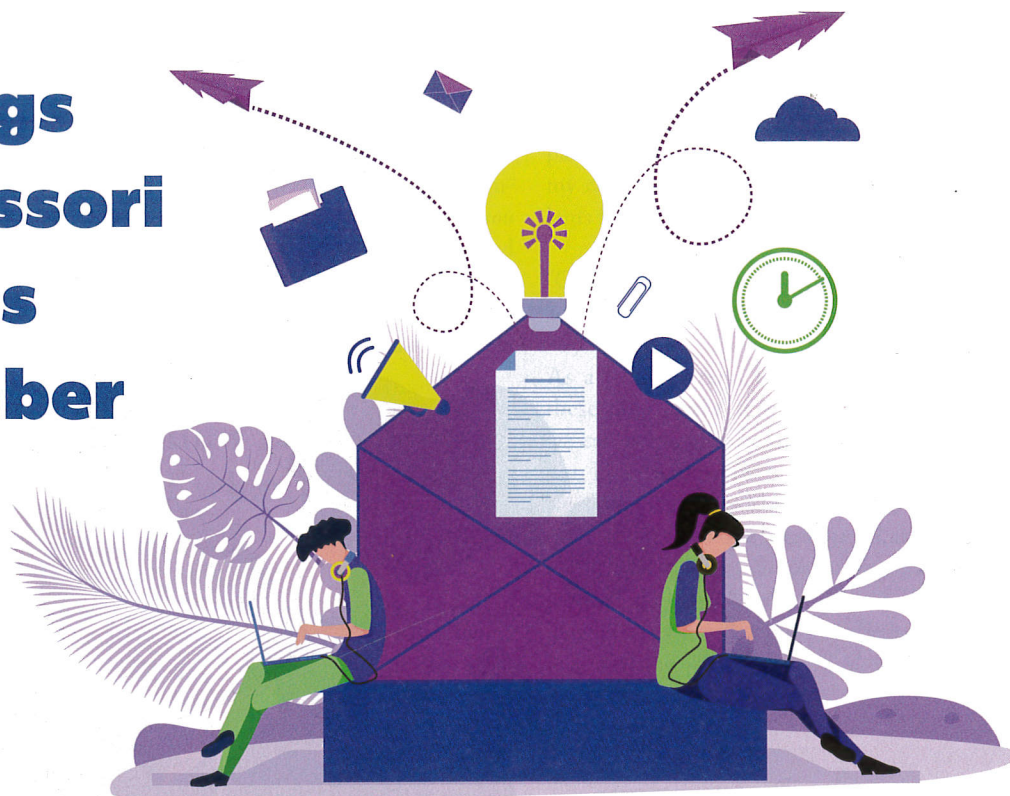


Top 10 Things Your Montessori Guide Hopes You Remember

And Five Things Your Montessori Teacher Might Hesitate to Tell You (in descending order)

by Cheryl Allen



10 Make sure your child can dress themselves in the clothes worn to school. High top sneakers look so cute, but if your child can't put them on and tie them, they need to be only for out-of-school days and times.

9 Let your child walk to the classroom. Carrying your child tells your child they can't do it on their own, and we want to encourage independence.

8 Make sure your child can manage their lunch items. Practice at home can help make lunch smoother for your child. If your older child will be cooking something in the microwave, let them try it at home first.

7 Limit the electronic babysitter, especially around school time. Screens certainly have their place, but try to use the time before and after school for music, audio books, conversation, or reading. This helps your child transition to and from school more easily.

6 Focus on specifics rather than giving a consistent "good job." Share what you noticed ("I saw you running around the whole field.")

5 Come to school on time. Make getting out the door on time a team effort by having your child complete some morning jobs. Getting to class on time allows your child more comfort when beginning their school day.

4 Communicate with your child's guide, but consider the time. Let your child's guide know if there is something that may affect the day, but try not to have a longer conversation just as class starts.

3 Help your child to "do it themselves." Take the time to teach and then give the extra time it will take to allow your child to do whatever they can, from putting on shoes to preparing their lunch.

2 Ask "tell me more" before complaining about any information you hear from your child. Often, clarification makes a concern a funny story. For example, a child told her teacher that another child, "Said the f-word." When the child was asked to whisper what was said, he leaned into me and said, "He said *fat*." Crisis averted.

1 Always know that we are all on the same team: Team Your Child. Even when any of us have concerns, our goal is always to support your child to success.

And now...

Five Things Your Montessori Teacher Might Hesitate to Tell You:

5 Watching TV shows on the way to school does affect the way your child settles into class. Frankly, we do not move as fast

and engage the brain the same way electronic screens do, so making that change can be difficult for many children.

4 Asking your child, "Why did you do that?" is not helpful and will probably not get a real answer. Try asking them to tell you the story of what happened, and ask how they were feeling before the incident; rarely do people know why they did something.

3 Have times when you are off your phone while you are with your child. Multitasking is sometimes necessary and so seductive, but some time without your child needing to compete with your phone is beneficial for both of you. Drop off and pick up from school are great times to be off your phone.

2 Be careful about what you say about school, your child's teacher, or your child's classmate. Your child is probably listening. Vent to family or a friend at an appropriate time and place, or consider if it needs to be said at all.

1 When you talk about your child, as if they are not there, when they actually are there, they will hear you. Consider children will take the information if it is new to them, and how they will feel about you sharing the information if it is not new. And, by the way, nobody appreciates being labeled. ■