



August 2011

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Early Childhood program at Kingswood Academy! Our aim is to provide both a traditional and Montessori approach to prepare your child for Kindergarten and beyond. We look forward to sharing this exciting and happy time with you and your child. The following list will help you prepare for our first day of school and during the year.

Philosophy of Education

At Kingswood Academy we strive to serve the child and foster an awareness of being a child of God. You are the primary educator of your child and our goal is to assist you in your important work as a parent. To realize this goal we have created an early childhood program where children can be themselves in an environment of freedom and responsibility—a beautiful place where little ones will come joyfully and become absorbed in a love of learning and virtue.

The Montessori Approach

We are pleased to offer both a traditional and Montessori experience. Briefly, the Montessori Method of education is based on the observations and discoveries of Dr. Maria Montessori, a turn of the century Roman Catholic woman. She was one of the first female physicians in Italy, graduating in 1896. From her many hours of observation she began to design activities which would help the individual development of each child. She discovered that given a carefully prepared learning environment children would work toward perfecting their concentration and habits of inner discipline and order. Montessori is an individualized program designed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential. The Montessori materials are designed to help the cognitive (mental) development, as well as concentration, coordination, independence and socialization. The classroom environment allows the child to develop in a natural and unhurried way. Within the Montessori class the child moves freely as the directress (teacher) serves to direct their interests so that through them the child builds on the person they are becoming. Due to this orientation, Montessori environments are active and peaceful. Freedom implies responsibility. When difficulties do arise the children work to resolve them. Therefore, the Montessori Method is education for life as the areas of interest include: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, Natural and Social Science, Foreign Language (Spanish) and the Arts. Outdoor and indoor activities facilitate physical development. Catholic religious instruction including the “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd”, prayers and lessons in character formation are also included.

Arrival and Dismissal

You are welcome to walk your child into the classroom at 8:30, or drop your child off between 8:15-8:30 for an all-school morning recess on the playground as the teachers are setting up the classroom for the day and are not available to watch children during this time. Dismissal for all grades is 3:10 except on Wednesday when school is dismissed at 2:30.

It is *very* natural for young children to cry when they are dropped off at school, especially in the beginning. Please know that short and simple goodbyes are best. Even though it is hard to leave a crying child, once we get the day started the tears subside and are replaced with a happy heart very soon afterwards.

Rest Time

We have a rest after recess. Please send a backpack with a travel size pillow, small blanket and a small stuffed animal for your child to keep at school.

Uniforms

School uniforms are worn in preschool; however a gym uniform is not. Please provide your child with a pair of ballet slippers in black or white, or other slippers which will be kept at school. Please be sure to label the slippers with your child's name. Please send a set of clothes including a pair of underpants and socks in a Ziploc bag with your child's name to keep at school. Please see your school handbook for details on the uniform code.

Kingswood has a lovely outdoor environment, and we will take advantage of it by going out everyday. Rain boots are suggested for fall and spring. When winter arrives, heavy insulated boots, a one-piece snowsuit and waterproof mittens attached together with a long elastic string to fit through the arms, and a warm hat is suggested. Please label all of these items.

Special Person/Sharing Basket

Each week we have a special student. That child gets to bring the sharing basket. In the basket you will find a note asking for a special request like: items for food preparation (fruits or vegetables), baking ingredients, or any needed items to help promote our practical life works. This will be a minimal expense and infrequent as each child is the special person for a week and we go through the calendar taking turns. You will also receive the sharing basket note one week prior to your child's special week so the items can be easily picked up while you are out grocery shopping. Throughout the same week as the special person brings the sharing basket, he or she also shares items about themselves. We ask that the student brings a favorite toy and book and family pictures and other special objects. Throughout the week the special person gets to share a little bit of his or her interests while the other children listen and learn about their classmate. They also lead the line. These weeks are very important to the children, so please mark your calendar. If your time is inconvenient, arrange a change with another family. Please do not send toys from home unless it is your child's special week.

Birthdays

Please join us to celebrate your child's birthday in class! Please send pictures representing each year of your child's life that will be used and sent home that day and a group snack to share.

Lunch

Please clearly label your child's lunch box. A milk program is available for full day students. There is no need to pack a snack as the children will prepare a snack from the sharing basket items each week. These will consist mainly of fruit, vegetables, cheese, crackers and 100% juice.

Field Trips

Any field trip information will go home in the green envelope. We may also attend plays or programs of the older grades that may take place when our class is in session.

Parent Involvement

One of the best and most delightful ways to learn about our early childhood program is to attend curriculum night. Traditionally, Kingswood parents have also been involved in all the events and committees in the school. This contributes to a warm family atmosphere where our children thrive! It also helps the parents to gain a deeper insight into their important task of educating their children academically and spiritually. Please note the events and conference days and plan to attend with your spouse. Please also consider helping on Wednesday mornings in the atrium for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

I am looking forward to an enjoyable year with you and your child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Barb

Mrs. Barb Labotka

Classroom Supply List

- 1 pair Ballet Slippers name written inside (Black or White) for boys take off bows
- Set of personal clothes in a ziploc bag labeled in case of accident
- Child size sleeping bag with travel pillow and stuffed animal for rest time
- Lunch bag with name clearly marked
- 1 family photo 4x6 in a frame
- 1 set crayola watercolor paints
- 1 package thick pencils and 1 package No. 2 pencils
- 1 package colored pencils
- 1 package glue sticks
- 1 small **acrylic** paint in the following colors: blue, orange, pink, red, yellow, green, brown, white
- 1 red pocket folder with prongs
- 1 2-pocket folder to keep paper work in
- 1 box gallon **zipper** ziploc storage bags
- 1 box sandwich **zipper** ziploc bags
- 3 rolls paper towel
- 1 package white washcloths
- 1 bottle liquid dish soap
- 1 special scented pump liquid hand soap for hand washing work (texture okay like bath and body works)
- 1 bottle spray kitchen counter cleaner with bleach
- 1 Hand towel (light yellow or dark green)
- 1 Washcloth (light yellow or dark green)
- 1 travel toothbrush set, small comb or brush, small nail brush in a pouch
- 1 plug in air freshener with a "fresh linen" scent
- 1 small bag bedding for guinea pig
- 1 small bag food for guinea pig
- 1 pair rain boots for fall and spring weather