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Judith A. Orion, Co-Director of Training for Assistants to Infancy, holds the AMI Primary diploma and received her Assistants to Infancy diploma at the first AMI training for that level, given in Rome.

## Assistants to Infancy (A to I)

- Tarunya Gouthaman

*A glimpse into the training that A to I students undergo ....*

It is fascinating to understand what entails ahead, when one undertakes to work with the youngest group of children, '0 to 3 years'! A to I students are trained to support parents and children through the stages of pregnancy and birth, to create and sustain beautifully conducive environments which meet the needs of the infant and a deep understanding of nature's design for human development. A to I training courses are two summers long, with assignments in the intervening academic year. During the summer sessions, students prepare their own reference manuals (albums), timelines of child development and some hand-made materials are required.

Some of the students who underwent the A to I training at The Montessori Institute (TMI), Denver, Colorado, share their experience with us.



2017 Batch



2018 Batch

Janani Bhuvaneshwaran works at Pacific Rim International School in San Mateo, California, with children in the Infant Community - Batch 2017

*"Soon after I finished my 3-6 training, I was closely associated with an Infant Community in Bangalore. Here, I observed these young and capable children running the community with confidence and knowledge. They inspired me to take the Assistants to Infancy training and understand better the development that happens before 3 years. Doing the course has opened up a new perspective for me that education begins at birth, it begins when the child is in the womb. I have also realized that we must educate our society and parents on the importance of the first three years of life. The course is intense and requires a lot of commitment, hard work and planning. The Montessori training is life altering. I felt it when I did my 3-6 and I feel it now. It is something that makes me want to continually evolve to be a better person for every young child that I come in touch with."*

Ammu Menon trained at the Primary Level works at Magic Years, New Delhi, with children in the age group between 18 months to 6 years - Batch 2018

*"It is amazing to see the development of the child from conception and how the environment contributes to the child's development in minute detail. The materials and activities presented during the first few months and from then on, are so vital to the child's complete development. I really enjoyed my trainer, Judi Orion's energy, passion and inspirational lectures. The other students on the course were extremely friendly, helpful and supportive. The only thing I found difficult was keeping pace with the expected work and of course, not getting enough sleep!"*

Ruveda Suwadhi has worked in a Primary environment and plans to open her own school soon - Batch 2017

*"I wanted to do the A to I training to understand the needs of the children below 3 years, how to support them and also to educate myself to work with parents of infants and toddlers. From the course, I learnt about the capabilities of 0-3 children and how beautifully they develop themselves. The 250 hours of observation we did during the interim year helped me understand the development of children in different age groups."*

Charmy Mukesh Karania, works at Harmony Montessori School, Mumbai, with children from the age of 12-14 months to 6 years - Batch 2018

*"This little child has such immense powers which often goes unnoticed. Being patient and observant are the two most important things that I have learnt during the course. The biggest challenge I faced during the course was to assimilate so much information in the short span of time and retain it. The training faculty were very supportive and helpful. It was great experience."*

Rukmini Ramachandran is the Director of Training at Navadisha Montessori Foundation and has been trained at both Primary and Elementary Levels - Batch 2017

*"I have always wanted to understand this age group. Though I have read a little around the topic I felt that the training would fill up some holes. The inner life they have even when they are so tiny is incredible! The changes in the body are accompanied by the psychological changes. I have understood the amazing speed and significance of early development. Be prepared for the work load in the course! Studying, typing, getting assignments and material making done on time was challenging but also exhilarating. I loved the material making. We were helped to do the work ourselves and we sewed so many things. The course met more than my expectations and exceeded it by far."*



The 0 to 3 environment



Registrations Open

AMI Birth to Three Assistants Course Certificate

Julia Hilson  
AMI 0-3 Trainer and Consultant

The course is specially suitable for parents of young children and those seeking to assist in a Montessori Nido or an Infant Community.

## Assistants to Infancy (0-3)

AMI Assistants Certificate Course

27-Nov-2017 to 08-Dec-2017



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## CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

*"At birth, the child leaves a prison – his mother's womb – and this makes him independent of her bodily processes. The baby is next endowed with an urge, or need, to face the outer world and to absorb it. We might say that he is born with 'the psychology of world conquest.' By absorbing what he finds about him, he forms his own personality."*

- *"The Absorbent Mind"* by Dr. Maria Montessori, Chapter - 9 (Published by Aakar Books Classics, Reprinted on 2014)

*The first sign of independence is seen when the infant is separated off the mother's womb to step into the real world. The child absorbs every bit of his surrounding in order to create a unique identity for himself / herself. The Montessori philosophy revolves around the idea of independence and children are encouraged from the beginning to find their path and place in this world by making independent decisions and choices.*



The Indian Montessori Foundation is organizing its Fourth National Montessori Conference on the topic, **"Swayam- Independent Thought, Independent Action"** on January 12 and 13, 2018 between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm at the Music Academy, Chennai. People from all walks of life are welcome to attend the sessions. The registrations are open NOW! Hurry to avail exciting offers and discounts.

**\*Register Online by November 01, 2017 to avail early bird fee\***

For more details visit [www.montessori-india.org](http://www.montessori-india.org) and get in touch either by calling 08248010258 or email [conference@montessori-india.org](mailto:conference@montessori-india.org)

## Mumbai Montessori Meet

- **Kruti Lakhani, Founder of Mindstein Montessori**

One of the first meets of its kind, the Mumbai Montessori Meet took place on September 16, 2017 at the Ratan Tata Institute (RTI). The purpose of the meet was that each person talks about the school programs that they run, how many environments they have, the sessions they conduct and discuss the challenges faced.

Beena Parekh, who started Harmony Montessori 15 years ago, shared with us the struggles that she faced and how she overcame them, giving each of us the hope and courage to pursue our goals of running Montessori preschools successfully.

Pavithra Rajagoplan, Auxiliary Trainer (3-6 years) spoke about the importance of an undisturbed working cycle which allows the building of concentration and without breaking the flow in the work of the children. She also emphasized on having the longer 6 hours working cycle for the Casa child.

The meet helped to create a platform and to unite the heads of all Montessori schools in Mumbai, enabling cooperation and communication between them. The highlight of the meet were two esteemed charitable institutions that have adopted the Montessori method and have been successfully teaching underprivileged children.

The school of Aseema Charitable Trust, has been educating parents of children from the lower strata of the society to help them understand the importance of education. They have found unique ways of giving them Montessori material challenges such as the binomial/trinomial cube, allowing a bunch of parents to struggle to put it together and then explaining parents that their children can do it at the age for 4. Despite the adversities, they have strived to make sure that these children come to school and become true Montessori children who are no longer misfits despite of the background or upbringing.

Anaxi Shah from Smile Montessori, has been running a charitable preschool for slum children for more than 2 decades. Her constant efforts towards the upliftment of these children is truly inspiring.

The driving force behind this meet was Zarin Malva, whose untiring efforts, made it possible for all Montessori schools to come together and create a network of people whose roots are entrenched in the teachings of Maria Montessori.



Binomial and Trinomial Cubes

## Who is an Elementary Child?

- **Aditi Ganesh**

Redwood Montessori School, Chennai organized a talk, “*Who is an Elementary Child?*” on August 18, 2017, by Rukmini Ramachandran, Director of Training, Navadisha Montessori Institute. The duration of the talk was about an hour and she covered various aspects of the topic such as: Primary (3-6 years) vs. Elementary (6-12 years) Environment, Primary Vs. Elementary Child, Areas of Learning in an Elementary Environment, Role of the Adults and Nature of an Elementary Child.

She highlighted the unique powers of imagination and reasoning that the elementary child possesses which leads him to often question the happenings around him. She spoke about how the idea of morality comes into the picture and how the child is also willing to take up challenges and showcase his will power courageously, becoming ready to explore the community and become a part of it. She brought out the importance of parent's support of the decisions made by their child, thereby having trust in their work and also helping them organize their time effectively to plan their day.

The talk ended with questions raised regarding qualities of an elementary child, materials they are exposed to in their environment, needs of the child and the idea of patience. She concluded by answering the queries and also gave solutions to the concerned parents, assuring that the children will be in good hands provided you hear them out and have faith in what they do.



Rukmini Ramachandran addressing the crowd

Food is comfort,  
security, art,  
connects to us on  
many levels –  
emotionally,  
philosophically,  
spiritually and most  
importantly food is  
love! In this series  
we bring to you  
simple recipes with  
tips on involving the  
children of different  
age groups in the  
art of food  
preparation



## Little Chef

- Kavneet Chadha

### BANANA MILKSHAKE

#### METHOD

- Peel the bananas and place in a flat bottomed bowl.
- Mash the bananas with a metal masher. Set aside.
- Add the powdered jaggery to the milk and stir till it is completely mixed.
- Chop the cashewnuts into small pieces.
- Mix the mashed bananas to the milk while stirring briskly.
- Add the chopped cashewnuts to the above mix.
- Pour the milkshake into glasses.
- The milkshake can be cooled or served directly.

*PLEASE NOTE: The milkshake can be transferred into a blender and then mixed until frothy. This step will require adult assistance. For children less than 3 years these ingredients can be prepared and kept ready. Initially these children will require collaboration. Older children can measure out the ingredients with the assistance of adults initially and independently with the passage of time.*



#### INGREDIENTS

3 ripe bananas  
250 ml full cream milk,  
room temperature  
3 tbsp jaggery,  
powdered  
1/4<sup>th</sup> cup soaked  
cashewnuts {optional}

## Dr. Maria Montessori Birthday Celebrations

- Mehak Hemnani

On August 31, 2017, like every year, the students of the Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI) celebrated Dr. Maria Montessori's birthday. This year the celebrations were held at the Da Vinci School which is close to the Institute.

The event started for the children of Da Vinci Montessori School with a short introduction on why the day was being celebrated, after which a small lamp was lighted by a child in front of Dr. Montessori's picture to give their respects. This was followed by a series of performances like storytelling and singing songs. The 'Rainbow' action song was particularly interesting for the children because the students from Thailand made different colors using various ingredients like honey, lemon, water, salt and butterfly pea leaves. The event ended with a song written by Gool Behram Rustomji about how children are happy in their environment working with the various Montessori materials!



RTI students performing for the children

## Parvarish 2017 – Where Parenting meets Education

- Vidhya Ramalingam

'Parvarish' was organized by Pebble Creek Life School on August 26, 2017, at Alankrita Resorts, Hyderabad. Parvarish started in 2009 as an event to commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Maria Montessori that falls on August 31. Each year, Parvarish sessions are carefully planned to give deeper insights into how parenting and education can together become more holistic and meaningful, so that the society can raise children who are joyful, aware and self-reliant. The event was attended by teachers and parents of Pebble Creek and a few other Montessori Schools in the city.

Parvarish 2017 had an interesting line up of sessions and speakers as well. Teenaz Reporter, AMI trainer (3 to 6) opened the session at Parvarish with her enlightening talk on '*Supporting Independence from Birth to Maturity*' that set the tone of the event. She drew attention to significance of supporting children in their journey of becoming an independent individual in his /her own right. The rhetoric of "When did we become the person we are today?" as she went through the journey of independence through the four planes was thought provoking!

The next session on '*Fostering Creativity*', was delivered by Dr. Chandra Rama Rao, an Organic Chemist. He spoke about how creativity expresses itself in various situations, how it can be supported and 'what' in fact kills creative instincts. He also spoke about brain development and enabling children to think rather than memorize and how in the very real sense 'boredom' plays a great role in creative development in children.



Break out session

Moiza Rafath, Founder Director of Pebble Creek, spoke about the potential of Montessori Children to be a part of the Model Montessori United Nations (MMUN) and the Adolescent Summit. The recording of the live sessions of MMUN and the Adolescent Summit was played. At the MMUN, children from different parts of the world collaborate and become advocates for true human progress, the path to realizing Montessori's goal of true education of bringing lasting peace.

Kausar Sayeed, Ambassador for LXL School Cinema presented the film showcase "*I Say, Bhallaji!*", which touched an emotional chord with all parents and teachers alike. An exciting breakout session by teachers of Pebble Creek helped participants to stretch their understanding further and build new perspectives about the impact of parental responses and involvement in a child's life.

The keynote speech of the day, '*The Child's Perspective*' was the most overwhelming and applauded session, presented by the high school children of Pebble Creek Life School. Their reflections on a parent's stand on aspects like love, anger, freedom, protection, exams and pressure and many other issues were outstanding and in the real sense 'eye-opening.' Their heart's desires and anxieties expressed clearly through poems, letters to parents and songs which honored parents rightly as 'flashlights' in a child's life, were received with joyful tears and a standing ovation.

### What Parvarish participants had to say.....

"Parvarish has always been worth the long trek for Montessori educators and members of the school community because of the depth and almost startling insights that Montessori speakers are able to give as they reveal aspects of Montessori philosophy and methodology. The highlight was listening to Teenaz Reporter's almost poetic explanation of the rewards in fostering independence in children and we could have happily heard her speak for the rest of the day. The short film about the Model Montessori United Nations and the Adolescent Summit was truly inspiring, and similarly, the Pebble Creek student presentations left one hopeful about the future of the world and of humanity." - Rahul Bhushan, Lumbini Montessori House of Children.

"The event was filled with captivating sessions. The breakout session was thought provoking as many of the participants expressed their views on the outcome of positive and negative parental responses. I was stirred by the poems and letters that the children of Pebble Creek School read out for parents. The film showcased by LXL School Cinema was touching as it showed how children revitalize when we follow their interests and how we ruin their dreams by authoritarian behavior." - Helen Elias Mohan, Model Montessori House of Children.

Parvarish in its true spirit touched the right chords with parents and teachers alike, marking a memorable day in the honour of Dr. Maria Montessori.



Students of Pebble Creek School

## Inauguration of AMI Primary Course

- Vidhya Ramalingam

The inauguration function of the seventeenth AMI Primary Montessori Diploma Course took place on September 7, 2017, under the auspices of the Montessori Training and Research Trust (MTRT) at the new MTRT center located in Jeedimetla, Hyderabad. The programme was attended by the trust members, alumni students and representatives from various schools. The inauguration commenced with the ceremonious lighting of the lamp that was followed by a prayer song. Usha Naik, Trustee, MTRT, addressed the gathering and conveyed her best wishes to all the students on course. Teenaz Reporter, Director of Training, thanked everyone who extended their support to revive the new Training Center and those who supported the course through the last couple of years. The programme concluded with a tree plantation.



Tree plantation at the inauguration



Usha Naik lighting the lamp



Teenaz Reporter delivers the vote of thanks

*Our best wishes to the students for a wonderful new journey ahead from the Touch Board Team!*

## IMF Talks

### BANGALORE

#### - Kavneet Chadha

A talk titled “**Endless Time**” was held on August 31, 2017 at Headstart Montessori House for Children by Rukmini Ramachandran, Director of Training at Navadisha Montessori Foundation.

She spoke about the concept of time being a human construction. She said that a child is born without the concept of time. When adults rush from one task to another, children are also rushed and the children want to be a part of the adult world, which is conquered by time. Children can be helped to understand the notion of time with the adult's help. Adults need to understand the ability of the movement of the child, so that the child is not rushed. The child needs to be allowed life experiences so that they can build upon his/her understanding about time. With adequate preparation and predictability, the children can connect between their world and the adults' world.

She ended the talk on a beautiful note by reading two poems, one called 'Endless Time' by Rabindranath Tagore and 'Bedtime' by Eleanor Farjeon.



Left to Right: Pavithra Rakesh, Ruby Lau, Suneeta Madnani, Anita Uday Kumar, Rukmini Ramachandran and Sumita Mukherjee

### CHENNAI

#### - Aditi Ganesh

The talk titled ‘**Nurturing Mathematics in Young Minds**’ was organised on Thursday, August 24, 2017 at Chennai Champs, The International Montessori House, by Ramya Sridar, AMI Trainer in Training at Navadisha Montessori Foundation.



Ramya Sridar and Hemalatha Rangarajan demonstrating a Mathematical concept

Nithyapriya Durai Rathinam shares her experience of the talk with us, "I was overwhelmed by the examples that were given from day to day activities linking it to the indirect learning of Mathematics. Be it a farmer's ability to practice agriculture or cooking where we have to measure various ingredients or riding a bike in which distance, speed and time come into play, Mathematics plays an essential role in our lives. In the Montessori Environment though the actual concept of Mathematics is taught only after four years of age, logical sequencing and analysis which is vital for Mathematics is imbibed in every activity shown to the child. Ramya also spoke about how children need to be encouraged to take up challenges in a positive stride not

only in Mathematics but also in life which will help them face the world confidently."

### MUMBAI

#### - Mehak Hemnani

A talk on “**How to help form will and handle tantrums in children below 3 years**” was conducted at the Da Vinci Montessori School, Mumbai on September 7, 2017 by Vibhuti Jain. She has worked with children in the age group of 0-6 years for 15 years out of which 7 years have been dedicated to toddlers. She holds an AMI diploma at the 0-3 level and has helped set up toddler communities at various schools.

Vibhuti pointed out that the key is to stay calm during a tantrum, offer choices to help the child develop his/her will and having a routine as well as order in the environment will help the child feel secure. She emphasized that freedom and discipline work hand in hand. She said that discipline comes only when freedom is given to a child, however there should be a balance and limits need to be set in a firm and consistent fashion.

Many other issues such as how to tackle different disciplining methods with different care-givers, how to tackle sibling-rivalry scenarios and how to get a child interested in a presentation were also discussed during the talk.



Vibhuti Jain addressing the crowd

## Anyone can become a subscriber!

The Indian Montessori Foundation brings out two publications, a monthly newsletter, The Touch Board (6 copies a year) and an annual journal, Montessori Matters.

### Subscriptions:

One year: Rs. 1200  
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Print out the subscription form from our website ([www.montessori-india.org](http://www.montessori-india.org)), fill in all the details required and send it along with your payment to the Indian Montessori Foundation.

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Do send in articles or news to [thetouchboard@gmail.com](mailto:thetouchboard@gmail.com)

## AMI Membership

Membership to Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) is open to everyone! Become a part of a worldwide community dedicated to the recognition of the unique nature of childhood, natural human development and the rights of the child. Discounted rates to events, AMI eBulletins and Journals are some of the benefits a member receives. AMI membership is an individual membership and is not available to schools, universities, and other educational organisations.

Membership fees begin at 40 euros.

To join, please visit [www.montessori-ami.org](http://www.montessori-ami.org)

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