



Alief Montessori Community School

12013 6th Street ◊ Houston, TX 77072

Phone (281)-530-9406 ◊ Fax (281) 530-2233 ◊ Website: www.aliefmontessori.org

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The opportunities for a child's growth and academic success are maximized when the home and the school share common goals. Active family engagement is critical to create an environment that will encourage the full development of every child's unique potential.

1. **Facilitating family-to-family support.** Effective support can only be achieved when families are well informed of school policies, procedures and the AMCS educational approach both before and during the child's enrollment.

Upon enrollment the parent/s of every PK child is required to meet with the teacher for a one-on-one orientation. The goal of this interview is to expand awareness and provide greater understanding of the child and the home environment. A parent involvement agreement is also signed. On this occasion, the parents learn about the school and the classroom. The parents also learn that Montessori works best when there is close collaboration between parents and teachers.

2. **Increasing participation in decision-making with regards to their child's learning.**

Parents actively participate in decision-making committees in special education, English language proficiency, safety and health, grade placements, etc.

AMCS classrooms are open for school visits and observations from October through May. Classroom observation is strongly encouraged at all levels but required in PK, at least twice a year. This helps broaden the parents' understanding of the Montessori approach.

Fall and spring parent-teacher conferences are required for each family every year. These are occasions for parents and teachers to share information and insights about the child and to answer any questions the parents may have. In addition to regularly scheduled conferences, parents and/or teachers may request a conference at any time during the year. Teachers are always interested in any information that provides greater understanding of a child's behavior and needs. They are also ready to discuss any questions or concerns which parents may have about their child's school experience.

Several other types of meetings are also scheduled to foster family engagement:

- a. Elementary and Middle School Orientation
- b. Montessori Journey (Parents are presented lessons in various content areas by the teachers in PK thru middle school)
- c. Parent-Child Night (The child shows the parents a few lessons he/she has been doing in class)
- d. Kindergarten Parents' First Look (An Orientation to the Elementary Program)
- e. STAAR Night (Orientation on STAAR test content, resources and dates)
- f. AMCS Open-house

3. **Providing educational opportunities and resources that will enrich knowledge and skills in meeting their child's developmental and learning needs.** AMCS recognizes the challenge of parenting and is committed to provide valuable learning resources and tools to parents.
 - a. Every month, AMCS conducts "Parenting with Love and Logic" seminars for all parents. These groups are open to all and approach parenting with respect for all cultures and parenting styles and provide proven methods for approaching common parenting challenges with love, respect and firm guidance.
 - b. The AMCSparenting@blogspot.com is updated regularly to provide online parenting tips and tools. Parents are welcome to comment and ask questions.
 - c. AMCS teachers and curriculum directors are all Montessori-trained and readily available to help parents with their questions specific to their children's needs.
 - d. Periodic workshops are presented to all parents based on survey results and parenting class feedback. Some topics are: Helping Your Child to Be An Eager Reader, Montessori at Home, How to Manage Technology and many more.
 - e. Experienced staff are available for individual counseling whenever needed.
4. **Providing a network of community resources.** The AMCS Parenting blog, AMCS Parents Facebook page and the monthly newsletter provide information on various resources available in the community for parents and students.
5. **Developing staff skills in evidence-based practices that support families in meeting their children's learning benchmarks.** AMCS provides its faculty members and staff with training opportunities to enhance their practice in supporting students' learning goals. AMCS sponsors its teachers to attend the Annual AMI Refresher Course, and Region 4 ESC trainings. All AMCS staff attend a five-day in-service training at the beginning of year, including a training on Teaching With Love and Logic. Additionally, workshops are frequently offered on such topics as classroom management, encouraging enthusiastic reading, incorporating music into the curriculum, refresher courses on Montessori theory, and ongoing support in maintaining and developing a vibrant, academically sound and effective classroom. To this end, each classroom has at least twice monthly observations followed by discussion between administrative staff (principal or curriculum director) and teacher. Teachers are required to complete annual hours of training, some of which is reading and discussing evidence-based information and practices.
6. **Evaluating family engagement efforts and using evaluations for continuous improvement.** AMCS utilizes conferences with parents and at times, surveys to receive feedback from students and parents on the school's family engagement efforts. During workshops and trainings, there is always time for a Q&A and workshop evaluation forms for the participants. Families are encouraged to volunteer in many capacities to strengthen the ties between the school and parents. Our parents have responded with a dedication and fervor that bonds us all together for the benefit of all.