

Fourth National Montessori Congress

- Aditi Ganesh

This is a great opportunity for parents, teachers, students and anyone interested in finding out about Montessori Education and how the system functions. The conference focuses on how one should build strong faith and acceptance in the fact that children, at a very young age are capable of many things and hence need to be independent.

Here are some of our attendees who have shared their views on why they have registered for the conference:

"One of the major reasons I was drawn to the Montessori approach is the importance it gives to independence which is the theme of the conference this time and I'm looking forward to hearing about different aspects of independence across the various age groups." - Maya Shah, Directress, Harmony Montessori School, Mumbai.

"I understand that it is important for children to arrive at independence by offering only useful help to them. I am intrigued by the theme of the conference and eagerly waiting to hear what the speakers have to say about Montessori Education and Independence." - Ashwini Rayan, Directress, Kidzo Montessori School, Chennai.

"The element of independence is vital for children and we have to provide them the required help from the very beginning. Being a parent, I can see and feel that it has to be fostered in the right manner for every child. This conference would help me look for ways and venues in providing the same, bearing in mind the growth and development of a child as well as the do's and don'ts to follow in this process"- Meenal Senthil, Parent from Redwood Montessori School, Chennai.

The Early Bird date for registration has been extended to December 18, 2017. Hurry to avail of the discounted registration! Spread the word around! DO NOT MISS IT!

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Fourth National
Montessori
Conference

Topic

"Swayam -
Independent Thought,
Independent Action"

Save Our Dates

January 12th & 13th 2018
Time - 9.00 am To 5.00 pm
Venue - Music Academy,
Chennai

Coming
Soon

One More Month To Go

Speakers At The Conference

N.Ravi

Former Editor-in-Chief, The Hindu

Dr. N. Rangarajan

Consultant Psychologist, Fortis Malar Hospitals

Carol Hicks

AMI Montessori Trainer (6-12 Age Level), USA

Hema Rangarajan

AMI Montessori Trainer (3-6 Age Level), INDIA

Judi Orion

AMI Montessori Trainer (Birth-3 Age Level), USA



Books are real and magical, simple and transcendent, right here and beyond, and an essential part of children's lives! We bring you a series of reviews of books suitable for children of different age groups. Watch this space in every issue for a different book!

Book Corner

- **Tarunya Gouthaman**

I SPY – ANIMALS IN ART

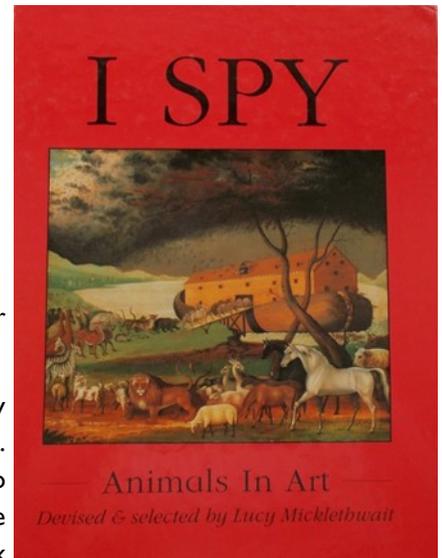
Compilation & Text - Lucy Micklethwait
 Publisher - HarperCollins Ltd, London, 1994
 ISBN No. - 0-00-664407-4

Lucy Micklethwait is a published author, editor, and an illustrator of children's books.

The author has selected an exquisite group of paintings by famous artists all over the world and compiled it into this book. Each page has a line indicating which animal the children are to look for in the respective painting. The language is very simple and can be easily introduced to early readers. At the end of book the author has given details about each painting, the artist who painted it, the title of the painting, which year the painting was done and where it can be found. It is a wonderful way to introduce the various mediums of art to children.

The author quoted in her book, "A child looks at a painting and responds instinctively. As we grow up many of us forget how to do this. Our children can help us to remember how to see clearly, and we can encourage them never to lose confidence in their own judgment." This book appeals to both adults and children by its simplicity and at the same time makes us gaze in awe at the captivating work of each artist.

The author has created several books in the 'I Spy' series such as I Spy Shapes in Art; I Spy: An Alphabet in Art; I Spy Two Eyes: Numbers in Art and many more. Some of her books can be found on Amazon in both hardcover and paperback.



MTRT Workshops - Hyderabad

- **Vidhya Ramalingam**

Building Our Community, Strengthening Our Practice

The Montessori Research and Training Trust (MTRT) organized a workshop titled "Building our community, strengthening our practice" on October 14, 2017. The overwhelming response from the participants made it evident that Hyderabad had been waiting for a long time for such workshops to happen!

Teenaz Reporter, Director of Training at MTRT, started the session with the idea of control of errors and how it plays a vital role in the process of making an independent and self-reliant child. She said that making mistakes is a proof of trying and is in no way a reflection of who we are. Learning through the errors is a process. When the child is not given the opportunities to fix his own errors, with the adult becoming his control of error, the whole process of learning is disturbed.

The session was then taken over by Rukmini Ramachandran, Director of Training, Navadisha Montessori Foundation. She spoke about independence from the womb during birth, where the child is getting separated from the mother. In this journey of the child becoming independent one should understand how the errors of the child is perpetuated when the adult becomes the control of error and when unnecessary help is given to the child. The solution lies in observing the child and tying ourselves to the principles and practicing them.

She said that our practice can be more strengthened by maintaining a healthy, well balanced symbiotic relationship between the training centres and the schools, and between the schools and the parent community. The school needs to give support to the parents by opening all avenues to connect with the school.



Teenaz Reporter and Rukmini Ramachandran addressing the participants of the workshop

She concluded by saying that we need to be easy on our mistakes. Mistakes help our intelligence to focus and many great things have come from mistakes!



Teenaz Reporter introducing Greg MacDonald

Montessori for children aged 6-12 years

The MTRT organized a workshop on November 4, 2017 at Pragnya Montessori School. Greg Macdonald, AMI Director of Elementary Training at MISD (Montessori Institute of San Diego) conducted the workshop titled "Montessori for children aged 6-12 years". The workshop was open to parents, educators and adults interested to know more about children of the second plane and nearly a hundred people were present for the workshop. The speaker focused on the nature of the second plane child and setting up an environment conducive to manifest the natural behaviour which eventually brings about self-discipline in children.

Madhulatha, from Pragnya Montessori School says, "The talk helped me to understand the essential Montessori principles which helped to link theory with practical in 3-6 and 6-12 years environment. One point which struck a chord with me is that we have to offer ideas from a child's perspective rather than the adult's point of view and we have to show how to use the materials in the environment instead of 'teaching' with the material."

Shurobi Roy from Pebble Creek Montessori School says, "The insights Greg gave on all topics were overwhelming; at the same time it was evident that each Montessori guide, teacher and parent was able to identify completely with every anecdote or situation that Greg spoke about. The explanation of 'self-construction' of the child and understanding of the power of relationships between the child, the adult and the environment was very insightful and humbling. Normalization and the relationship between natural environment and natural behaviour were extremely powerful."

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

NUTRITIOUS WRAPS

METHOD

- Pre heat the oven to 180 degrees centigrade.
- In a shallow dish, mix together all the ingredients of the marinade. Set aside.
- Cut the paneer into 8 slices.
- Place the paneer into the dish with the marinade. Spoon over the marinade over the paneer until it is well coated.
- Place the dish in the oven and bake for 20 minutes.
- Cut the capsicum and tomato into small pieces.
- Carefully divide the chopped tomatoes, onions and capsicum between the four chappatis.
- Add 2 pieces of the baked paneer on each chappati, ensuring to spoon over the marinade.
- Fold the chappati and serve.

PLEASE NOTE:- Paneer can be substituted by broccoli, cauliflower or zucchini. The baking time will vary for these vegetables.



INGREDIENTS

4 medium sized
chappatis
200 g paneer/ tofu
1 small capsicum
1 small tomato
1 small onion, chopped
For the marinade
2 tbsp butter
4 tbsp thick yoghurt
1 tbsp lemon juice
4 tbsp finely chopped
coriander
1 tbsp honey
Salt, to taste
Chilli flakes, to taste



Begum Bilkees I. Latif

In memory of Padma Shree, Begum Bilkees I. Latif

-Vidhya Ramalingam

Padma Shree, Begum Bilkees I. Latif was the Chairperson of the Montessori Training and Research Trust (MTRT) for more than thirteen years.

She was deeply involved with every activity of the trust and as the Chairperson her decisions were made with a clear vision and long-term goals. Her manners, courtesy and attention towards everyone was quite admirable and inspirational. In her own right she was a reputed author and a champion of several social causes. She was an amazing person who devoted her services towards the upliftment and welfare of the underprivileged, especially the children in slums. She was awarded the Padma Shree in 2008 for her social service.

She bore her last illness with grace and fortitude and passed away on October 27, 2017. She will be truly missed and always be remembered for her greatness, wisdom and graciousness.

IMF Talks

Chennai

-Aditi Ganesh

The Thursday Talk for the month of October was held at Navadisha Montessori School October 26, 2017. Ann Dunne, an AMI Trainer and educational consultant for the 6-12 age level spoke on how to offer support to an Elementary Child by giving practical examples from day to day lives.

Srividya Parthasarathy, who attended the talk shared her experience with us, *"Ann explained how it is crucial for us to support the children in becoming independent, both intellectually and physically. We need to offer the children of this age group plenty of opportunities to take up certain duties and make decisions on their own, helping them become responsible individuals. Children of this age group often face a moral dilemma and as adults we need to offer the required guidance for them to develop empathy and judgement."*

At the end of the session, Ann answered many questions that were raised by the participants and everyone left home with more clarity on the nature of an elementary child and our role in their lives.



Ann Dunne delivering her talk at Navadisha

Mumbai

- Mehak Hemnani

On October 12, 2017, Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) organized a talk on "How to foster the Montessori path of learning for your toddler at home" by Sejal Shah and Ritu Shah at Ubuntu Montessori School. Both speakers are AMI Diploma Holders at the 3-6 level. Sejal Shah is the Head of Ubuntu Montessori School and Ritu Shah is a Directress in the Toddler Environment at Da Vinci Montessori. The speakers provided insights into Montessori education and the importance of providing a similar environment at home.

Two important aspects that were highlighted in the talk were:

- (1) Preparing the adult - stressing on the importance of observations, collaboration and repetition with the child
- (2) Preparing the environment - Videos and pictures were shown depicting how easy it is to provide a basic child friendly environment at home which allows the child to explore on his own and become independent

The biggest take away from the talk was the message - 'Follow the child – he'll provide cues on his interests and needs'. Several questions were raised leading to discussions on topics such as dealing with tantrums and helping children from Montessori schools to cope with high school interviews.



Sejal Shah and Ritu Shah at Ubuntu Montessori School



Teenaz Reporter at Lumbini Montessori House of Children

Hyderabad

-Vidhya Ramalingam

The IMF Hyderabad team has all geared up to host the series of Thursday talks across the twin cities. To initiate with the series of talks in the city, Teenaz Reporter, Director of Training, MTRT, delivered a speech on 'The child's need for time in a timeless world' at the Lumbini Montessori House of Children on October 26, 2017. She said that in today's fast paced life, we forget the children's need for endless time. Time, that they need in order to grow, develop and appreciate their world. Our understanding of their need for time and our preparation in patience will help us support our children along the natural path of development.

Chitra from Anthea Montessori School shares her experience with us, "Teenaz emphasized on how the child comes into the world with no knowledge of any schedule, day, date or time. Therefore, it is essential that we understand children initially take longer to do things that we adults tend to do much quicker. However, if we invested the time NOW to make our child independent and gave him/her enough time to practice the essential skills, very soon the child will be your collaborator instead of being dependant on the adult for basic needs. She stressed on the importance of order and rhythm in the child and emphasised on how important a consistent schedule is. It was a wonderful reminder for all of us to embrace the psychic needs of the child."

Bangalore

-Kavneet Chadha

The Thursday talk in Bangalore took place on October 26, 2017 in National Public School, Rajaji Nagar, at 4:30 pm. The speaker Bindu Subramaniam spoke about the 'Art in the life of a child'. She is the daughter of violinist Dr. L. Subramaniam, runs the Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts and is involved in philanthropic activities of the Subramaniam Foundation. Bindu spoke about music and its importance in a child's life from the time they are in the womb. The highlights of the talk were:



Bindu Subramaniam explaining the importance of music in a child's life

1. Exposure to music - Children exposed to music have a higher IQ, are more social, understand/grasp things better and tend to be all-rounder's. Children learn better practically and develop their interest in music.

2. Exposure to languages - A variety of music exposes children to languages, helps build bridges and eradicate issues like racism. She gave an example of a child travelling on a flight and knew a Swahili song. The child got to know that the air hostess on the flight also knew Swahili and this helped build a special bond between them and also encouraged the child to learn more songs in Swahili.

She also spoke about Montessori supporting music and exposing children to different aspects of music. She said that the teachers in the environment are not focused only on academics, the curriculum touches different aspects of human life, including music. The questions were mostly about her academy and the work that takes place in relation to music.

Flora - Here, There, Everywhere!

- Mehak Hemnani

With a keen interest in learning, Karim and Pooja Velji fell for the Montessori way of education the moment they heard about it from a friend. Within no time, Pooja (Founder & Director of I Cube Montessori School, Pune) joined the Montessori course in Hyderabad.

I Cube Montessori School, formerly known as "Little Steps Montessori School" was started in 2004 in Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra. After 7 years of success, they decided to expand their horizons and moved to Pune in 2012, starting the I Cube Montessori School.

I Cube Montessori School has three Primary Environments (2 to 6 years). It is located in a lane just off the highway. It is in a residential area with close to 7 societies around it and has plenty of greenery with clean walking paths and roads.

The school has an area for outdoor activity which is accessible to the children. The area is 15 feet by 50 feet and the ground is tiled. 2 of the 3 environments' windows open to the outdoor area. There are gardening patches running alongside the wall with plants both potted and in soil. Plants such as Pleomele, Majesty Palm Indoor Plant, Norfolk Island Pine, Temple tree, Ixora Coccinea are found in the environment.



Children take care of the plants by removing the dead leaves and watering them. They also engage in activities such as floral design, flower arrangement, growing mustard and garlic plants. Various gardening tools along with a separate wash basin is provided for the children to use. Many books on nature are available in the school to supplement the children's interest in gardening.

In this issue we are doing a special feature on plants as part of an environment and how love for the same can be imbibed in children



Keeping a Diary

-Krithiga Sundar

Imagine a family, hiding, holed up in the secret annex, removed from the comforts of home, not able to move freely during the day, where every movement of theirs had to be weighed and analyzed, whereas in the world that they had left behind, their friends and fellow countrymen were rounded up and shipped to camps, where, friends betrayed and in some places help was offered by the unlikeliest persons. How does this affect the young girl who had just stepped into the most tumultuous period of her life, adolescence? How can we know?

“The nicest part is being able to write down all my thoughts and feeling; otherwise, I might suffocate.” - Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl. Thanks to Anne Frank, who kept a diary about their life in the secret annex, we have come to know about the life of Anne and life in the middle of war zone.

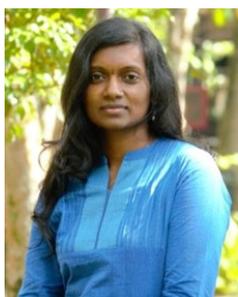
Introducing diary writing to children enables them to gather their thoughts, pen it down and reflect. It would be lovely for them to keep those old journals safe, to browse through them at a later point in life, to reminisce about their childhood, while at the same time to observe the growth and the transformation their writing has gone through. It is a means of self-expression which would help them to record the events that happened, their reactions or their near and dear one's reactions; how it made them feel at that moment. It is also a documentation of their memories. We might never know someday this child could be the next Anne Frank or Virginia Wolf.

When can we introduce diary writing to the children? Catch them young when they write with pleasure and interest, help them to write every day. May be there is a famous writer in the making and we have done our bit in that creation.

“The child's explosion into writing is closely connected with his special sensitivity for language, and this was operative at the time when he began to speak. By the age of five and a half or six, this sensitivity has ceased to exist; so it is clear that writing can be learned with joy and enthusiasm only before that age. Children older than this have lost the special opportunity which nature grants them of learning to write without making special and conscious efforts of application and will.” - Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind.

Montessori says that there is an explosion in writing in children and they learn to write with pleasure before the age of 5 ½ to 6 years. They write stories about themselves and the things that they see around their environment. These children when they move to the next plane of development come with special characteristics, a logical mind to reason with and a fertile imagination, which would aid their writing.

In the class room if they have uninterrupted writing time to maintain a journal. It would help them to actually look back at their day to see whether it has been a productive day or not. Even at home they can be encouraged to maintain a diary, by giving them their own personal space and lovely stationary to record their thoughts and ideas. Let's seduce them to write. Montessori believes in 'Show, don't tell', so the best way to help nurture the habit of diary writing would be to show them how to do it. Nine year old Ernest Hemingway had recorded in his diary that he intends to travel and write. Narrating interesting tidbits like this or stories about the famous diarist can be undertaken to introduce diary writing to the children.



Krithiga Sundar

The additional challenge we face is that, we are in the age of Whatsapp and Instagram, where children as young as one are tech savvy and the art of writing is slowly becoming a relic. Writing letters to near and dear ones has become history. Tabs in lieu of paper and pen. Any lists that the children make, is typed in the computer. So, let us encourage our children to record the wondrous life that they are living so that their life is enriched by their writing.



Krithiga Sundar has been working at Navadisha Montessori School in the Elementary Environment since 2011. She did her AMI Elementary Training under Jean Miller and Carla Foster. Krithiga has done her Bachelors in English Literature and her Masters in Social Work (Medical and Psychiatry).



The Touch Board team wishes all its readers and well-wishers a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

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.

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Do send in articles or news to 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

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