

THE SPONGE

January 2010



General News

It's hard to believe that 2009 is coming to a close soon. It's been a great year, with lots of changes, and we are very appreciative to all our families and staff who have helped us negotiate these changes as smoothly as we have. We've loved getting to know all of our wonderful children better. They are all such unique, special little people and we cherish them.

Our holiday program and pot luck this year was one of our best. The children and teachers worked hard to deliver an entertaining performance and they succeeded. Entertainment does not always mean singing!

We hope everyone was pleased with the choice to exchange books this year instead of including toys, etc. We felt it was a way to encourage reading and to keep the gifts more equitable and age and gender appropriate.

All cubbies have been emptied so please remember to send a change of clothes and slippers back to school on January 4th.

Enjoy your holidays! We'll see you in January, refreshed and ready for more learning and fun!

January Dates to Remember

- 4th - First day back from Winter Break.**
- 9th - Open House 10:00- noon, for 2010-2011 school year.**
- 11th - 29th - Enrollment for returning families only.**
- 12th - Primary Parent Connection 6:30-7:30 p.m.**
- 14th - Toddler Parent Connection 6:30-7:30 p.m.**
- 18th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No school. No childcare.**
- 22nd - Parent/Teacher Conferences. No school. Childcare available.**

OPEN HOUSE

On Saturday, January 9th, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, we will hold an Open House for new families interested in enrolling for the 2010-2011 school year. Visitors will meet the staff, receive an overview of Issaquah Montessori philosophy and curriculum, and be able to tour all the classrooms. Enrollment applications will be available at the Open House and general enrollment will begin on February 1st, after current families have had an opportunity to enroll.

Vakker Studios will be here to take family portrait with packages range from \$51 to \$248. We will have specific information when we return on the 4th. Please call or email Linda to make an appointment.

Primary Parent Connections

Learn what to expect as your kindergartener becomes a first grader. What's typical? What's worth worrying about?

Juliana Fitts, Head of School at Arbor Schools, guest speaker.



Moms Night Out at Vakker Portraits

Save the Date for Thursday January 14th at
6:30pm when we welcome you for
an evening out just for moms!

We're excited to bring you into our beautiful studio and spoil you for the night – and who doesn't need a little pampering after the hectic holiday season.

We've brought together delicious **treats and beverages**, as well as a variety of **gift baskets and prizes** that will be given away throughout the evening.

Our professional makeup artist will be in attendance, and ready to give you a quick touch up before you spend a few moments with one of our talented photographers. Have your portrait taken by yourself or with friends – and you'll receive a **complimentary Facebook ready image!**

We hope that you and your friends will join us for our "Moms Night Out". Call or email soon to RSVP.

The Vakker Staff
425-455-2827 or info@vakker.com

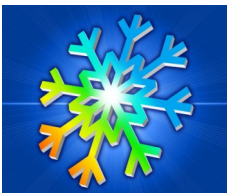


WEATHER RELATED SCHOOL CLOSURES

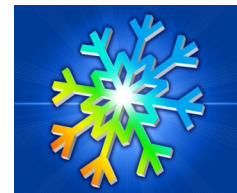
At Issaquah Montessori we follow the Issaquah School District when determining when to close school or to have a late start. When conditions are questionable, the Issaquah School District Transportation Department sends drivers out in the wee hours of the morning to assess the degree of safety. If there is a change of schedule, they then post it on their website: www.issaquah.wednet.edu. Please check this website in the morning before coming to school if there is the slightest question regarding road conditions. Even if the roads in your neighborhood are clear, they may be unsafe in other areas of the school district. You can also log on to www.schoolreport.org and sign up to receive email alerts.

The policy at IMS is as follows:

- If Issaquah schools are closed, IMS is closed.
- If Issaquah schools are 1 hour late, IMS is 1 hour late.
- If Issaquah schools are 2 hours late, IMS morning classes are CANCELLED and there is NO Before School Care. Afternoon classes begin at 1:00 pm.
- If the weather turns bad during the school day and Issaquah schools close, IMS will also close and make every effort to contact all parents immediately.



*Weather related school
closures will not be made up.*



PARENT EDUCATION

Help Me Help Myself

Children from about age three are asking us to help them learn independence. Children want to learn how to do things on their own without adult supervision or permission. Even though at times we feel we have to help children constantly, in reality, children are asking us to help them help themselves.

Much of what we classify as "misbehavior" in the three to six-year-old, upon closer inspection, is children trying to do things by themselves, and not being successful. In our hurried world, it's easier to do it ourselves than to stop and show our children how to do a task, and patiently wait as they complete it. Do we really have 15 minutes every morning for our three-year-old to put on her shoes and socks?

Visiting friends a few years ago, I asked their nine-year-old if he'd like to help me cut apples for a pie. Jimmy's eyes widened. "Oh, no, I can't. Mom won't let me use a knife."

"Why is that? Were you irresponsible with a knife?"

"No. Mom's afraid I'll cut myself."

After getting an okay with Jimmy's mom, I began showing him how to cut the apples into chunks after I'd peeled and quartered them. Within half an hour, Jimmy had learned how to peel, quarter and cube apples. And not a mangled finger in sight. At dinner Jimmy was so proud of "our" pies. He thanked me for taking the time to show him how to use a paring knife. "I knew I could do it if someone just let me." Help me help myself.

We can begin to show our children how to use serious tools such as knives, scissors, hammers, and screwdrivers around age three, with 100 percent adult supervision. First, we need to feel confident that the child will listen and follow our direction. If not, he or she is not ready for these kinds of tasks.

Secondly, we need to find tools that are safe. For helping in the kitchen a small butter knife or canapé knife will cut bananas and apple slices, but won't cut small fingers. There are scissors available that will only cut paper, and not hair or clothes. Small hammers can be used to drive 16 penny-nails into a log end. For hammering, invest in a pair of child sized safety goggles. A short three-inch screwdriver and ratchet can be used to loosen and tighten screws and bolts on boards.

As a child's level of skill and responsibility grow, we can introduce new levels of difficulty with different tools and materials.

Giving our children "real" work with real tools will help them gain independence. Self-esteem is based on having skills, meaning you can act in ways that benefit yourself and others. Too often, adults think that just telling someone that they are wonderful develops a feeling of self worth. Self-esteem is based on the self-confidence of knowing how to do something, not on what someone says to you.

"Help me help myself" is the young child's cry for independence that leads to true confidence and self-esteem. Don't do for your child what they can do for themselves.

Remember, any unnecessary help is an obstacle to a person's independence.

From *Understanding Montessori Newsletter*.