



# OBSERVATION GUIDE

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LEELANAU MONTESSORI NURTURES THE WHOLE CHILD IN A PREPARED ENVIRONMENT BASED ON RESPECT, INDIVIDUALITY, A LOVE OF LEARNING, AND FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY.



*We cannot create observers by saying observe, but by giving them the power and the means for this observation and means are procured through education of the senses. ”*

*Dr. Maria Montessori*

## WELCOME TO LEELANAU MONTESSORI

Leelanau Montessori is an authentic Montessori school, providing an educational choice that is an alternative from the traditional model. We provide philosophy and practices that will empower your child to direct his/her own life and development, creating prepared environments that stimulate and enable various activities toward self-actualization. Our method reflects the educational and psychological research and data-based instructional strategies of Dr. Maria Montessori, various educators of her day, and contemporary educational research.

This booklet will provide you with information to review and refer to during your observation process. It has been prepared for all those who are interested in familiarizing themselves with the Montessori Method and specifically our program at Leelanau Montessori. Please take a moment to reflect on your individual goals for observing our classroom environments.

Please note that this initial observation is an adult observation with no accompanying children. We have found the best way to assure parental understanding and confidence is for parents to observe a class in session and have questions answered immediately afterwards.

### VISION STATEMENT

Leelanau Montessori children will attain mastery of essential academic skills and an inner disciplinary drive toward self-fulfillment and actualization while allowing the ongoing development of each child's imagination and creative abilities.

### MISSION OF THE ACADEMY

Leelanau Montessori Public School Academy nurtures the whole child in a prepared environment based on respect, individuality, a love of learning, and freedom with responsibility.



*Free the child's potential, and you will transform him into the world.  
Dr. Maria Montessori*

## CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDELINES

While observing, please take note of the following guidelines to assist the children in the following ways:

**Choose a space to sit that will not interfere with the children's work or access to materials. Classroom guides often provide a chair for observation purposes.**

**Do speak to a child if she/he initiates conversation. However, please understand that uninterrupted work is important. You may redirect a child by telling them you are there to observe the whole classroom and that you need to concentrate as well.**

**Please refrain from talking to other adults in the environment. So that you are best able to use your observation time, you may ask to speak to an adult after your time in the classroom environments to address any questions you may have.**

Thoughts on where to focus while observing:

- Observe the class as a whole plus choose one or two children to focus on.
- Does the child concentrate on their chosen work for a long time? How long?
- Is the child orderly in their use of material and returning it to its original location in the room?
- What materials has he/she chosen?
- Is the child independent in choosing their work?
- Does the child work independently?
- Does the child socialize while she/he is working?
- Does the child finish the work he/she has chosen?
- Does the child require much assistance from an adult? If so, in what ways?
- Does the child relate well in a group setting?



## ADMISSION PROCESS

Thank you for your interest in Leelanau Montessori. We welcome the opportunity to meet and take you on a tour of our campus and classroom environments. We look forward to discussing the Montessori philosophy with you and what makes our school so special! The steps in our admissions process include:

**Schedule a Tour / Observation:** Contact the Leelanau Montessori office to schedule a tour at 231-271-8609 or visit our website at [www.leelanaumontessori.org](http://www.leelanaumontessori.org) to book a time online. This is an exciting opportunity to learn more about the Montessori educational philosophy and to see the students in their classroom. There will also be time to ask questions before or after your observation.

**Completion of Application:** Applications are accepted year-round via mail or dropped off in person (along with the \$50 non-refundable application fee for preschool aged applicants).

**Admission Letter Sent** (based on availability): If a placement is offered, families will be notified by mail. Additional forms including health forms, profiles and permissions will be provided at this time. When maximum enrollment for a grade has been reached, applicants will be placed in a waiting pool and admitted on the basis of a lottery system as developed by the Board of Directors. Families will be notified when a space becomes available.

**Classroom Visit:** After availability has been determined, families are contacted to schedule a classroom visit with their child's teacher.

## PROGRAMS

Our general age groupings are:

Toddler: 15mo. - 3yrs.

Primary: 3yrs. - 6yrs.

Lower Elementary: 6 – 9 yrs.

Upper Elementary: 9 – 12 yrs.



*It is necessary for the teacher to guide the child without letting him feel her presence too much, so that she may always be ready to supply the desired help, but may never be the obstacle between the child and his experience.*

*Dr. Maria Montessori*

## SCHOOL DAY

Daily Schedule:

8:00 a.m.	Arrival
8:15 a.m.	Work Cycle (This time includes planning, choice and clean-up with individual, partner and small group activities.)
11:00 a.m.	Group
11:15 a.m.	Lunch
12:00 noon	Outdoors
1:00 p.m.	Indoors/Rest/Work
2:40 p.m.	End of Day group with recall and reflection
3:07 p.m.	Dismissal/pick-up

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

At Leelanau Montessori we encourage and appreciate parent participation. Some of the ways you as a parent may enjoy sharing time with the children while at school are:

- Join all the children for lunch or a special activity.
- Attend our family focused outings and events.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Drive and accompany the school on field trips.
- Share personal talents or interests with children.
- Read to the children.
- Listen to the children read.
- Making materials for the classroom.
- Working on special projects with the children either at school or at home.
- Participate in “work bees.”
- Join a parent task force.
- Work with children in the school garden.
- Care for school chickens.
- Cook with the children.
- Bring books in from the local library.
- Bring flowers for children to arrange.
- Help with Fundraising events.
- Help with the recycling and composting program.
- Cook with the children.



## UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS ABOUT LEELANAU MONTESSORI AT A GLANCE

### Leelanau Montessori:

- Follows the educational precepts of Maria Montessori within the State of Michigan guidelines.
- Is a charter school and is publicly-funded by the State of Michigan.
- Is a school in which any child from any school district can attend.
- Currently offers a toddler program (beginning at 15 months) through sixth grade.
- Is tuition free for kindergarten through sixth grade and offers a Great Start Readiness Program for qualifying 4-year olds  
LMPSA also has scholarships and financial aid available to qualifying families.
- Currently has a total enrollment of approximately 130 students.
- Welcomes students without regard to race, religion, color, creed, country of origin, or disability. Twenty-six percent of students are considered minority students.
- Is licensed by the State of Michigan and participates with the Department of Human Services to provide funding for qualifying families.
- Collaborates with Leelanau Outdoor Center to give elementary students wilderness and community building experience at the beginning of each school year, on-campus activities with LOC Mobile twelve times per year, and 3rd through 6th grade students enjoy an end of year camping experience at Camp LOC.
- Offers band for 6th grade students in conjunction with the SBPS.
- Presents opportunity for music lessons within a child's school day.
- Is committed to a whole child physical education experience.
- Is committed to offering a well-rounded curriculum exploring math, science, language, geography, culture, art, history, community service, practical life, and peace education.
- Has a strong community of staff and families committed to current best practices for educating children.
- Is committed to parent education, houses a library with parent education materials, and offers parent education nights throughout the school year.
- Offers before care and after school care for our preschool aged students beginning at 7:30 a.m. and ending at 5:30 p.m.

## OBSERVATION NOTES

*Our aim is not only to make the child understand, and still less to force him to memorize, but so to touch his imagination as to enthuse him to his innermost core.*

*Dr. Maria Montessori*

### Observer Questionnaire

Thank you for visiting our class. Before you leave we would appreciate you completing the following questionnaire. If you do not have time now please fill it out later and return it to the Leelanau Montessori main office. Thank you!

Name, Date and Time of observation period: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

What room did you observe today? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you see the following in the classroom today?

	yes, did observe	did not observe	observed the opposite
good group relations amongst the children	_____	_____	_____
children solving problems	_____	_____	_____
variety of individual work	_____	_____	_____
clean, orderly, and interesting classroom	_____	_____	_____

2. What did you find the most interesting? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. What did you find least attractive? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Was your total impression: positive \_\_\_\_\_ negative \_\_\_\_\_ neutral \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you observed other Montessori classes? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you observed non-Montessori schools? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you a parent? \_\_\_\_\_ teacher? \_\_\_\_\_ student? \_\_\_\_\_  
where are you a teacher/student? \_\_\_\_\_

Comments, Suggestions, or Questions:

