



RMCA Visitor Observation Guide

Distinctives of an Ambleside Education in Practice

What to look for:	Teacher	Student
Role	Serves the children as a guide to--not the source of--knowledge.	Comes to school ready to learn.
Responsibility	Facilitates an engagement with the text or subject. Avoids lecturing. Cultivates positive habit formation (habits of learning, working, and relating).	Is engaged in and responsible for her own learning. Follows directions the first time they are given. Puts forth best effort consistently. Demonstrates genuine care for people and school property.
Relationship: Teacher and Student	Affirms that each child is a person--not a project or a problem. Exercises appropriate and gentle authority.	Respects and relates to the teachers, in a warm friendly context, as his authority (not a peer).
Curriculum: Relationship with Ideas and Knowledge	Presents primary sources, original works, beautiful materials, and richly composed texts for students to ponder, practice, discover, and enjoy.	Experiences her schoolwork as a delight. Embraces struggle as a necessary and normal part of learning. Determines to push through struggle toward growth.
Classroom Atmosphere	Promotes a peaceful yet diligent air. Allows for times of silence for children to think before speaking. Maintains a classroom that is ordered, attractive, and inspirational.	Participates freely without fear of ridicule or comparison to classmates. Respects the time and quiet necessary to do the labor of thinking and doing. Enjoys the teacher, classmates, and work at hand.
Narration: A retelling of what was read, seen, heard, or observed	Utilizes this primary "tool" across the curriculum to facilitate students' engagement of knowledge while sharpening the habit of attention.	Tells back in ordered sequence, recalls as many details as possible, and uses as much of the author's language as possible after a single, careful reading.
Motivation	Maintains a high joy, highly relational engagement between self, students, and the text. Facilitates the learning of knowledge as its own incentive. Avoids using personality or external rewards to manipulate.	Displays a natural and eager appetite for knowledge and is engaged with the rich, inspiring "living" curriculum. Engages in good work for its own sake and her delight. Does not seek artificial rewards as a motivator.
Behavior	Expects that all children will act out inappropriately or impulsively at times. Seeks to engage the child through relationship and habit rather than punishment. Trains and inspires from within to live well rather than manage weak behavior from without.	Is responsible for his own behavior, enjoying the natural rewards of good behavior (i.e. attends to the teacher, another student, or text, carefully follows directions, participates avidly, listens actively, works thoroughly and accurately).