

***Denali Montessori***

**952 Cordova Street**

**Anchorage, AK 99501**

**907-742-4500**

**Parent Handbook**

*“To assist a child, we must provide him with an environment which will enable him to develop freely." Maria Montessori*

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**Overview of the Denali Montessori Program**

**Mission Statement:**

Denali Montessori promotes mindful activity within a compassionate, diverse community.

**Vision Statement:**

Within a compassionate, diverse community, Denali Montessori promotes socially responsible, resilient, life-long learners who can advocate for themselves and others.

Denali Montessori began in 1985 with two classrooms of combined kindergarten/ first/second grade. It is now one of the largest optional programs in the Anchorage School District, with a waiting list for all grades. Denali Montessori is a unified neighborhood and optional program providing Montessori education for students in the neighborhood as well as from other areas within the Anchorage borough. (See Brief History and Principles of Montessori Education following this.)

The Montessori program has approximately 356 children enrolled in 18 classrooms as of fall 2024. There are three kindergarten classrooms, seven primary classrooms (combining grades 1, 2, and 3), four intermediate classrooms (combining grades 4, 5, and 6), 3 Life Skills classes, and a Migrant Education Preschool.

Denali Montessori follows ASD requirements for class sizes. Montessori adheres to the same curriculum standards as all schools in the Anchorage School District. Progress reports record mastery of specific Montessori skills during the 3-year cycles.

Parents play a primary role in the success of the Montessori program. Montessori is a highly individualized learning method, following the interests and levels of the children. The program values and relies on parent volunteers to help in the classrooms. Enrolling a child in the program means a commitment by parents to spend at least 36 hours of their time volunteering each year, which equates to about an hour each week. (See Volunteers for a variety of ways to contribute to the Denali community.).

The school building houses three Special Education classrooms for children with intensive needs, and a Migrant Education Preschool program. School activities (assemblies, after-school clubs, multi-cultural activities, spelling bees, etc.) include all students.

**A Brief History**

*” Every society must somehow solve the problem of transforming children into adults, for its very survival depends on that solution. " -Maria Montessori*

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was educated in Italy as a doctor but discovered her role as an educator while working with institutionalized and disadvantaged children. A gifted observer of children, a prolific writer, and a charismatic educational leader, she spread her educational methods throughout Europe, the United States, and India in the early 1900s.

Interest in Montessori in this country re-emerged in the 1960s and has been building since. The majority of Montessori preschools and elementary schools are privately owned. However, the number of public Montessori elementary schools is growing throughout the country.

Current educational research supports many of Montessori's observations. Much of the reform, which has taken place in schools and educational programs in the United States, reflects the same hands-on approach advocated by Montessori. Montessori has also expanded in many places from preschools to elementary and secondary schools. The number of Montessori schools and public programs continues to grow.

In Anchorage in 1983, a committed group of parents organized to create a public-school Montessori program. The parent group spent many hours researching, advocating before the school board, raising funds, and making materials.

In 1985, the Montessori program opened on a pilot basis, serving kindergarten through second grade. After two years, the program was removed from pilot status, and there were children on the waiting list for enrollment. An additional -Montessori classes were added each year. In 2001, Denali moved to Kennedy School on Fort Richardson while the school was being rebuilt. On return to the new and beautiful Denali in 2002, Denali reopened as a complete 1v1ontessori School for the neighborhood for Anchorage Area students.

Denali Montessori has been a parent/ teacher/ administration partnership since its inception. Initially, the Montessori Advisory Committee was the governing parent /teacher group for the program, but it has become part of the PTSA since 2014. (See PTA/PTSA and Montessori Advisor Committee). Parents continue to play an active, vital, and valued role in the direction and functioning of the program.

**Principles of Montessori Education**

*"It is the tendency of the child actually to live means of the things around him; he would like to use a washstand of his own, to dress himself, to comb the hair on a living head, to sweep the floor himself; he too would like to have sets, tables, sofas, clothes-pegs and cupboards. What he desires is to work himself, to aim at some intelligent object…” -Maria Montessori*

It is difficult to summarize the comprehensive and integrated approach to education that Montessori developed. However, there are guiding principles underlying much of what actually happens in the classroom.

First is respect for the child. Montessori based her work on observing children and their responses to the materials, work, an orderly environment, and teachers. Montessori observed that children liked manipulating materials and working, saying that a child's work was to develop himself/herself into an adult.

Classrooms are set up to emphasize order, sequence, attractiveness, and to provide a variety of spaces to give children the opportunity to carry out their work with ease and concentration, supporting both academic and social growth.

Movement enhances learning. Specially designed materials for each area of the curriculum are available to the child to manipulate. Choosing the material, having a lesson with it, practicing, and then returning it embeds the learning.

Multi-age classes foster peer learning, provide incentives for learning, and increase support and interest in learning. Students can learn from or teach peers, move ahead or refresh an earlier concept, and gain assurance in both academics and social skills.

Montessori materials are designed to be attractive, isolate a particular concept to be learned, allow sensory-motor learning, and are primarily self-correcting.

Having a choice is an important part of Montessori. Research shows that it contributes to a better sense of well-being and performance. (Lillard, 2005) The order and sequence of the materials on the shelves help facilitate choice. The specific procedures introduced in the lessons and the guidance of the teacher also promote choice in an orderly way.

Conceptual lessons in sciences and social studies are introduced with materials designed to inspire interest and clarify concepts. The lessons are rich in context, presented with materials that are meaningful and interesting. There is a strong emphasis on the natural world and other people. A significant aspect of Montessori philosophy is education for peace. The lessons above provide an approach to world peace through environmental and social awareness.

The Montessori classroom, materials, teacher, and curriculum are all quite different than their counterparts in traditional elementary classrooms.

**Classroom**

*“We must not wait upon him but educate him to be independent.” -Maria Montessori*

The classroom at work is a concrete example of the Montessori philosophy. The classroom, materials, and lessons are all carefully structured to contribute to the independence of the child.

* The emphasis in the classroom is on freedom within a structured environment. Students have many opportunities to select learning activities and experiences that interest them and, in doing so, take responsibility for the direction of their education.
* Cooperative learning, not competition, is emphasized in the classroom. Each class contains three grade levels, providing an opportunity for those who have mastered a skill to help others learn it. This allows greater appreciation for one's development and promotes a sense of community in the classroom.
* Individual work allows each child to work at his or her own pace, without pressure to slow down or speed up for others. Children receive lessons in small groups or sometimes a large group, depending on the topic or skill involved.
* Children are free to move around the classroom. They work on different levels (floor, table, desk), and on different projects. You may see a group of children talking quietly together or others concentrating deeply on a subject of special interest. Still others may be in individual or small group lessons with the teacher. \*
* Often, there is a parent in the classroom, especially in kindergarten and the primary grades. New readers in kindergarten and primary classes may read aloud individually to a parent or work in small groups with a parent. The parent supports the teacher and students by giving spelling tests, helping with craft projects, reading a story at the end of the day, copying handouts, or lending a hand when asked. The children and the teacher appreciate and depend on the presence of an additional caring adult.

*\*See the appendix for the classroom Freedoms and Responsibilities chart*.

**Materials**

***“****Our aim is not merely to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to inmost core.”- Maria Montessori*

Montessori identified four stages of development (preschool through kindergarten, ages 6-9, ages 9-12, adolescent) as 'sensitive periods' for learning. The materials used in Montessori classrooms reflect the developmental stage of the students who work there.

The materials have been carefully designed to lead to specific learning experiences. They are progressive, meaning a material that presents a concept is followed by a material that advances the concept to a new level.

* In the Montessori classroom, a child progresses from concrete materials to abstract ideas.
* Materials are organized in subject areas. Some displays may be out of their area due to space, but as much as possible, there are designated areas.
* Materials are located throughout the room on low shelves. The teacher gives individual and small group lessons on their use. Materials are available for students to use at will, but they must be used in the manner learned in the lesson.
* The attractive, organized, and sequenced materials engage the student's body and mind to assist in concentration, the ability to make choices, and to move with purpose.
* The materials are self-correcting so that a child can measure his/her progress without asking the teacher. More abstract materials (task cards) may have correction keys.
* To encourage students to learn research skills, Montessori classrooms have libraries containing resource materials. Science experiments and natural materials (fossils, minerals, and leaves) may be on display or in us to study. Classrooms often have plants, and some classrooms may have pets (fish, birds, reptiles, mammals), though there are restrictions and allergies to consider.
* Materials for self-care of the classroom are available to support student care of the environment.
* There are usually objects of interest or beauty from a project or subject being studied

**Teacher**

**“***By education must be understood the active help given to the normal expansion of the life of the child.” -Maria Montessori*

Montessori called the teacher the “directress.” The teacher does not “own” the knowledge, parceling it out to students, but serves as a guide to facilitate learning.

A Montessori teacher is trained in philosophy and methods above and beyond what is required to attain an Alaska State Teaching Certificate. Currently, we have no Montessori training centers in Alaska, so a Denali Montessori teacher may be in the process of acquiring Montessori Teacher Certification through out-of-state sessions or online study. Teachers working on their Montessori certification are mentored by experienced Montessori teachers. Extensive training is important because Montessori is not just a teaching method that uses specific materials. It is a philosophy toward living and learning, as well as a methodology for teaching. Extensive training is imperative for the teacher to assimilate the intensive curriculum and to become firm in the philosophy.

* The teacher's first duty is to prepare an orderly environment that stimulates intellectual growth as well as sensory-motor and communication skills.
* The teacher's role is that of the guide. She is trained to help the child direct his or her own learning. Freedom to choose challenging work allows children to pursue interests that might be especially absorbing at a particular developmental stage.
* The teacher observes each child for learning style, developmental stage, and skill level, and uses her observations to guide the child toward appropriate work in the curriculum areas.
* Having a child for three years gives the teacher the time to learn the best approaches for that child.
* The teacher guides the whole class in appreciation of each other, in working together, and in problem solving.

**Curriculum**

Although the Montessori curriculum fulfills Anchorage School District standards, it is not the curriculum taught in traditional and optional schools. It is carefully integrated so that the child's work in one area supports work in other areas. The following examples show the sequential nature of activities in a Montessori classroom; this pattern is applied to all areas of learning.

**Elements of the Curriculum**

1. **Practical Life:** Work in this area helps children learn to become independent, helps children learn to concentrate, and teaches children the work cycle.
2. Care of Self:

Example: Kindergarten: washing hands

Lower EL: cooking

Upper EL: community service

1. Care of the Environment (classroom):

Example: Kindergarten: sweeping, polishing

Lower EL: care of seedlings, plants, and animals

Upper EL: class responsibilities

1. Grace and Courtesy:

Example: Kindergarten: greeting a visitor

Lower EL: answering the phone

Upper EL: Mediation Skills

1. **Sensorial Materials:** These Materials isolate the senses so that the child can refine his/her perception and awareness of the world around him/her.

Example: Kindergarten: pink tower/red rods

Lower EL: geometry solids/constructive triangles

Upper EL: continued use of early math and geometry sensorial

materials for area, volume, and algebraic concepts

1. **Language:** The language materials proceed from concrete to abstract, and from simple to complex. Reading and writing are taught simultaneously, using sandpaper grammar is taught concurrently with reading and writing. The materials are color-coded so that the child absorbs the rules sensorially before being taught formally.

Example: Kindergarten: sandpaper letters, movable alphabet

Lower EL journal, reading, and grammar manipulatives

Upper EL: grammar manipulatives, charts, texts

1. **Mathematics**: The math materials also proceed from concrete to abstract, from simple to complex. The child manipulates concrete objects before doing the operations with paper and pencil. The materials are based on the metric/decimal system: 10 blocks in the pink tower, 10 colored cylinders, 10 red rods.

Example: Kindergarten: red and blue rods, golden beads

Lower EL: stamp game, bead frames, geometry cabinet

Upper EL: checkerboard, division material, decimal material

**Cultural Subjects: Science, Botany, Zoology, Geography, History, Art, Music**

Montessori believed that a deeper knowledge and understanding of the world and the needs of all people help us understand cultures and promote a sense of interconnectedness and brotherhood through ‘Cosmic Education’. Maria Montessori referred to this as being “cultured”.

Study in cultural subjects includes:

* Classified cards- to lay out, match, organize, sort; they help students identify the items or concept being studied
* Timelines are used extensively and are presented as narratives, unlocking the history or any development of history and time. They also give the child a sense of order.
* Students work on these timelines and cards, organizing, researching, and building their concept of history and the world.
* The study of the Fundamental Needs presents the history and the uniqueness of other cultures, thus providing an understanding of the common needs of all humans. This study also possesses cards and charts for presentation, study, work, and initiating personal study.

1. **Science:** The science materials lead a child to learn from personal experience in addition to teaching scientific classification and nomenclature.
2. **Physical Science**:

Examples: Kindergarten: experiments with liquids, solutions, sink/float

Lower EL: experiments with matter, magnetism, forces

Upper EL: more complex classification, study of processes,

independent research, artwork, and preservation

1. **Botany:**

Example: Kindergarten: study of parts of plants, experiments, care of

plants

Lower EL: study of plants, types, parts, leaves, flowers,

Experiments

Upper EL: more complex classification, study of processes,

independent research, artwork, and preservation

1. **Zoology**:

Example: Kindergarten: living/non-living, vertebrates, animals of the world

Lower EL: animal classification, environments, biomes

Upper EL: more complex classification, internal parts, cell

studies, endangered species, Alaska coastal biome.

1. **Geography**: Montessori has a strong emphasis on world geography.

Examples: Kindergarten: landforms, land and water globes, maps

Lower EL: puzzle maps, primary pin maps, map making

Upper EL: pin maps, types of maps, research projects

1. **History**: Study of time, day, week, year, calendars, event, time periods.

Examples: Kindergarten: time, passage of time, timelines-day, year

Lower El: clocks: hours, minutes; Timeline of the World,

Fundamental Needs of Man through History

Upper EL: timelines-earth, prehistory, ancient history, study of

different periods and eras, biographies

1. **Peace Curriculums/S.E.L**.: Social emotional learning comes through the Montessori peace curriculum and ‘Cosmic Education’. With lessons in care of self and in interactions with others embedded in the Montessori curriculum through all levels, students learn to show respect of self, and others, and to be stewards of the environment in and out of the classroom. (See Other Services for information about others through our mediation program.
2. **Health:** Denali’s students receive one hour of health curriculum two weeks a month. The Great Body Shop is taught to all grades. There is an optional program grades 5/6 for Human Growth and Development, which requires parental approval for participation. Curriculum is available for preview.
3. **Music**: The Montessori bell set is used for sound discrimination, matching tones, sequencing tones (the scale) and playing compositions. Music classes are also taught to all levels for two half-hour sessions by a school district music teacher based at Denali. Our music teacher is also in charge of the Denali choir, an option beginning in second grade and up. Beginning in the sixth grade, students can attend band or orchestra classes. These optional programs meet three times a week for forty-five minutes classes.
4. **Art**: Students use art in a variety of classroom projects and work such as illustrating research, stories, writing of some form, or science and math. Teachers, parents, and also students introduce and coach lessons in techniques and materials one to one, in small groups, or as large group. Art materials are available in the classroom. Art instruction is also provided by a district art teacher for an hour a week, two weeks a month.
5. **Library:** Classes meet for a half hour each week, and students are encouraged to come during open library times. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time n the library assisting the librarian. They may check out books from both the student selection and the Montessori Library resource section.
6. **Physical Education**: Physical education classes in Kindergarten and Lower Elementary meet for three half-hour sessions a week. The Upper Elementary classes meet once a week for one hour and once a week for a half hour. During these times the instructor’s goal is to lay the foundation for lifelong physical fitness by developing, maintaining and increasing good fitness habits. The program provides a variety of fun experiences and organized activities that motivate children to participate in healthy exercise, both inside and outside of school. The program provides team, individual and dual sports, as well as creative movement, dance and gymnastics.

**A Parent’s Quick Reference**

**Family Responsibilities**

**Volunteering:** Although the Montessori Method depends a great deal on the prepared environment of the classroom, this prepared environment is not easy to provide. A great deal of time and energy is required from the teacher of each class as well as from the children's families. For the program to continue to grow and flourish, it’s important to understand the Montessori Philosophy and take an active part in the education of our children.

Programs that demand a great deal of individualization by the teachers also demand a great deal of time from the families of the students. For Denali to maintain the quality of our program, families are expected to contribute four hours a month to the program or thirty-six hours a year.

This requirement can be satisfied in a variety of ways:

* Direct involvement in the classroom, in the library, or on field trips
* Construction of classroom instructional materials
* Serving on committees
* Becoming a playground attendant
* Offer to teach a skill with Community Schools
* Helping with fundraisers
* Donating materials or funds to fulfill part of the teacher’s “wish list”
* Parents can always propose their ideas

**Field Trips:** Students and Parents are notified in advance regarding the specifics of field trips, along with a permission slip, which must be signed and returned before the day of the trip. If the field trip requires payment, the preferred method is to go online through the Parent Connect portal. **\*Note: Alaska Junior Theater is a Non-Refundable field trip**. Cash and checks will also be accepted.  Parents who want to chaperone must be on the approved volunteer list. The application is online @ asdk12.org. This service to Denali is a responsibility that should be considered carefully. The teacher tries to allow all parents to chaperone on a field trip. Parents who chaperone must start and finish at school. Childcare must be arranged for Siblings.

Chaperone Responsibilities:

* Chaperones must commit to escorting children from school to the field trip and from the field trip back to school. **No side trips are permitted**. Chaperones may not leave the group at the field trip site to return home.
* Chaperones must be in charge and aware of the children they are responsible for at all times on the trip.
* Chaperones must follow the plan and guidelines established by the teachers before the trip.
* Chaperones are discouraged from bringing younger siblings on the field trip. They cannot give their attention fully to the students they are responsible for if they have another child in tow.

**PTSA:** The PTSA at Denali supports school-wide functions such as the Back to School Picnic, Open House, Fall or Spring Carnival, School Pictures, Teacher Appreciation Week, Book Fairs, Spirit Wear, and the end-of-the-year Ice Cream Social. In 2013, the PTA changed its association to become a PTSA to include students in its membership. The PTSA is also the parent/school liaison to the school district on pertinent issues. They operate solely on volunteer efforts, and all families are encouraged to become members and attend meetings.

**Montessori Advisory & Outreach Committee (MAOC):** In the past, the Montessori Advisory & Outreach Committee was the governing parent and teacher group for the Montessori program. In 2014, it was voted for the committee to become part of the PTSA, as the whole school is now Montessori. This committee still works to maintain the high education standards and improve the Montessori aspects at Denali. The committee always needs volunteers to steer or head fundraising projects.

**Practicalities**

**Transportation:** The Anchorage School District does not provide bus services to Denali Montessori. Parents are responsible for getting their child/children to and from school. Because there can be congestion due to drop off and pick up, Staff work hard to make a system that allows a smooth drop off and pick up.

Please follow the directions of the staff and allow time for any delays. Please do not park and leave your vehicle along the front of the school. This is a Fire Zone, and we must leave it clear in case of an emergency.

**Three Drop-Off and Pick-Up Zones:**

1. 10th Ave. north side (between Cordova and A Street) is a “kiss and go” zone.
2. 10th Ave. south side is used for parent parking. Please use the crosswalk to walk your child to the playground.
3. The main parking lot is used for parents who walk children into the building, while the curbside fire lane is restricted to a flowing drop-off lane with no parking.

**Drop Off:**Supervision on the playground begins at 8:45 am on Mondays, & 7:45 am Tuesday through Friday. All students will remain on the playground until ten minutes before the start of the class, breakfast will be served in the classrooms. At the bell, students line up with their class and then enter with their teacher to begin their learning time. Students are expected to arrive at school on time. Arrival after 9 am (Monday) and 8 am (Tuesday-Friday) is considered Tardy. An absence or tardy may be excused for

* Illness
* Death or serious illness in the immediate family
* Participation in a school function
* Extenuating circumstances approved by the principal, and
* Attendance at religious services

in accordance with the ASD Handbook**.**

**Pick-Up:** School dismissal is at 2:30 p.m. Students must be picked up on time. Any students not picked up will be waiting in the front office and must be signed out by a parent or guardian (to include an emergency contact). If a student is not picked up on time in excess of 3 times, a parent conference will be required. If a student is placed at Denali as part of the lottery, they are subject to the following provisions as stated in **Board Policy 444.21:**

1. It is the parents' responsibility to provide transportation at their own expense.
2. Students must be delivered to school and leave school at the times established by the principal.
3. Any false statements will be subject to administrative review and appropriate action.
4. Prior to enrolling a student in a school in another zone, the parents of the student must agree that the student will complete at least the current school year without requesting further zone exemption transfer unless the teacher, principal, and parent find the educational and emotional needs of the student are not being met.
5. Students must meet the attendance and behavior standards of the admitting school. Disciplinary concerns can cause the revocation of the zone exemption.

**School Supplies:** Each teacher makes a list of the school supplies needed at the beginning of the year. These will be available online and at the Back-to-School Social. Please check with your child’s teacher occasionally during the year to see if your child has any additional supply needs.

**Clothing:** Students will need a change of clothing in case of an emergency. Mark all of your child’s belongings with a bold, permanent marker.

**Lunch**: Each grade level chose to eat either in their rooms or the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). Denali is a Provisional School, which means that all the students receive free Breakfast and Lunch.

**Snacks:** Each classroom has different schedules/approaches to snacks. In most classrooms, students are asked to take turns providing a snack to share with the class. Some classes have an assigned calendar to bring in snacks, while others may ask you to provide them in advance. Please send enough of two kinds of food (i.e., cheese and crackers) for the number of children in the whole class. According to the American Montessori Society nutrition requirements, snacks must be healthful and well-balanced, since food impacts brain function. Please avoid processed foods and those containing additives or sugar and minimize natural sweeteners such as honey or molasses. Also, please use consideration of animal products out of respect to families who are vegetarian or who follow a Kosher diet**. It is important to check with your child’s teacher for specific needs/allergies of the class.**

**Safe Nut-Free Snack Suggestions**

* Cheese, plain yogurt
* 100% whole grain snacks-brown rice crackers, popcorn, rice cakes, etc.
* Vegetables-carrots, cucumber, celery, snap peas, etc.
* Fresh Fruit-apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, berries, natural dried fruits
* Biscuits, 7-grain waffles, breads, muffins (items with little to no sugar)
* Granola, healthy snack bars
* Dip- hummus, cream cheese, salsa
* Hard-boiled eggs

Montessori Practical Life includes food preparation, so it is acceptable if the snack requires minimal child preparation. If you have any concerns, ask your child’s teacher. The Anchorage School District does not allow cookies, brownies, cupcakes, etc., for birthday snacks.

**School Communications:** A great deal of the school/parent communication is now electronic:

* The Peace Corner- Denali’s newsletter from the principal.
* Facebook page- Both Denali and Denali PTSA
* ASD App- On this app, Denali information is put out, as well as anything that the district puts out, such as school closures and school start delays.
* Robo-text system- Used for immediate information and reminders of events.
* Find Denali on the district website [www.asdk12.org](http://www.asdk12.org) under elementary schools.

Many other communications, such as official School District communications, letters from your child’s teacher, and PTSA notices, will be in paper form. These will come home with your child each Thursday in a manila envelope known as the Thursday Folder. Please send the envelope back on Friday.

**Events That Help Foster Communication**: Attendance at our after-school functions gives families and staff opportunities to connect socially. These events are opportunities for us all to feel we are a part of the Denali Montessori community.

Example: Back-to-School Social, Open House, Fall Carnival, Holiday Night,

Literacy Night, Math/Science Night, Peace Concert, PTSA meetings

**How to Address Concerns**: If a concern or problem arises at school, it is always best to talk with the person nearest the problem whenever possible. Often, this will be your child’s teacher. Next would be the principal. You may contact her/him directly to answer questions or provide guidance by calling the main office or by email. If you share a concern of a general nature that affects a large part of the student community, contact the members of the PTSA or raise the issue at a PTSA meeting. The PTSA is here to support the parent base. You can direct inquiries and concerns about school operations and policy to the Office Staff.

**Homework:** Homework brings the school and home closer together. It provides the opportunity for practice and application of academic skills. The child, parent, and teacher all share responsibility for homework. Each teacher takes a different approach to homework, and it may vary from year to year and child to child. Some use a homework folder due on a certain day. Homework may be assigned or student-selected on a daily, weekly, or long-term basis. It may include, but not be limited to:

* **Math Practice/Application**: You will not be expected to work with your child on math procedures, but in the primary grades, you can work with your child on “math facts” (addition, multiplication tables). The concepts of money and time are important things to work on at home. Games and cooking are both imaginative ways to build math practice into home life.
* **Reading**: Reading to or with children at home daily gives them a firm foundation in reading and vocabulary. Beginning readers are often sent home with copies of books to read to parents.
* **Spelling**: Your child may bring home a weekly spelling list with suggestions on ways to practice the words.
* **Handwriting**: Beginning writers may bring home practice sheets.
* Projects: Books reports, research, biographies, or a connection with current cultural subjects may be assigned depending on the level. The most important thing you can do for your child is to help them pace themselves to complete the project on time.
* Absences: Absences may result in extra student homework assignments.

Time approximations for a student to complete homework:

Kindergarten 10-20 minutes Lower EL 20-30 minutes Upper EL 30-45 Minutes

Student individual abilities may contribute to homework taking longer or shorter than expected. Please share any homework concerns directly with your child’s teacher. Parent support and supervision of homework an extremely important factors in building positive attitudes and study habits regarding homework. When helping your child with homework, remember the Montessori principle that you should never do for a child what the child can do independently.

**Montessori in the Home**

These ideas to help you create a Montessori environment in your home encourage independence, self-confidence, reasonable freedom of choice, orderliness, and responsibility. From Joan Beck’s column “You and Your Child” in the Chicago Tribune, 1965, this advice has been a part of Denali’s Handbook since the program’s beginning years.

1. Whenever you can, arrange your home so that the child can manage for himself. Move his table and chair low enough, his toy shelves easily accessible, his clothing equipped with fasteners he can operate, his clothes’ rods to the right height, etc.
2. Don’t do anything for him that he can do himself. “Any unnecessary aid is a hindrance to learn,” and Montessori
3. Teach your child with real things. Take the time to show him how to handle materials and equipment carefully, and he will be capable of far more than you realize. Use more glass objects, like pouring pitchers, when possible, and fewer plastic. How can we learn to be careful in an unbreakable plastic environment?
4. When you want to teach your preschooler a new activity or skill, plan it out first as a programmed teaching exercise. Break it down into small, precise steps. Ask yourself: “What points of interest does this activity hold for my child? How can I isolate a single learning element I want my child to absorb?
5. When teaching a small child, slow down your movements. Use as few words as possible. Let your movements guide your youngster’s eye to what he is to learn.
6. Give your child enough time to do the task without hurrying. He usually works at a slower, more deliberate pace than an adult. He needs to repeat activities often, even after he appears to have mastered them.
7. See that your younger has as much choice as possible in his activities. He can’t live up to his potential unless he has the opportunity for independent work.
8. Don’t insist that your child try a new activity if he isn’t interested.
9. Make discipline interesting whenever you can. Say, “See how quietly you can close the door.”
10. Make creative uses of silence. Encourage your youngster to be still for a moment so they can hear more acutely. This not only stimulates their sense of hearing but also gives them a feeling of self-mastery.

**FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY**

A consequence is a loss of a particular freedom when one does not exercise responsibility.

**FREEDOM** **RESPONSIBILITY**

1. TO CHOOSE WORK 1.   Choose challenging work.

2. Finish the work.

3. Know how to use materials correctly.

1. Work in all subject areas regularly.

2.  TO TALK 1.    Let others concentrate.

2. Keep topics appropriate.

3. Control tone and volume of voice.

4. Use acceptable language.

3.  TO MOVE ABOUT 1.   Walk without disturbing others.

2. Walk around work, rugs, and people.

3. Let others concentrate.

1. Get up for the purpose intended: to get paper, get or return materials, sharpen pencils, etc.

4.  TO CHOOSE A WORKPLACE 1.   Be able to concentrate.

2. Let others concentrate.

3. Leave walkways free.

4. Clean up your workplace when finished.

5.  TO LEAVE THE ROOM 1.   Follow ground rules.

2. Do only that which you left to do.

1. Return in a timely manner.
2. Re-enter the classroom quietly.

6.  TO USE TECHNOLOGY 1.  Use it for educational purposes.

2.  Limit your time so others can use it.

3.  Use carefully to keep from damaging.

4.  Put it away when finished.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Denali Montessori promotes the development of the whole child within a compassionate, diverse community.

VISION STATEMENT:

Within a compassionate, diverse community, Denali Montessori Promotes Socially Responsible, resilient, life-long learners who advocate for themselves and others.

Denali Montessori Core Values

*DEVELOPMENT OF LIFELONG LEARNERS*

Our multi-age learning environment stimulates the child's natural curiosity; fosters personal discoveries and creates socially responsible citizens of the world.

*RESPECT*

Our community cultivates a climate of respect for self, others, and the environment.

*INDEPENDENT, SELF-MOTIVATED STUDENTS*

Students have the opportunity to take ownership of their individually chosen paths of learning within a structured, prepared environment that encourages

independent, self-motivated learners.

*PEACE*

Denali students, staff, and families work and learn together to create solutions

peacefully, and promote harmony in our community, nation, and world.

*DIVERSITY/ CULTURAL AWARENESS*

We celebrate our different ethnicities, backgrounds, and experiences.

*THE AUTHENTIC CHILD*

Our Montessori practices support each child's unique nature and development

through compassionate communication and constructive responses.

*COMMUNITY*

Denali Montessori promotes character development that nurtures community

awareness and global respect.