



The Walden School

Montessori-based, Preschool–Grade 8



Our Peaceful Classroom

A peaceful atmosphere is frequently associated with a Montessori classroom. Visitors notice how comfortable the children are in the classroom and will comment on the orderliness and the serenity of the environment. The classroom has a busy hum of conversation and the children move freely about the room. The whole environment, however, is modulated by respect - respect for the teachers, respect for the children, respect for the materials and for work in progress. It is an atmosphere where cooperation rather than competition is encouraged.

When conflicts arise in the classroom, the children are given the tools to solve the problem independently. Our classrooms have been using the peace rose to resolve conflicts. The rose allows the children involved to feel heard and respected and to find a solution to the problem that both children can agree to. (win-win) The children involved in the conflict take the peace rose to a quiet place in the classroom. The child holding the rose begins and uses an I message to say how they are feeling. (“I am mad at you for knocking over my work.”) The other child then takes the rose and expresses their feelings.” (“I was talking to you and you wouldn’t listen. I was mad.”) The children then have a back and forth discussion on the event and only the person holding the rose can speak. When children first attempt this, some adult supervision is needed to help them arrive at a resolution that both children feel is fair.

Peace education is an ongoing experience in the classroom. Each classroom is an inclusive community that values each child as an individual; encompasses the habits of respect and fairness; encourages peaceful conflict resolution; and gives each person a sense of belonging to a group whose combined efforts can be greater than any one member. The community is sustained by cooperation, mutual support and delight in each other’s accomplishments.

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