



Family/School Community Partnership, Parent Participation & Parent Education

The California Montessori Project strives to partner with parents and guardians to best serve the needs of the children. This is accomplished through parent education and orientation, frequent and positive communication between staff and families, and regular parent involvement.

Parent Education and Orientation

CMP provides a variety of parent education opportunities and events throughout the year. Within the first few weeks of school, an orientation Back-to-School Night will take place. This is a very important evening to provide parents with information about the curriculum, classroom schedule, field trips, and other pertinent policies.

Within the first month or two of school, a parent information evening will be scheduled which focuses on preparing parents for their volunteer duties both in the classrooms and on field trips. This is especially important for new families, but does vary in content each year to encourage all parents to attend.

Later in the year, teachers may schedule curriculum informational evenings, as well as Watch Me Work evenings when children demonstrate to their parents the special materials they use each day in class.

Information about these events will be provided in the campus calendars and weekly newsletters. At times, CMP will also arrange for educational professionals to provide workshops or presentations for families and teachers. Parent participation hours will be credited for attendance at any of these Montessori classes and functions.

Parent Participation is a CMP Priority

CMP recognizes that parents are the most important educators in their children's lives. Studies show that children whose parents are involved in their education perform better in school than children whose parents are not involved. This is why we encourage parents to be active with their children's school at all grade levels.

CMP encourages and welcomes parents to work with their school Campus Advisory Council and standing committees. These committees have been formed to support the students, school and staff. Information on how to sign up for these committees is available in the campus newsletters and from the office staff.

All enrolled CMP families are encouraged to contribute at least 40 hours of service to the school (70 hours for two or more enrolled children) for the purpose of participating in their child's educational experience and campus community.

A variety of service opportunities exist and include: Working in the classroom with our Montessori staff, providing office help, chaperoning field trips, and serving on campus committees to enhance the learning community. There are opportunities for work to be done at home and/or outside of school hours for working parents as well. Preparing classroom materials, adopting a classroom pet or plant during school closures, parent education nights, fundraising, school events, and campus beautification days provide enough additional opportunities to assure a comfortable level of participation. CMP is grateful for the contribution volunteers make on behalf of the school and in the lives of all of our students.

Parents can offer Special Units of Study: an Important Part of our Montessori Curriculum.

If parents, relatives, or family friends have special talents or training, please let us know so that we may schedule some time for you to participate in the appropriate curriculum unit. Students often enjoy the opportunity to share their special adults with their classmates.

Student Safety: Livescan Fingerprinting and TB tests

Student safety is a priority at CMP. In an effort to provide the highest level of safety for our students, all CMP staff and contractors and volunteers who interact with students are required to successfully complete an electronic fingerprinting process known as a “livescan” report through the Department of Justice. Under California Health and Safety Code 121545, volunteers who are in contact with students are required to have a tuberculosis clearance. These two requirements must be on file with the school office prior to commencing work at any CMP campus.

The livescan report by the Department of Justice (DOJ) looks for the same things all our employees are checked for – convictions for drug crimes, sexual crimes, violent felonies and DUI crimes. Livescan reports can be initiated at your local police station or directly at the Department of Justice and usually take 3 to 5 days to generate a report to the school.

Tuberculosis is an airborne disease, which means it can be passed from one person to another simply by sharing the same air. TB tests can be obtained through your medical doctor or through the county department of health. For those with a positive TB test, a chest x-ray is required prior to clearance.

Because the Department of Justice has not yet developed a process for cross reporting, all parents must obtain a livescan clearance specifically for CMP regardless of whether the parent has previously received clearance through an employer or another organization.

A clear livescan report and TB test result must be on file with the school office PRIOR TO the first time a parent volunteers in any role where he/she is in direct contact with students. This includes participation in school-sponsored field trips.

Working from home or serving on parent committees does not require these clearance checks.

Parent Participation on Field Trips:

Parent/guardian participation plays a key role in the success of field trips, and parents are asked to drive students and assist with chaperoning. All adults attending field trips must fulfill screenings to ensure the safety of the children. Please note that any adult without these clearances may not attend the field trip, including other adult family members. Please refer to the field trip policy for specific documents that are required to be on file at the school campus for approval to chaperone and/or drive on field trips.

The California Montessori Project Welcomes Parents to observe our Classrooms and Daily Activities.

Any time you would like to observe the daily activity at our school, please feel free to schedule a time with your child's teacher. While it is standard procedure to advocate an "Open Door Policy", we also want to be sure to limit the amount of potential interruptions and distractions each day. Contacting your child's teacher to schedule an observation in advance will help alleviate scheduling conflicts. We ask that parents refrain from visiting/observing classrooms during the normalization period. Contacting your child's teacher to schedule an observation in advance will help alleviate scheduling conflicts.

Parent observation is a time for you to observe your child's class and make any notes regarding questions that may arise. Observers should be courteous and quiet guests during the entire observation period. Observers must refrain from student interaction and must save discussions with the teacher until she/he is relieved of her/his student supervision duties. Additionally, parents should remain aware of the length of the observation period and keep it to a reasonable length of time, usually 60 minutes, or less. Parents who prefer to interact with the class should plan to complete the requirements for parent participation in the classroom and should submit a request to the teacher to provide such service.

While observing, parents must adhere to policies regarding student confidentiality. Parents shall not talk about any student to another student, parent or other third party. Breach of this policy is a breach of confidentiality and will jeopardize the parent's opportunities for further classroom observation or participation.

Policies for observations have been developed to assure a positive experience for all parties. Observers who chose to ignore these policies will be asked to end their observation immediately.

Child Custody

CMP follows child custody decisions made by the courts. In order to do this, the family must provide copies of all relative legal documents to the school. It is not CMP's responsibility to obtain these documents. School staff cannot modify or make exception to any judge's ruling regarding the custody of a child. If a child custody arrangement has changed, a parent or guardian must provide copies of the applicable legal documents to the school. If any dispute arises at school regarding visitation or child custody, CMP staff will call the local authorities to resolve the situation. CMP requests that separating and divorced parents place their child's well being as their number one consideration. When divorce occurs, families are still co-parenting and the child's welfare must come first. CMP wishes to support families as much as possible in achieving positive implementation of this goal.

Thank You for not Smoking

CMP is a tobacco free environment. Smoking and use of any tobacco products are prohibited at all times at school campuses and surrounding areas, including outdoor areas. Smoking is also prohibited during school functions and field trips off site, regardless if smoking is permitted in that particular environment. Thank you for your cooperation.

Parent Communications at CMP

Parent-Teacher Conferences

CMP identifies parents and teachers as two integral parts of the student's academic success team. As such, CMP encourages parents and teachers to stay in close communication regarding each student's progress toward subject mastery. In addition to informal discussions and communications throughout the year, CMP offers two formal opportunities each school year for parents and teachers to meet individually to discuss the child's progress. These parent-teacher conference periods are scheduled at specific intermittent periods: In the Fall, after completion of the normalization period, to provide an overview of the goals and objectives of the child's academic plan for the year, and toward the end of the school year to provide a final update on the child's progress toward subject mastery before moving on to the next level.

Weekly Newsletters and Updates from Each Campus

Each week, campuses will publish newsletter updates to include information regarding special projects and events, holiday activities, field trips, fundraising, and various other informational items of interest to our CMP families. Campus newsletters are posted on the web site and will be sent home with the students if families desire paper copies. Look for these updates and read them to keep informed of important school information.

Class Newsletters and Updates

Each teacher composes her/his own lessons and newsletter information. This information will be published at regular intervals and is another way for you to stay informed about your child's education. As you read through the information, please let your child's teacher know if there are any areas you are knowledgeable in and wish to share. We also encourage you to share this newsletter with your child.

Parents are Vital to Every Child's Success: Developing a Plan of Support for your Child:

CMP recognizes that parents are vital to every child's academic success. The following points are offered to assist you in developing a plan of support for your child:

- Schedule an appointment to visit your child's school; you are a welcomed visitor!
- Make sure that your child gets enough sleep, eats a healthy breakfast every day, brings a healthy lunch and snacks for school, wears appropriate clothing for the weather, and arrives at school on time and ready to learn.
- Read to your child every day, or encourage your child to read independently.
- Insist that your child treat him/herself, other students, teachers and staff with respect and obey home and school rules.
- Call your child's teacher or the school office, write a note, or email the teacher at the classroom email address when you have a question, a compliment, or a concern.
- Volunteer your time. Many volunteer tasks can be done at home.
- Join the standing committees developed to support your child's school.
- Attend Campus Advisory Council/Board meetings at your child's school.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences to discuss your child's progress and any challenges he/she may be encountering.
- Carefully review your child's report cards, school newsletters, and other information from school.
- Participate in school activities. Encourage your child to do the same. These activities and events have been planned to provide families with the opportunity to participate in the school community and enhance relationships between students, parents, and school staff.

School Evaluations

Each year CMP will conduct surveys of parents and staff regarding their perception of the school/teachers and program. We invite you to provide us with feed back to help us continually improve. The results of these surveys will be shared with Principals, Governing Board, and staff, and will be used to effectively implement positive program change. Many of our best ideas have come from parents and staff!