, does assignments and attends meetings. Able to take responsibilities as a leader
Puts sibling to bed and dresses them
Cleans pool and pool area
Respects others' property
Runs own errands
Mows the lawn
Helps parent build things
Cleans oven and stove
Able to schedule ample time for studies
Buys own treats
Checks and adds oil to the car
Can be home alone for short periods of time

MONTESSORI "HOMEWORK"

Why Homework?

Both a century of Montessori experience and the last thirty years of educational research agree:

- People learn best when they are learning something that personally interests them
- Having some sense of control over one's learning is a prerequisite of personal interest.

This means that coercing someone to "learn" something in which they have no personal interest is often worse than never introducing them to it at all. The negative emotion that accompanies being coerced to "learn" is likely to remain permanently attached to the subject of the "learning" and may obstruct all future attempts to learn that subject. Moreover, repeated experiences of this sort typically lead to passivity in the learner and frequently to the development of a negative self-image with regard to one's ability and fitness to learn a broad range of subjects and skills. These are among the main reasons why Montessori teachers do not give assignments and in particular, why we do not assign traditional homework.

In Summary:

- This type of "homework" is not optional for Montessori students.
- The school day and school year are too short for life long learning to end there.
- The absence of screens and social phone calling on school nights creates the time for homework.
- Assignments are not effective and may be harmful.
- The homework list, to which the child and parent may propose additions, offers the important element of choice.
- Montessori homework seeks to inculcate learning as a way of life.

If homework is not assigned reading, worksheets, and projects with deadlines, what is it?

What we are looking for are many opportunities for the children to both consolidate and expand the knowledge they are working with in the classroom. Inevitably, these real world experiences will also spark new questions and other interests which the child will bring back to the classroom, enriching both their own classroom work and that of the other children. We want to foster this sort of "learning feedback loop" between school and home to the benefit of both and to the great benefit of the child.

For learning to be assimilated and integrated, it must be repeated in another setting. It must go from school to home and be recalled, revisited, and repeated. Recalling, revisiting, and repeating in the same setting is not as effective.

We are looking not for worksheets and assignments but for learning as a way of life, both at home and at school. And, of the two, the home will ultimately have a far greater influence on the child's future way of life than will the school.

Guidelines for Homework

In order to better support learning as a way of life, we are providing the following guidelines for the child's work at home.

The child should spend at least three hours per day on Montessori homework. Three hours a day of homework allows the child to spend time each day on a wide variety of activities: physical exercise, service, intellectual activity, household responsibilities, the arts, etc.

- At least 30 minutes of that time must be spent reading from books on the appropriate reading list.
- Ideas using Computers are mainly suggested for those in the 9-12-ish range with parental approval.

The Most Important Thing You Can Do To Get Smarter & Stronger

Whenever you feel like turning on the TV or playing computer games, first come get this list of ideas and pick something from it to do before you spend any time in front of a screen. Then, if you still want to sit in front of a screen, set a timer for 30 minutes and make yourself turn off the electronics when the timer goes off. Be sure to limit yourself to no more than one hour of combined screen time per weekend day.

If you really want to get smarter and stronger, turn off the TV and computer for a month. Yes, you can do it. You won't even die of boredom. You will find interesting hobbies and become more interesting and fun to be around.

If you do use the computer, use it as a tool for making yourself smarter and stronger: write with it, do math with it, do art with it, or explore www.enchantedlearning.com with your mom or dad. So far nobody has ever gotten smarter and stronger playing computer or video games, and you're probably not going to be the first.

Creative Arts / Construction

- Knit, crochet, spin, weave, sew, quilt, hook rugs, embroider, tie-dye, beadwork, paint, sculpt.
- Make pottery and take a pottery class where you work with real clay, not just glazes.
- Learn new art projects by reading in books or taking an art class. Prepare an art project to teach to the class in the fall.
- Take weaving classes.
- Work with a knowledgeable adult to build a fence, a doghouse, a bike ramp, a bookcase, a bench, etc.
- Find an adult who has a lot of tools and likes to build or repair things. Learn the names of all the tools the adult has. Learn to write the names as well as say them. Learn what each tool is used for.
- Learn photography – how to take a really good picture.
- Learn how to operate a video camera. Make your own movies.



- Document a week in the life of your family using a cam-corder or camera. Write a paragraph about each family member and what they will be doing for the summer. Mail the package to your grandparents or some other relative or friend who would like to receive the update.
- Practice your musical instrument or learn new songs to sing. If possible, take private music lessons on your musical instrument.
 - Learn a new song to teach the class. Bring a copy of the words when you teach it to us.
 - Learn to dance.
 - Get a copy of Curve Stitching by Jon Millington and work your way from front to back. You'll be ready to invent your own curve stitching designs next year!
 - Visit one of the art museums in town. Visit the gift shop after you've toured the museum. Buy postcards of your favorite works, and try to copy them at home with colored pencils or watercolors.
 - Take art classes in a variety of media
 - Go to stores like Hobby Lobby (there is a new one on Barrett Parkway by the School Box now) or Michaels, etc. and

browse around for inspiration.

- Take the weekend classes offered at Home Depot and Lowes on how to build various items.

Language / Words / Literature

- Schedule a weekly trip to the public library. Plan to spend at least an hour looking through books, looking up things in the catalog, reading magazines, etc.
- Take regular trips to bookstores. Make a list of all the good bookstores in town and try to visit each one at least once so you can learn what sorts of book each store offers
- Read books from the Reading List. Keep a list of the books and the number of pages you read in each.
- Consider joining a summer reading program at the public library.
- Write a description of a friend, a friend's house, a pet, a favorite place, a vacation spot, etc.
- Interview your family and relatives. Start a family newsletter.
- Enter an essay, story, or poetry contest. Submit your work to magazines that publish student work.
- Practice telling stories. At the library, look for books of folktales from around the world. Pick a few to learn by heart. Plan to tell them to us on the fall camping trip.
- Find a newspaper article you want to read and discuss with your family. Set aside a specific time and place for the discussion.
- Have a family reading time. Everybody reads whatever they want in the same room. Start small: perhaps for 15 minutes after dinner. Gradually increase the time.
- Have a read-aloud time. One person could read while the others clean up from dinner or do some other simple task. Family members take turns being the reader.
- At the bookstore, look for books of crossword puzzles, anagrams, and other word games. Keep a book of word puzzles in the car to work on whenever you are riding around.
- Play great board games such as Scrabble, UpWords, Boggle, or Word Thief.
- Write with your family. Start a family journal. In the journal, keep lists of things to do around the house, descriptions of special events such as hosting houseguests, notes about phone calls to family friends and relatives, anything you want to record from your everyday life. See Peter Stillman's book Families Writing for more ideas and inspiration.
- Listen to books on tape while driving around on errands or on vacation. Some places to borrow, rent, or buy books on tape: Your local library, Barnes & Noble, Audible, and Amazon, among others.
- Read and write poetry. Memorize a poem a week.
- Choose a story to practice reading aloud. Practice the pronunciations of all the words. Try giving each character a different voice when you read. Try to use your voice to make the story more interesting to your audience.
- Put on some calming music (Bach, Mozart, Satie, Gregorian chant are nice) and practice making the most beautiful cursive or italic letters you can.
- Instead of phoning, write letters to your friends and relatives. Try starting a round robin letter to your friends or relatives. First, make up a list of 3 – 5 people and their addresses; put your name and address last on the list. Write a letter to the

first person on the list, and enclose a copy of the list of addresses. The person you wrote to writes a letter and sends it, your original letter, and the list of addresses to the next person on the list, and so forth. Eventually, all the letters will come back to you!

- Write a review of a book you read or a movie you saw. Tell the basic idea of the book or movie and what you liked and didn't like about it. What did the author do well? What did they not do so well?
- Learn to touch type (that is, type without looking at the keys or your fingers). You might want to use a software package such as Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing.
- If you want to practice spelling in a very structured way, check out the books at the Neuhaus Educational Center website: <http://www.neuhaus.org/Classes/index.asp#SS>
- Keep your self-editing check list up to date at home and refer to it when you write.

Math / Numbers / Geometry

- Comparison shopping: figuring price per pound, calling various stores, etc. When you shop at the grocery store, take along a pad and pencil; keep a running total of the cost of items you buy. Check your answer against the cash register receipt you get when you pay for your items.
- Read *The Number Devil* by H. M. Enzensberger. This an especially good book for people who have not yet learned to love math, but those who have will enjoy the book, too. Every Upper EI student should read this book.
- Keep statistics. Graph when you go to bed, how many pages you read each day, how far you walk each day, how many ounces of water you drink per day, how often you have friends over, how long it takes you to eat breakfast, how many meters per day you swim, how fast you can jog around the block, how many multiplication facts you can do in a minute, etc.
- Measure things around the house and calculate their surface area and volume. Take trips to the park, etc., to measure things there.
- Help with the family budget. Record the family expenditures for a week. Help your parents write the checks when they pay the bills (they'll have to sign the checks) or see if they will teach you online banking.
- Take a finance class for kids
- Play good "thinking" games such as chess and go. Learn how to notate chess games. Learn to play chess by mail with your friends (that's where you mail your moves back and forth on post cards or in letters).
- Make up math problems for yourself to work. Consider making a "Math Workout" for yourself once a week. This will help keep your math skills strong and will allow you to spend your next school year on new, interesting math, instead of re-learning all the math you forgot over the summer!
- Work on memorizing all your multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction facts, if you haven't already done so. Once you've mastered your math facts, work on speed.

Nature / Plants / Animals

- Check out the many Marietta/Atlanta Metro area summer camps that are based in these studies. Go rafting, hiking, etc.
- Whenever you travel to a new city, visit the local zoo and aquarium or the local natural history museum.

- Check out the camps and activities sponsored by the Atlanta Zoo
- Before you travel to another part of the country or to a different country, read about the biomes there. Read about their climate, animals, and plants. While you're there, look for things you read about.
- Go camping with your family or friends.
- Learn more about nutrition. Visit <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/pyramids.html> to learn about the Harvard Food Pyramid. For a week, keep a journal of what you eat. See if you are in balance with the Harvard Food Pyramid. Pick one or two things you can do to start moving your diet closer to the recommendations of the pyramid.
- Make a botany map of your back yard. Place each plant in its place on the map and label each plant with its common name and scientific name. (You might need some help from a library book or a knowledgeable adult gardener.)
- Go food picking on a local farm such as Lake Lara Gardens (Burnt Hickory Road, Near Barrett Parkway, approx 2 Miles from RMA)
- Grow your own food. There are so many varieties: Square Foot Gardening, Traditional Gardening, Lasagna Gardening, Container Gardening, etc. Do some research and decide what you think is a sound, convenient and ecological method or try a couple and see which gives the best harvest with the least amount of investment (and define investment – labor? money? time?).
- Go to a 4-H camp
- Follow up on the skills we explored in our field study – archery, pond ecology and animal identification, hiking, zip lining, herpetology, etc. Read over your notes from your field journal.
- Read Weslandia – got any ideas for yourself?

History / Geography

- Help plan the family vacation. Research the landmarks, geography, culture, special attractions of the area you'll be visiting. Map out the route you'll take.
- Make a map of your house and gardens. Make a detailed map of your room.
- Study world religions. Pick a religion you don't know much about. Read about it in books you check out from the public library. See if you can find a local group that practices that religion. Plan with your parents to visit their church, temple, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship. Good religions to start with: Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant), Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Unitarianism.
- The website at <http://killeenroos.com/link/anchist.htm> links to hundreds of other sites on ancient civilizations.
- Pick a continent you'd like to know more about. (If you can't decide, work on Europe first.) Using an atlas, make flash cards of all the countries in that continent. On one side of the card have the country's name; on the other side, the country's capital city. Memorize all the countries and capitals in that continent, then do the same for another continent.
- Interview someone from another country. Ask them about their country's history, landmarks, cities, agriculture, industries, religions, festivals, form of government, famous scientists, famous artists and writers, etc. Ask them for permission to tape the interview. From the tape, make notes. From the notes, write a summary of what you learned about the person's country.

Science

- Check out Family Science Nights at local Nature and Science Centers.
- Check out the astronomy programs
- At the library, look through the children books on science. Choose one that has experiments you can do at home, such as the books by Janice Van Cleave. Try some experiments at home with your parents.
- Consider the books and kits available from Terrific Science (www.tsbkm.com/).
- Try some of the activities from the San Francisco Exploratorium website: www.exploratorium.edu/explore/handson.html
- Explore the Life on Earth site at the University of California – Berkeley. www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/allife/threedomains.html
This is fairly advanced, but extremely cool.

Sports / Exercise

- Play on a team or join a club or gym or local YMCA. Make exercise a regular part of your day. Practice a sport or physical skill such as: hiking, biking, skating, swimming, walking, caving, climbing, canoeing, snorkeling, running, gymnastics, basketball, rock climbing, yoga, Pilates.
- Spend as much time outdoors as possible. If your body gets used to staying indoors in the air conditioning all the time, you will be at risk for heat stroke if you do need to do something physical outdoors.
- Work on developing the habit of drinking enough water each day. To find the minimum amount of water your body needs to avoid dehydration, use the following formula:
- $(\text{your body weight in pounds} \div 10) \times 2 = \text{minimum ounces of water you need each day}$
- You'll need to drink more than that if you are exercising in the heat.
- Download a free book of cooperative games at <http://freechild.org/gamesguide.pdf> . Try these with your friends.
- Learn to stretch and warm up and cool down properly.
- Continue to meet or exceed the Presidential Fitness Challenge standards: www.presidentschallenge.org . Be certain your body is in proper alignment so that you do not injure yourself while you exercise.

Community Service / Activism

- Keep a scrapbook of newspaper articles on issues you care about in the community or world. Write letters to elected officials (congresspersons, senators, the President, city councilors, etc.) expressing your opinions about issues you've read about.
- Participate in an environmental clean up. This might be as simple as going to the park with your family or friends and filling up a big trash bag with all the trash you can pick up. Save recyclable bottles and plastic in a separate bag to recycle later.
- Help younger children learn to do something they want to do.
- Visit an elder. Look for opportunities to assist the elderly. Some children call out bingo at a retirement home every other week.



- Volunteer at a local animal shelter or zoo.
- Volunteer at Meals on Wheels.
- Offer to help neighbors with pet sitting, picking up their newspaper when they're out of town, etc.
- Sign up for a week to care for the classroom pets, farm animals, and gardens. The chickens, ducks, donkeys, and sheep need to be fed and watered every other day and have their poop scooped out of the coop once a week. The gardens also need to be watered and checked for weeds every other day (this can be done on the same day the chicks are watered and fed, and they would probably enjoy some time out to walk around while you tend the garden, etc).

Whatever is ready to harvest you can have!

Household Service

- Help out more with the household chores since you have more time at home. Learn to do some new things such as washing clothes, ironing, folding laundry, polishing furniture, vacuuming, mowing the lawn (if your parents agree). Work alongside another family member whenever possible.
- Cook together with your family. It can be more fun than cooking by yourself. Shop for good cookbooks to try recipes from together. A couple that have gotten rave reviews for beginners (they actually teach you about food and cooking, organize meals by season, and are not supposed to be terribly complicated): “Cheap Eats: Simple, Sumptuous Meals for Four You Can Make for Under \$10” by Brooke Dojny and Melanie Barnard and “The Splendid Table’s How to Eat Supper” by Lynne Rossetto Kasper and Sally Swift,
- Be responsible for one or two meals per week. Plan the menu with your parent(s). Make a shopping list. Do the shopping. Cook the meal with your parent(s). Try not to use a microwave oven when you cook!
- Refer to the “Home Responsibilities for Children” section of the RMA Parent Handbook. Are there any you could learn?



GOOD BOOKS FOR MONTESSORI PARENTS

The following are suggested reading materials for parents. Many of these publications are available for checkout in the office.

ANY AGE

Lillard, Angeline S. (2005). *Montessori: the Science Behind the Genius*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Faber, Adele & Mazlish, Elaine (2012). *How to Talk so Kids will Listen & Listen so Kids Will Talk*. New York: Scribner

Greene, Ross (2016). *Raising Human Beings* New York: Scribner

Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2015), *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. California: Puddle Dancer Press

Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2003), *Life-Enriching Education*. California: Puddle Dancer Press

Faber, Adele & Mazlish, Elaine (2012), *Siblings Without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too*. New York: W.W. Norton

PRIMARY

Futrell, Kathleen (1995). *The Normalized Child*. North American Montessori Teachers' Association

Kahn, David (1995) *What is Montessori Elementary?* North American Montessori Association.

Kahn, David (1995). *What is Montessori Preschool?* North American Montessori Teachers' Association.

Montessori, Maria. (1949). *The Absorbent Mind*. Madras, India: Theosophical Publication House.

Oriti, Patricia. (1994). *At Home with Montessori*. North American Montessori Teachers' Association.

Seldin, Tim (2006). *How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way*. New York: DK Publishing.

Montessori, Maria (2017). *Maria Montessori Speaks to Parents: A Selection of Articles*. Amsterdam: Montessori Pierson

ELEMENTARY

Lillard, Paula P. (1996). *Montessori Today*. New York: Random House.

Stephenson, Susan Mayclin (2013). *Child of the World: Montessori Global Education for Ages 3-12*. Arcata: Michael Olaf Montessori Company

ADOLESCENT

Walsh, Dr. David (2004). *Why Do They Act That Way? A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen*. New York: Simon & Schuster

Montessori, Maria (1949) *The Formation of Man*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam: Montessori Pierson