

*Learn about the*

# ***K12 Cluster Curriculum Overview***

## **A 3-year Overview of Thematic Units**

Within the framework of Montessori philosophy and practices, the organizing matrix for the Kindergarten through second grade units is Time and Space. Learning is experientially based, with students working independently and in pairs, in preparation for learning how to work together in small multiage teams. Students engage in many hands-on activities, using manipulatives.

Beginning with a comparative study of *Families at Home* in their Portland neighborhoods and *Families Around the World*, students will begin to develop an international perspective. As students gain an understanding of the social rules governing family life, and learn how families interact with their environment, they will increase their knowledge of self. The educational approach will help students develop social interaction skills, participate, and make decisions.

Next, students will study and compare *Communities at Home* and *Communities Around the World*, learning how people organize social, political, and economic institutions to meet basic human needs by focusing on the production and distribution of goods.

The basic social science concepts of change, location, diversity, justice, power, and trade-offs will be introduced through concrete applications in our comparative studies of *Societies in the United States* and *Societies Around the World*. These units will focus on the key features of societies past and present, and will be examined to provide in-depth study of those societies.

## **K12 Schedule Overview:**

The K12 curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of the individual student. The students report to their check in room at 7:50am and begin working independently. Learning tasks may include shared reading, an estimation game, journal entries, or one of many options that tie into the unit theme.

Following check-in we commence with literacy block. Students are placed in flexible groupings according to their reading needs and strengths. Each student reports to his or her assigned flexible literacy room. There are typically twelve small grouping with four groups assigned to each teacher. We constantly evaluate student progress. A child may be regrouped at anytime when it becomes evident that he/she would be better served in another group. During the two-hour block the students rotate through a series of activities including small group reading instruction with the teacher, computers, and stations tied into the theme and literacy benchmarks.

During the next learning time block of the day we further explore and expand upon our theme. Theme-based activities may be presented in various grouping configurations. Examples of grouping may include: check-in groups, large and small groups, indoor/outdoor activity groups, rotation through learning stations in all three class rooms. During these times we encourage older students to support the younger students. We take scheduled restroom breaks and some outdoor recesses. We incorporate food and snacks into our lessons and recess when possible.

After lunch some students participate in math activities while others are in writer’s workshop/spelling/poetry/creative dramatics. The groups rotate at end of the first hour and the second hour of Math instruction will commence.

We dismiss students from their check in rooms at 2:15pm each day.

The following chart is a SAMPLE schedule for K12. Students move based on developmental abilities and are placed in *classes*, rather than classrooms. Please note that the schedule reflects what is scheduled by *classroom*—rather than by class. The strength of the Odyssey program is that it affords the teachers the flexibility to work with each student according to his/her needs and instruction time is organized based on many factors, taking into account all students’ success. Math, Writing & Literacy groups are determined by developmental levels and group dynamics in order maximize your child’s success. Rotation classes; Science, Art & Thematic Simulation are taught to mixed-age teams, allowing for cooperative learning & teaming experiences.

Time	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.
7:50-8:00	Homeroom—Attendance taken at 7:55				
8:00-8:30	Math				
8:30-9:00					
9:00-9:15					
9:15-9:40	Writing				Gathering
9:40-10:20	Writing		special	Writing	
10:20-11:00	Writing	P.E.	special	P.E.	Writing
11:00-11:30	LUNCH & RECESS				
11:30-12:00	LUNCH & RECESS				

12:00 - 12:30	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy	Literacy
12:30 - 1:00			ROTATION		
1:00 - 1:30					
1:30 - 2:00					
2:00 - 2:15	Homeroom				

**K12 Behavior Plan:**

We believe that appropriate classroom behavior and the development of self-management skills improves the learning environment and helps to create a safe place for students to meet their academic potential. Our expectations for student behavior are high and we believe that with the right guidance all students will be able to meet these behavior expectations. The following outlines our general behavior expectations and plan. While all team members will follow these guidelines, it may look slightly different in each classroom, due to the differences in our personalities and demeanor.

The behavior expectations of the classrooms are clearly explained to the students and will be continually reinforced and reviewed throughout the school year. The following appropriate behaviors are expected of all students:

- Focus on the lessons and learning.
- Follow directions from teachers and assistants.
- Treat class members with respect.
- Participate fully in classroom activities.
- Make appropriate choices.
- Manage personal behavior with minimal guidance.

Students are taught the expected behaviors outlined through group discussion, posted signs and continual positive reinforcement from team teachers. Students who have difficulty developing these skills will be counseled and encouraged to improve.

If a student continues to show difficulty in mastering behavior skills, that student is asked to stand on a thinking square so that he/she has time to think of an appropriate action that they might take to eliminate the problem behavior. During this time the child is invited to watch what is happening as the lesson or activity progresses. This thinking time is repeatedly referred to as a reminder or an opportunity to get into a problem-solving frame of mind.

If the thinking square time does not produce a change we send the student for a time-out, outside of the classroom. This time out will occur in another team teacher's classroom and the student will fill out a Think Sheet. Parents will be contacted at this point via email or phone.

Should the steps above fail to improve problem behavior, the K12 team asks for a conference with the family, student, principal and appropriate staff so that we can devise an action plan together.

There are behaviors that require immediate attention and result in a behavior referral and an immediate visit to the principal's office. These behaviors are outlined more specifically in the parent handbook. The most common for this age group would include physical abuse to another student and bullying.

**K12 Homework Expectations:**

Homework is an important part of a student's academic life. The K12 homework will be differentiated to meet your student's specific literacy and math goals. We will also make available monthly projects that will be optional and based on our current thematic study.

Each student has a reading baggy which contains the student's practice materials. Every school day the baggie is brought home in the child's backpack. The children return the baggie to school every morning. When students arrive at school they will put their reading baggy into their reading group cart. The symbol on their baggie will match one of the drawers in the cart. Student management of this process helps students to become more independent in their learning environment.

Reading homework is designed to allow practice at the student's instructional level. As students progress, the word lists and reading books increase in difficulty. A journal will be added to their baggie in which they will respond in writing. These activities are designed to prepare them for thoughtful reading. They may be asked to refer back to the text to find information, formulate an opinion, relate an experience of their own to an event in the book, write questions to challenge their group members or complete an activity designed to expand their vocabulary.

- Homework Guidelines
  - 10-15 minutes – Kindergarten
  - 15-20 minutes – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
  - 20-30 minutes – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

**K12 Gathering:**

Friday Gathering is usually held on Fridays from 9:15-9:40 a.m. in the Cafetorium. This is a time when the entire K12 cluster comes together as a multi-aged group to share in

various activities. The overarching purpose of Friday Gathering is to prepare students for the end of unit performances. During Friday Gathering students get a chance to:

- Be in front of an audience
- Get used to using the microphone
- Share a special talent
- Share project work from current units
- Special K12 cluster events such as guest performances

Some examples of Friday Gathering activities include:

- Students shared the shakers they made for the Five Senses Unit
- Students played the instruments they made for the Five Senses Unit
- Students receive awards such as Superstar Reading Program Awards