

Dear Parents,

Welcome to primary class. We are looking forward to working with your child and helping him or her to blossom in our classroom. To introduce ourselves, “we” includes Bev Gay and me. Bev is my assistant, and has worked with me for six years. She came to our school with a great deal of experience, having previously worked in a Montessori classroom for five years, in addition to having worked with special needs children in the Cherry Creek school system. Bev has also worked as emergency room nurse. She is married with two grown children, both of whom received a Montessori education. I have known her for a long time, and can attest to the wonderful combination of kindness, humor and intelligence with which she is, and we will be blessed. Bev’s love for children is apparent.

I am Gwen Alexander. I have been the lead teacher in this classroom for the last eleven years, and still feel as enthusiastic about MPA and my work as I did when I first came here. I hold a bachelor’s degree and an Indiana public school teaching license from Franklin College. My interest in Montessori began when my son started attending a Montessori school in Columbus, Indiana. When my husband was relocated to Denver, I joined the Montessori School of Denver, where I worked for four years. During this time, I spent three summers studying at the Montessori Institute in Denver, where I earned my AMI primary diploma. This will be my twelfth year as a lead teacher in our classroom.

My aim is to help your child to grow and flourish at his or her own pace in an environment, which honors his or her social, emotional, and academic growth.

While the children are in class, I need to devote my full attention to them and will not be free to answer your questions. However, please do not hesitate to call me at home in the evenings, or at the weekends, with any questions and concerns, which you may have. I will contact you as soon as I am able. My telephone number is (303) 779-5259.

The following pages provide general procedural information. You will receive a list of supplies, which your child will need for school. Supplies are “pooled” and shared throughout the year.

This will be a great year.

Warmly,

Gwen Alexander

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Dear Parents:

Some of the following information will be familiar to those of you who have returning students.

**Snacks:** We will supply snacks in the mornings for the remainder of August. After that time, parents are requested to send in snacks on a rotating basis, beginning in September. Lists will be sent to let you know when it is your turn to provide snack.

**Birthdays:** We like to celebrate birthdays. When your child has a birthday, perhaps you could send in a list of milestones in his or her life to date. We could then share it in class at line time.

I would also like to honor the birthdays of those children who have birthdays during summer holidays. In such cases, we will honor their “half-birthdays.”

**Friday Folders:** Notes from administration and classroom will be sent home in the Friday folder, which will be provided. Please return your folder to the classroom on the following Monday. Feel free to include notes to me, since I check returning folders on Mondays.

**Morning drop off:** Please drop your primary child off at the classroom door and leave promptly. It is understandable that your child may feel separation anxiety because a beloved parent is leaving him or her. It may take a while to realize that mom or dad have NOT gone forever, and will soon return. However, experience has shown that children recover much more quickly after mom or dad has left.

Kindergarten students can be left at the “drop and hug” area outside the front of the school, and can then walk to the classroom, to be signed in by either Bev or myself.

Please remember to sign your child in and out on the attendance sheet, which is located on the table outside the classroom door. If you are more than ten minutes late, please go to the office and pick up a tardy slip for your child to bring to class.

If you are a primary parent, please come to the classroom to pick up your child. You will need to sign your child out on the sheet provided. Kindergarten parents will be taken to carpool. Teachers will bring clipboards to your car, in order for your child to be signed out at that time.

Please remember that all children need to be picked up at 3:00PM.

At 3:15 PM, we are required to take your child to be signed into aftercare. If your child is not enrolled in our aftercare program, you will be billed, irrespective of the reason for your being late.

**Special Circumstances:** Life is full of surprises, both good and bad. If your family encounters any kind of difficulty, which may impact your child’s behavior, please let us know. We don’t want to be privy to your personal business, but we can keep a watchful eye on a child who is feeling sad.

Each child is unique. In order for us to be sensitive to your child’s needs, it would be helpful for us to know of any particular fears or phobias, which may exist.

**Sharing Time:** We will be glad to let your child share a special experience or “treasure” with the class. Such a sharing will provide a wonderful opportunity for your child to gain confidence in addressing a group. However, I would ask for your cooperation with regard to WHAT is shared. Items such as a special rock, leaves, or objects, which have some kind of educational significance, are welcome. Toys are inappropriate. Please keep them at home.

Only one sharing each day will take place. Your child will be allowed to share one time during each month. A sheet will be posted outside the door for parents to sign. Please have your child ready to provide some information about what he or she is sharing. If you would like to write a few words for your very young child, I will gladly read it out to the class. One sharing can take place each day. Therefore, some children may have to wait for another day to share.

**Lunch Time:** Please supply the necessary spoons, cups, etc., for your child’s lunch since we have a limited supply. Your child can clean his or her eating “equipment” and bring it home for reuse. Lunches, which the children are able to assemble and put away by themselves, are recommended, in order to foster independence. “Squirt” type foods which are packaged in toothpaste tube style (such as Gogurt) are not recommended. When in the enthusiastic hands of a primary child Gogurt has an amazing ability to drip, splat and fly through the air.

Any food which contains peanuts or tree nuts, is not allowed in the primary wing. Some of our students are highly allergic to peanut/tree nut products.

We have a small microwave oven in the classroom, which can be used to heat up your child’s lunch. Please place such food in a microwave container. We have a larger group of children to serve in a short period of time, and do not have time to do anything other than simply heat up food.

Please do not send plastic knives to school. Also, please do not place any kind of medication in your child’s lunch box. Any medication should be taken to the office, where it will be administered to your child.

**Toys, Candy and Gum:** Please keep them at home.

**Money and Valuables:** Probably best to keep it at home so nothing is lost.

Please minimize the number of items of jewelry with which your child is adorned. It is amazing just how many pretty necklaces, etc., can be worn at one time by such a little person and get lost or cause distractions.

**Hats and Footwear:** Some children love to keep their hats on and take their shoes off! If your child is so inclined, please remind him or her that hats are taken off and footwear is kept on in the classroom (these rules are written in the school handbook).

Sensible shoes with closed toes are recommended, to avoid problems with tripping and stubbed toes.

Please send a pair of slippers for your child to change into at school. This will help to keep the floors clean, as your child will work with materials on the carpet. Slippers should be clearly marked with your child’s name.

**How Can I Help?** There will be opportunities to help out in the classroom or at home. If you would like to volunteer (and earn volunteer hours) please write a note to let me know. (I don't want to forget your kind offers!) Possibilities exist in the areas of:

- Library. Select and return an armful of appropriate books every two to three weeks.
- Field trips. Drivers are always needed to make these events possible.
- Cooking. If you like to cook, perhaps you would like to make something with the children. Ethnic specialties can be woven into cultural presentations. We have a fully equipped kitchen downstairs.
- Skills to share. If you would like to talk to the children about your profession, skill or interest, I would love to hear from you.
- Culture. The children enjoy hearing about different cultures.
- Crafts. Some crafts take preparation. If I make a prototype and supply materials, it would be wonderful if someone would set up the work at home so that it is "ready to go." I will also ask for your help in our classroom on occasional "craft" days. Please let me know if you would be interested.
- Reading. This entails your coming to school and listening to children reading to you on a one-on-one basis, or reading to about four no-readers at a time, and asking questions. A sign-up sheet will be posted.
- Laundry. Taking lightly soiled classroom laundry home each Friday and returning it on the following Monday.
- Gardening. Our garden patch needs some tender loving care. If you enjoy working out side, there are always weeds to pull. If you would like to contribute plants for the garden, the money, which you spend, will be converted into "hours" required by the school. We also have a garden patch by the playground, which would benefit from some enthusiastic "green fingers."

**Classroom Visits:** You will be very welcome to make arrangements with me to visit the classroom. I would appreciate your visiting after the first seven weeks of school, so that all the children will have had time to settle in to their new surroundings. Please refer to the Family Handbook for procedural requirements.

**Allergies:** if your child has any food or other significant allergies, please write a note to let us know.

**Napping and resting needs for three and four-year-olds:** If your child is three or four years old and participates in the afternoon program, he or she is required by law to rest in the afternoon. We provide mattresses, and the loan of a storage bag for your child's bedding. Please supply a **small** pillow with pillowcase, a fitted crib sheet to cover the mattress, and a **small** blanket. This bedding should fit into the storage bag. Bedding will be kept at school. Linens will be sent home on Fridays for washing.

**Backpack:** Not a mandatory item, but it might be helpful to provide your child with a backpack in order to accommodate items, which are to be sent home. MPA will often send a Friday file folder home on a weekly basis.

I hope that the above information will be helpful. However, please do not hesitate to ask questions. Since I like to focus on the children when they are in school, I would appreciate your leaving a voice-mail at my home: (303) 779-5259 as necessary. I will then return your call. Thank you

Warmly  
Gwen