

Greetings from the Early Childhood Community!

We hope this letter finds you relishing in the memories that you have created this summer and happy to begin another year in the educational journey of your child.

The first day of school is a delightful juncture in your child's life. Your child is embarking on a path that will lead him/her on many roads of discovery and learning. As wonderful as this new experience may be, it can also be quite stressful for the young child. New situations and change can, at times, be unsettling for all of us. For many children this may be their first experience of separation from parents or care givers at home. It is common for even the most outgoing child to be anxious the first day of school.

The following are a few suggestions for assisting your child during this time. Remember, the Xavier Montessori Lab School faculty will be available to provide support and assistance making your child's (and your) first school days happy days.

- Prepare your child for the new school experience by explaining what to expect. Answer all questions directly and honestly.
- Convey a positive attitude. Young children are aware of your feelings. Your enthusiasm will assure the child that school is a fun place.
- Establish a routine involving both the night before a school day as well as morning preparation. Rituals and routines will add predictability and are comforting in unfamiliar situations.
- Bring 2 photos from home to keep in their cubbies. This is often reassuring in helping the child with the initial adjustment to school.
- Clearly state to your child where you will be and when you will return. It may also be helpful to discuss what will happen when you are reunited, perhaps a snack will be waiting for them in the car.
- *Maintain a clear good-bye routine in car line.* This may include a kiss and a hug, or a wave from the car window. Once you tell your child you are leaving, it is important to follow through. Extending the good-bye with "Ok just one more kiss, and then I really, really have to go" tends to heighten anxiety rather than relieve it.

Again, please know we are here to help make the first day of school a happy transition and we look forward to an exciting and fun year.

Warmly,

Beth & Donna

Nurturing Independence in the Children's House

Dr. Maria Montessori created the first “Casa de Bambini” with a focus on the whole child. Our Lab School is a carefully prepared environment created to foster the development of the children's independence and sense of personal empowerment. This is truly the children's community in which the environment is their second home and everyone here becomes a second family.

The following are some tips to nurture your child's independence and transition into his/her new role as an important member of the Lab School family:

- Before the school year begins you may want to drive your child to school, explaining that this is the new route that you will take each morning on the way to school. Drive through the gate and follow the driveway to the back of the Joseph building. Stop at the top of the hill at the second gate and inform your child that this is where the teachers will be every morning to welcome him/her to school. A teacher will open the door for each child and walk him to the set of gray double doors where another teacher will meet the child and guide him to his cubby. Also, during this preliminary visit, you may want to park your car and stay a while to play on the playground.
- Allow your child to **independently walk** into school and show them how to **hang up his/her own backpack**.
- A child's autonomy is greatly increased when wearing shoes that can be independently put on and taken off. **Shoes with Velcro or without laces** are recommended if your child is still working on tying laces.
- Your child can practice taking off his/her shoes and putting on his/her school shoes and vice-versa before you bring them to school. When not in use indoor shoes will be stored on the bottom of his/her cubby.