

A photograph of two young children in a classroom setting. A girl with blonde hair, wearing a pink shirt, is holding a small globe. A boy with dark hair, wearing a blue jacket, is pointing at the globe. In the background, there is a display of various small flags on sticks. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent layer and a white L-shaped frame on the left and bottom edges.

THE SUZUKI SCHOOL NEW PARENT ORIENTATION



Our Mission



To develop in young children a lifelong love of learning by honoring each child's natural talent and ability in partnership with the parents.



The next sections will address how we live out our mission.



Our School's Values Drive Our Decisions

We seek and value growth and learning in service of excellence.

We are committed to the well-being of our school community.

We believe children are prepared for life through holistic education.

We value emotional intelligence and honest consideration of others' perspectives.



Our Vision: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

To promote equity and cultivate an inclusive community of children, teachers and families where all cultures, backgrounds and perspectives are valued, embraced, and celebrated.

The Suzuki School cultivates a community where all can learn, love, thrive, be their true self and reach their full potential.

Our Commitments for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

1. **Equity and Fairness:** We actively work to dismantle disparate treatment and strive to create a sense of belonging in our community through affirming one another's identities and creating connections.
2. **Value Diverse Community:** We seek out diverse community members with a shared vision for our mission. We actively teach children to be supportive advocates and friends through empathy and perspective-taking.
3. **Responsive and Competent:** We maintain a deep obligation to teaching practices that are culturally competent, responsive, supportive, void of applying intent or making assumptions when situations emerge. We commit to maintaining an active posture in learning, understanding, and accounting for cultural differences amongst our community members.
4. **Growth Mindset:** We cultivate a community committed to growth in all things and recognize this work as a journey, not a destination. We are committed to expanding our knowledge of others and place value on diverse thoughts and opinions while pushing through possible discomfort for the good of the community.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: How we achieve our vision

Collaborate	We engaged the entire community to developing our vision and exploring our needs
Cultivate	We have created a 30+ hour DEI facilitated training course for all Suzuki employees
Culturally Responsive	Montessori curriculum must be Culturally Responsive to each child that is age appropriate and affirming
Communicate	Monthly communications to parents about our commitment, DEI committee meetings periodically.
Collate	“inspect what you expect”



“TO DEVELOP IN
YOUNG CHILDREN
A LIFELONG LOVE
OR LEARNING...”

This is achieved through the Montessori
curriculum.

Interdisciplinary Team

Administrators with robust tenure and expertise in operating a school

Child Development Specialist

Executive Committee Provides Shared Oversight of the Schools and a Common Vision

Registered Nurse (Director of Health and Safety)

Trained, Certified Montessori Teachers

Long standing relationships with experts outside our school (i.e. therapists) and Metro Atlanta private and public schools



We are a school – not a day care.

- **The term “daycare”** is often used to describe schools which serve young students. However, daycares are established to primarily supervise and care for children - not to educate them as schools do.
- We operate with the mindset of a school and in order to be successful, we need parents who align their expectations with this. As a school we provide:
 - Professional faculty with advanced degrees, expertise, and teaching certifications.
 - Premium services such as:
 - Registered Nurse on Staff
 - Developmental Specialist on Staff
 - Affiliation with the Montessori Teacher Education Institute
 - Private and Public School Consultation
 - Trained Chefs

Schools Prioritize Decisions Differently

A school prioritizes on first supporting the students, then teachers. The parents come last.

In contrast, daycares typically prioritize parents, then students, and teachers last.

These differing priorities fundamentally shift how the program operates.





The Montessori Approach

We are an authentic Montessori School affiliated with the American Montessori Society.

Montessori Building Blocks:

- *Montessori furniture and equipment designed for children*
- *Multi-age classrooms to leverage opportunities for learning and growth and to create a more caring learning environment**
- *Identify the child's sensitive periods and respond to them with Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Math, Art, Science, Social Studies*
- *A heavy emphasis on building good citizens through the Peace Curriculum*
- *Fiercely protecting the uninterrupted lesson block*
- *Children thrive when emulating life through their work*
- *Foundational lessons must "normalize children"*

* There are uninformed biases against this concept at times.



Our Faculty are Specialized and Passionate Educators

- Each classroom has trained Montessori Teachers and/or those in training.
- Montessori Certifications are rigorous:
 - Certifications can take 18 months to two years to achieve
 - They include between 200 and 300 clock hours of training,
 - Certifications also include a teaching practicum, and intensive coursework/exams.
- Our faculty have professional degrees and specialized knowledge and skills to work with our students.
- The Montessori teaching approach is much more fulfilling to educators because the outcomes are more evident, and they are armed with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful.

Role of the Montessori Teacher Education Institute

- A “lifeline” for our school is the Montessori Teacher Education Institute.
 - In this highly competitive labor market, the MTEI is a major draw to our school for new teachers who want to have a career as a Montessori Teacher.
 - Provides a continuous pipeline of newly Montessori trained teachers
 - Acts as a quality control and accountability system for our schools
 - Provides high-quality on-going teacher training
- We have worked to make MTEI a nationally and regionally recognized resource to strengthen it and the school.



The Magic of Montessori

- Children gain more confidence at a young age because of the independence they build and earn over time.
- The lessons are designed to build and strengthen focus and concentration so that children can work independently and have more agency over their work.
- Children earn their freedom of independence through choices within limits and with effective boundary setting.
- Children may gravitate to certain topics based on their sensitive period - this evolves over time!
- Teachers are trained to observe children and entice them with new lessons.
- Materials are designed to foster self-correction and self assessment, building children's intrinsic motivation.
- There are fewer behavioral challenges because children are doing work that responds to their interests.

Montessori creates the space for children to develop a love of learning rather than disengagement or discouragement.



Suzuki School and Parental Expectations: How They Can Collide

View or perspective of late or inconsistent attendance

Visibility into what children are learning without lesson plans

Multi- aged classrooms – a young three-year-old child with a graduating kindergarten student - is this safe and appropriate?

Level of independence - parents may not be comfortable with their children gaining independence at a young age

When children struggle to be “normalized” not only does it interfere with their learning but also the classroom environment which relies on independent work, self control and effective self-help skills.

We have trained professional teachers - not service providers

Culturally Responsive Teaching is not Critical Race Theory - our work is affirming and empowering



Inconsistent or Late Attendance – Why it Matters

- Late drop offs are a common challenge.
- The morning, Montessori work block needs to be free of distractions.
- When students are consistently dropped off after the start of the morning workblock:
 - *They don't have time to mentally transition.*
 - *The teacher may have to stop a one-on-one lesson to attend to the child arriving late.*
 - *Other children's concentration is broken.*
 - *Chronically late children do not get the full benefit of the Montessori education and may not be as prepared for their next school.*
 - *It negatively affects teacher morale.*
- Infant parents mistakenly believe that this requirement doesn't apply to them, but we ask the same of them as the rest of the school.



“...BY HONORING
EACH CHILD’S
NATURAL TALENT
AND ABILITY...”

Enrichment and premium services at The
Suzuki School.



Dual Language Immersion Program

- We strive to have native Spanish speakers in every classroom as part of the teaching team, typically fulfilling the role of an Associate Teacher.
- Designed to expose students to Spanish throughout the day as part of their routine and also with more structured lessons.
- Local Elementary Schools recognize our program when considering acceptance into DLI tracts for K-12 schools. *If you are targeting a DLI program in Elementary School please make sure campus leadership knows!



Enrichment Instruction

Suzuki
Moves
(Physical
Education)

Suzuki
Music

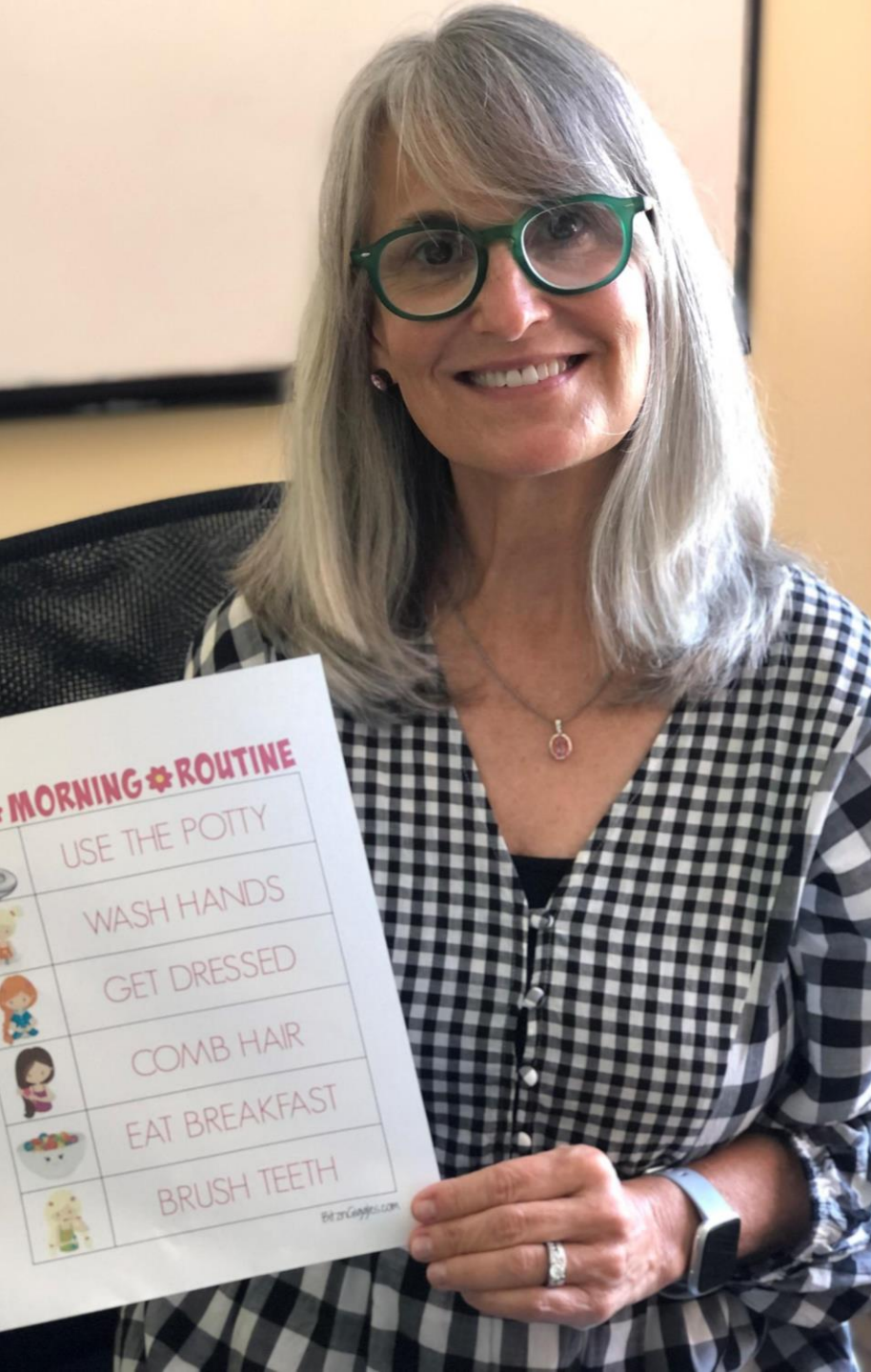
Suzuki
Method
Violin and
Piano

Suzuki
Spanish –
now through
DLI program



Role of Aileen Jackman, Developmental Specialist

- Every school must address what to do when there are developmental challenges or concerns. Most don't have the resources to do so, and it has a profound effect on the child and the classroom.
- Our Developmental Specialist is a role that is highly specialized, and part of what sets us apart as a school of excellence.
 - *Can administer developmental assessments and screenings to help understand where a child might be experiencing challenges or where they might benefit from extra support.*
 - *Offers parent education – both to the larger school community (workshop style) and also one on one as needed or requested.*
- Aileen's background and expertise:
 - *BS in Early Childhood Education*
 - *M.Ed. in Special Education*
 - *Certified Child Life Specialist, DIR Floortime Trained, Positive Discipline Certified Trainer, Better Brains for Babies Certified Educator*
 - *Mother and friend!*



Aileen is many things to us, but there are also some things she ISN'T...

- A bad omen;
- An indication that there is “something wrong” with your child;
- An indication that your child is viewed as a problem or the “bad kid”;
- A scary person to meet with;
- Someone who wants to give your child a label;
- Someone who thinks you’re a “bad parent” if your child experiences challenges;
- The precursor to being kicked out of school or to your child’s prison record 😊



“...IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH THE
PARENTS.”

How we view partnership at The Suzuki
School.

Parent Partnership

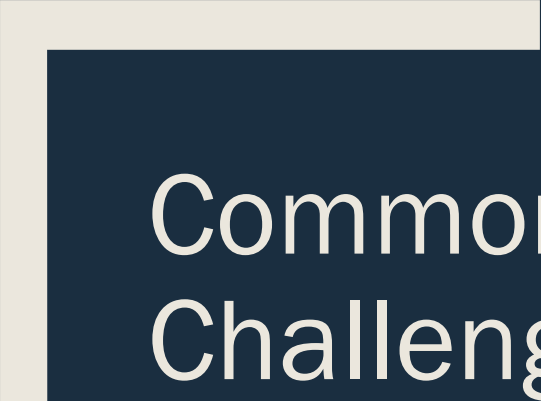
- *We value emotional intelligence and honest consideration of others' perspectives.*
- We expect to have a partnership based on mutual respect, honest consideration, and dignity.
- It's important for children to see the adults in their lives model emotional intelligence and positive conflict resolution.
- It is important that these values are shared and lived out by our community – violations are taken seriously and can affect your good standing at our school.





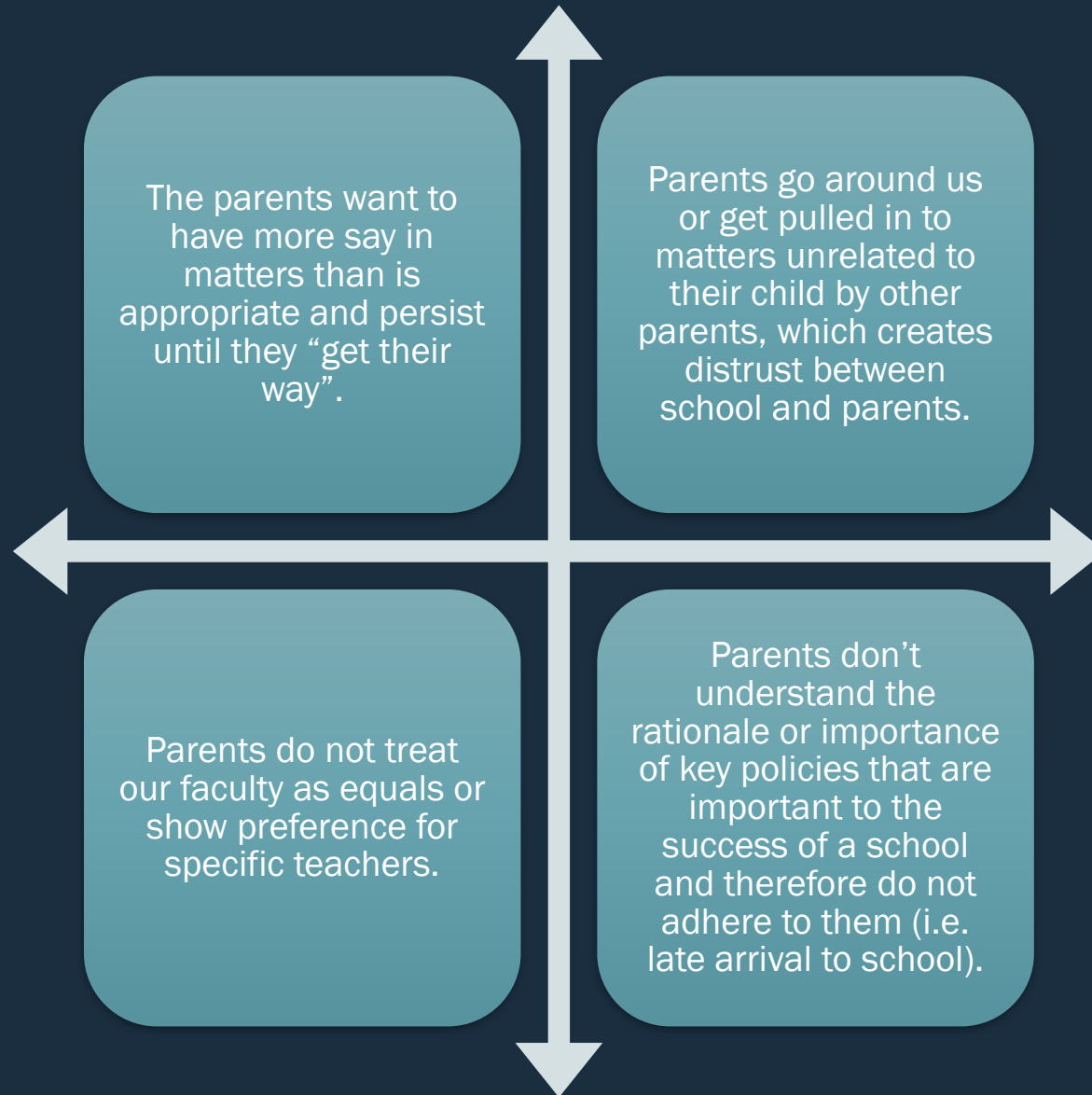
Approach to Parenting

- Most parents default to parenting the way they were parented.
- Some challenges we see that can manifest at school based on parenting approaches at home are:
 - *Misplaced expectations and fear of failure on the part of the parent.*
 - *Parents may take a more behavioral approach to parenting and may not understand a developmental approach or philosophy.*
 - *Confusion about why behaviors can manifest at school that are different than home, and vice versa.*
 - *Different or inconsistent parenting approaches between parents can create disequilibrium for children.*
 - *As parents, we set unreasonably high expectations of our abilities and may not feel comfortable asking for help.*



Common Challenges During Partnership- Parent's Perspective

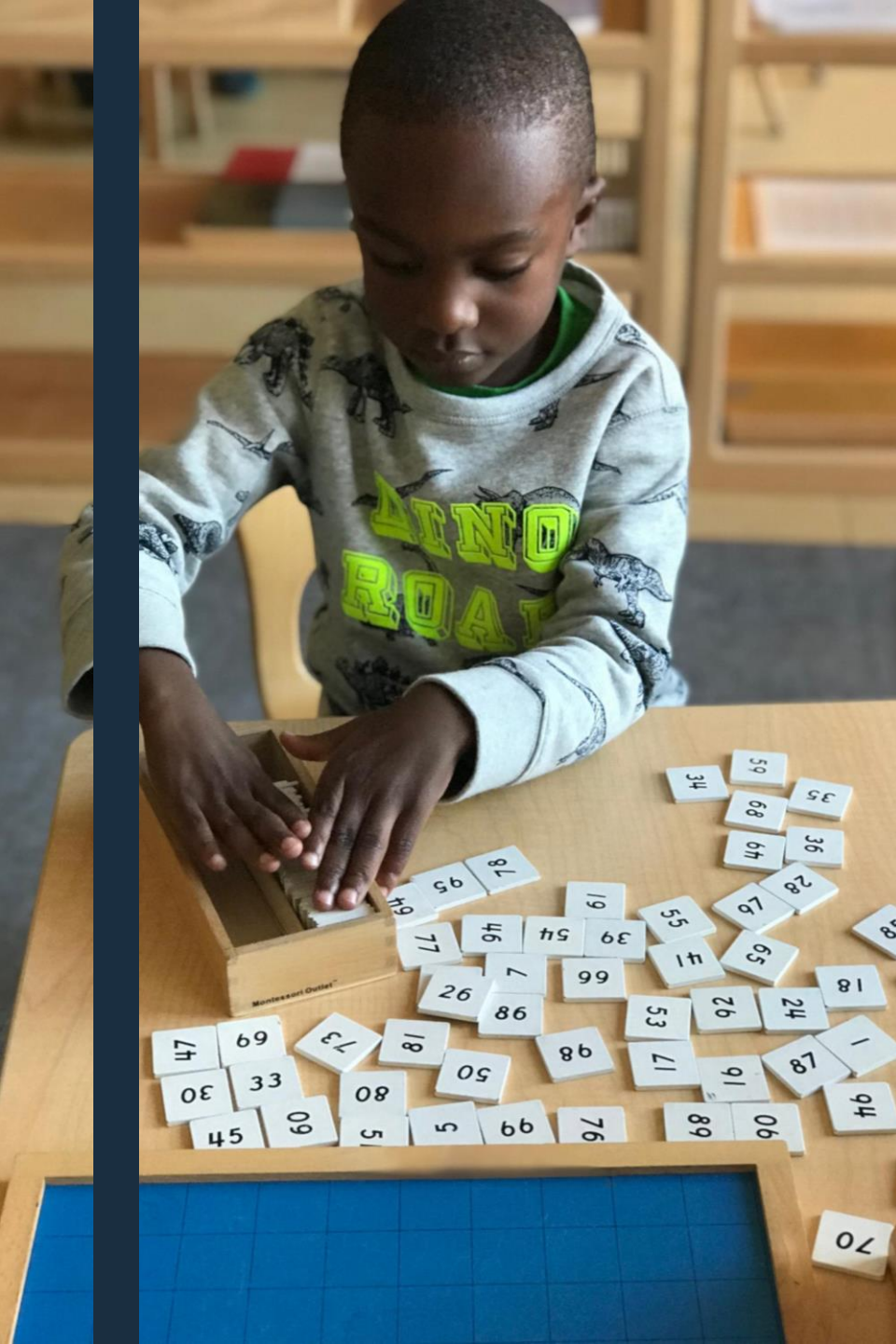
- A student is identified as having a developmental challenge or delay (including challenging behavior at school) and parents do not see our perspective.
- Parents have fears or concerns and may not be forthcoming about them (particularly with respect to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).
- Parent feels we haven't lived up to our promise because of a specific event or misalignment between expectation and reality.
- A misalignment with respect to the Montessori curriculum and what the parent sees as the best way to educate their student.



Common Challenges During Partnership – School’s Perspective

Partnership vs. Customer Service

- This means that our service model is partnership oriented (vs. traditional customer service oriented)
 - Partnership seeks solutions based on the priorities (first students, then teachers, then parents)
 - Parents with a customer service expectation may demand that we meet their preferences, such as:
 - Menu changes or exceptions based on personal preferences
 - Classroom placements, teacher or peer requests
 - Chronic tardiness in arrival to school
- We are confident in our ability to deliver on excellence based on our experience and expertise and ask that you not ask for exceptions.
- Consider asking yourself whether you'd ask for this type of exception at a K-12 school?





School Priorities and Impact on School Operations

- We enforce timely arrivals at school for all students – and a commitment from parents to make this happen on a daily basis.
 - *Even 5-10 minutes later matter!*
 - *We are not a drop in day care but there are some that have this model.*
- We strongly discourage children being at school for more than 9-9.5 hours daily on a consistent basis.
- Daily operating hours must balance parent, student, and teacher needs. Our teachers demand better work-life balance and shorter days reduce stress for our students!
- A calendar of closings that reduces burnout for our students and faculty, and allows us to attract top talent.
- We do not honor parent preferences for class placements, menus, etc. and we ask for your trust in order to deliver on excellence.



Challenges with DEI in an Early Childhood Setting


Students: Unconscious bias is real and therefore as educators we must be intentional to ensure that there is not differentiated treatment based on gender, country of origin, race, physical ability, or other factors.

Teachers: We have a diverse staff and parents may unwittingly show preference towards certain teachers – this is always noticed by faculty.


Parents: Sometimes parents worry about bias and are uncomfortable or fearful of retaliation or profiling. As a school we must be attune to these parents needs and concerns.

Partnering When a Child is Facing a Developmental Challenge

The next several slides deepen your understanding of how we will work with you and your child if there are developmental delays or behavioral concerns.



We are going into depth on this topic because our experience is demystifying these challenges can reduce parental stress and achieve better outcomes for children.



This one area causes the most stress to parents - and the school - in large part based on fear.



Approach to Child Development

- The human experience is imperfect, and you should expect challenges over the course of the time we are working together. We are here on this journey with you and your family!
- Early intervention is key in preparation for life and for best results during this rapid time of brain development.
- We take a highly individualized, body systems approach to child development. This is different than a behavior-based approach, which relies more heavily on punishments and rewards to shape behavior.
- This can feel less straightforward than many of our childhood experiences.
- Your child's path is their own and it is not a reflection on you as a parent!

Monitoring Child Progress and Development

Multiple Assessment Tools used throughout the year:

- *Transparent Classroom throughout the year (Montessori Lessons)*
- *Infant/Toddlers: Ages and Stages Questionnaire (parents complete before conferences)*
- *Primary: Minnesota Executive Function Scales (MEFS)*

Additional internal resources we use when there are behavioral, developmental or academic concerns include:

- *Assessments and Consultation with Developmental Specialist (internal)*
- *Assessments and Consultation with retained outside specialists as appropriate*

Partnering to support your child when there are concerns:

- *Concerns are shared with parents and plans of action developed which can include but are not limited to modifications in the classroom, additional support, and outside screenings.*
- *Goal: identify early and get the child the resources to be successful*

Early Intervention is Key



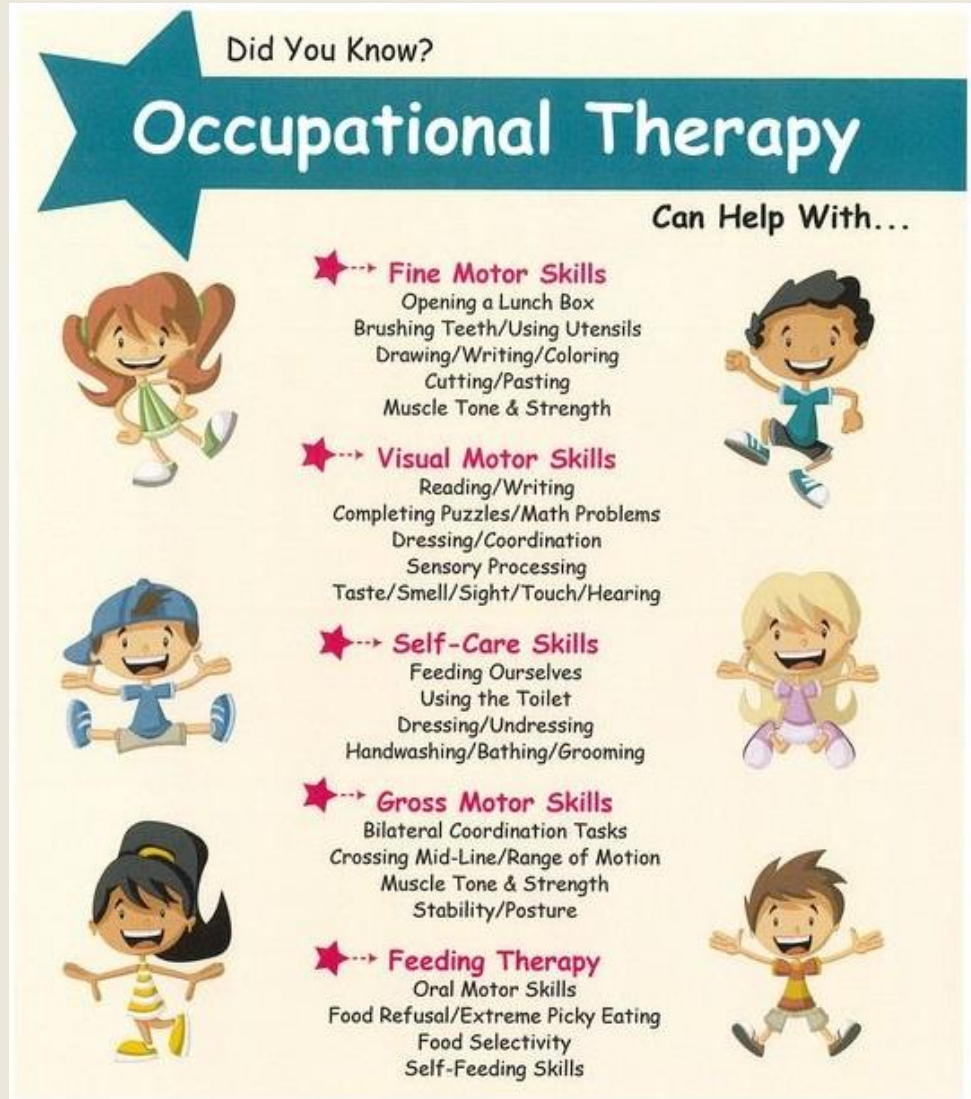
- Intervention is **likely to be more effective** when it is provided earlier in life rather than later.
- The connections in a baby's brain are most adaptable in the first three years of life. These connections, also called neural circuits, are the foundation for learning, behavior, and health. Over time, these connections become harder to change.
- Early intervention services can **change a child's developmental path** and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- Families benefit from early intervention by being able to **better meet their children's needs** from an early age and throughout their lives.
- ***A Note about Pediatricians:*** Pediatricians play an important role in a child's health and well-being. They are generalists, and they don't spend a lot of time with your child. While their opinion is important, we ask that you defer to us when considering school related challenges or behaviors.

*taken from the Centers for Disease website



Referrals and Common Resources in Early Childhood Settings

- **Speech Therapy:** Speech therapy **assesses and treats speech disorders and communication challenges**. It helps people develop skills like comprehension, clarity, voice, fluency and sound production. Speech therapy can treat childhood speech disorders or adult speech impairments caused by stroke, brain injury or other conditions.
- **Physical Therapy:** Physical therapy is **an exercise treatment for patients who have been immobilized or impaired in their movement and flexibility**. Patients are rehabilitated to use their own muscles to increase flexibility and range of motion as well as to advance to higher levels of muscular strength and endurance.
- **Occupational Therapy:** Occupational therapy (OT) is **a branch of health care that helps people of all ages who have physical, sensory, or cognitive challenges**. OT can help them regain independence in all areas of their lives. Occupational therapists help with barriers that affect a person's emotional, social, and physical needs.
- **Parenting and Child Psychologists**



Occupational Therapy Demystified

- Occupational therapy covers a broad range of treatments aimed at increasing functionality and independence.
- No two referrals are for the same reason – one student may be in OT to help manage big emotions and another could be focused on increasing coordination.
- OT is a holistic profession, and the approach can vary depending on a specific student's needs, and with the big picture of their life in mind.
- We have seen OT help children practice things that are hard for them which in turn builds their confidence, and when children are confident, they are more regulated and can focus and attend to learning tasks with greater ease.



Early Intervention and Future Private School Applicants

- If Early Intervention services are recommended for my child, will this affect private school admissions?
 - *No. Private schools are more interested in parents partnering with us to remediate any potential challenges.*
 - *Ravenna Teacher Recommendation Form Question: Have the parents of this child been:*
 - Supportive of the child's experience
 - Supportive of your school routines
 - Supportive of you as a teacher
 - Follow through on suggestions/guidance
 - Realistic in setting educational goals
 - To your knowledge, is the parent's perception of the child compatible with the school's understanding of the child?



If My Child Receives Early Intervention, What is My Role as the Parent?

- *“Parents are the essential coordinators, supervisors, and quality-control managers of their child’s programs of support” – Mona Delahooke*
- As a parent your involvement and insight are essential for your child’s developmental progress. You are your child’s first teacher and you know your child best!
- Early intervention empowers parents with the necessary tools to help your child through their developmental challenges, so they can reach their fullest potential.
- We recommend that parents take an active role in observing and communicating with their child’s therapist. Therapists model and teach strategies and techniques to support your child when implemented across home routines and daily interactions benefit the therapeutic process and your child’s developmental progression.



If My Child Receives Early Intervention, What is My Role as the Parent?

- A team approach to communicating recommendations and strategies with our Developmental Specialist, teachers, and leadership team ensures that therapist's recommended techniques and strategies are embedded into your child's daily routine and interactions.
- We have seen that children benefit from a coordinated, consistent approach throughout their day. This ensures the communication to tweak as needed, support you as parents, partner with your child's teacher, and everyone working together to support your child's overall development.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers:

- *Identify and communicate observations in a timely and ongoing basis with parents.*
- *Implement strategies consistently to support the student.*
- *Include key personnel in conversations in order to create successful strategies.*

Developmental Specialist:

- *Observations and recommendations to faculty and parents.*

School Leadership:

- *Timely communication and coordination with parents as is appropriate.*

Parents:

- *Adhere to the plan*
- *Reciprocal and timely communication*
- *Posture of partnership rather than blame.*



COMMUNITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Parent Code of Conduct

Arrival to school on time by 8:45am – it's important for the children, and it's important for our faculty and school leadership.

Timely payment of tuition in full using Tuition Express.

Alignment and support of our school's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as well as core values and initiatives.

Timely communication with us about anything affecting your child or family at school.

Respectful, direct communication – free of threats or personal attacks – about concerns or questions (rather than going to other parents to discuss)

To follow through in a timely manner and in good faith on any recommendations or resources from the school in order to fully support your student at our school and ensure their success.

- We are a community focused organization, and we love that parents find “their people” at our school.
- Community is encouraged, cliques are discouraged.
 - *We want to be your first and only source of information about our school as it relates to your student. Please direct your questions or concerns to the school.*
 - *We ask that you steer clear of unproductive conversations outside of school about the school because this leads to gossip, misinformation, and distrust between the school and the family.*
 - *No two children or families are alike, no two situations are the same. Parent conversations that compare children or experiences fuel confusion and are not in the best interest of your student.*

Parent Partnership and Social Code of Conduct



School Code of Conduct

- Open door policy for concerns or communication
- Honest consideration of your perspective
- Respect, despite disagreements
- Timely, accurate information about your student including any concerns we have about their development
- An authentic Montessori curriculum
- Safe, secure environment
- Authentic commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Partnership free of retaliation



THANK YOU

We look forward to this journey with you and your family!

