

# The Touch Board

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JANUARY 2020

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### 2019-20 ISSUES PLANNED

July  
August  
September  
October  
November  
January  
February  
March

## IMF Events

### CHENNAI

- Aditi Ganesh



Micaela Kuh

A talk on 'Helping Children to be Problem Solvers' was conducted on October 17, 2019 at Redwood Montessori School. Micaela Kuh, an AMI Elementary Trainer in Training, took the crowd through different kinds of problems a child could face right from an infant to an adolescent stage quoting examples from her own life, which helped the crowd relate to day to day events of life.

*"My biggest takeaway from this topic was that in order to help children to be problem solvers, the right kind of environment must be provided. At different stages, children have different kinds of questions to tackle, be it personal or solving global problems and we as educators and parents must provide the right kind of support"* - Anjana Kushalappa, Educator, Redwood Montessori



Micaela giving an overview of the Four Planes of Development

### MUMBAI

- Meera Ghelani



Suneeta Madnani

Suneeta Madnani, AMI Primary Trainer spoke about the importance of movement for the young child on November 28, 2019 at Harmony Montessori.

She spoke of how the child from the very beginning uses movement to create and construct his personality and makes a huge effort to constantly better himself and adapt to his environment with his head, heart and hand.

*"It was a reminder to harness the innate love in the child to attach to the environment that will lead to care and responsibility."*- Rita sanghvi, Educator, New Activity School



Attendees at the Thursday Talk

**CHENNAI**

- Aditi Ganesh



Rukmini Ramachandran

Rukmini Ramachandran, Director of Training, Navadisha Montessori Foundation spoke on 'Parenting Challenges in the Global Village' on December 7, 2019 at Global Montessori Centre.

The workshop dealt with the differences in raising children with time, the developmental needs of children at different age levels, adults being role models and setting clear expectations for the child.

N. Srinivasan and Elizabeth Philip, both parents of young children felt that the importance of routine in a child's life, which means routine also in the adult's life was brought forward.



Participants at the Workshop

## IMF Infant Furniture

*In a world designed primarily for the functioning of adults, it may be challenging to find furniture appropriate for the very young. The Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) now manufactures small sized furniture suitable for children between birth and six, considering access by children and fostering their independence. This becomes even significant at this point with the beginning of the first Assistants to Infancy course in India, aiming to understand and create environments answering the needs of young children. The furniture is made of durable wood and every item is an invaluable addition to homes and schools.*

### **Dressing Mirror and Stool**

Dimensions : Dressing Mirror: Total Height 36" Unit Height 10" Width 8"

Stool : 8x8"

Price : Rs.7850



The dressing mirror is provided with a stool for children to sit and groom themselves. On the dresser there is space to place items the child needs.

For more information about infant furniture and to request for the complete catalogue write to [info@montessori-india.org](mailto:info@montessori-india.org). The furniture and other IMF publications and materials can soon be availed in an online shop!

**Registrations Open!**

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| Email: [course@navadisha.org](mailto:course@navadisha.org) | Ph: 9884669104 |



## At the finish line !

We are immensely happy to announce that Ramya Sridhar, Chennai is now an AMI Primary Trainer. Ramya holds a Masters in Psychology and has completed her AMI training under two age levels (3-6 level and 6-12 level). She is an alumna of the first course at Navadisha Montessori Foundation (NMF) and has been assisting on their courses since 2012. She has served as an examiner and has presented many talks and workshops. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate her!



## Special Education

*With a rise in parents and teachers looking out for professional help with regards to children with special needs, we bring out contact information of some organizations specializing in this field.*

### **RIPPLES—CENTRE FOR ENHANCED LEARNING**

Ripples-Centre for Enhanced Learning is a special education centre for children in Hyderabad. Afshan Jabeen is the founder director of this learning centre. She is an AMI trained Montessori Directress, certified Dyslexia Therapist, Trainer, Psychological Counsellor and a RCI registered Clinical Psychologist. She has been active in the field of education and working with children with dyslexia for more than two decades.

### **For further details, please contact:**



9985041506 & 9985440442



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[www.ripples-cel.com](http://www.ripples-cel.com)



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\* The Indian Montessori Foundation does not endorse any organizations or individuals listed in the series. They are only to serve as reference.

# Through a Toddler's Eyes

In this column, we bring to you Janani's reflections and practical ideas focusing on the child between the ages of birth and three years.

- Janani Rajyasri Bhuvaneshwaran



**About the Author:**

Janani currently lives in California and is trained in both the 0-3 and 3-6 age levels. She has also worked with children at both age levels. She is currently in the process of finishing her Masters in Montessori Education at the Early Childhood Level. Janani has also recently started a small blog called SrishtiEd ([www.srishtied.com](http://www.srishtied.com)) in hopes of connecting with more families of young children. She loves working with the youngest children and their families and feels that the importance of the first three years needs to be taken to the wider society. In her spare time, she loves cooking for her family and friends ; creating new recipes for young children to become independent in the kitchen!

Biting is a phase that children go through while navigating initial interactions with the world. Biting, however, comes with shaming around parenting skills or lack thereof. Understanding why it happens will help us address the issue and view it as a natural part of a child's development.

**What triggers Biting?**

Physical Triggers	Psychological Triggers
<p>Children begin <b>teething</b> anywhere between 3 and 12 months of age, experiencing sensitivity which makes them want to bite.</p> <p><b>Insufficient oral stimulation</b> is another trigger. Foods for children are often soft and mashed which leave gums unsatisfied and make them look for other things to bite.</p>	<p>When there are guests, other young children, or changes at home, children may feel they do not get <b>attention</b> and resort to biting.</p> <p><b>Lack of vocabulary</b> to communicate joy, frustration or excitement often triggers biting, loosely translating as "Hey, this is my toy" or "I do not want to play with you"</p> <p>When toddlers have no control, biting helps them <b>assert power</b>.</p> <p>Toddlers, through biting, <b>explore limits</b> to understand what is acceptable and not and how far they can go.</p> <p>Biting often occurs during <b>group play</b> because toddlers brains are not fully developed to practice sharing.</p>

**What can we do about Biting?**

- Be firm but not loud.** Go down to the level of the child, look them in the eye and say "NO." The more firm and consistent we are, the easier it is for the idea sit.
- Separate the two children.** Sometimes, children may be overstimulated, so taking one for a walk or to a place to calm down helps diffuse the tension.
- Observe what triggers the biting.** This way, you can step in before the biting, to avoid making it a habit.
- Offer fibrous foods.** Offering food to chew on such as apples, carrots, bread, beans will give their teeth attention and also satiate the need to bite.
- Shift attention.** Attending to and soothing the child who has been bitten will take away the attention from the child who has bitten.
- Narrate stories.** It is helpful to have oral stories & books on biting which focus on what to bite instead of what not to bite.

**What to avoid?**

- Biting back to prove a point** may not work but make it more confusing because toddlers understand that biting is wrong, they just lack the self-control to hold back.
- Isolating or giving a time-out** not only makes them feel cornered but helpless. Just as talking kindly helps us resolve our issues, talking to the child kindly shows them that we do not want to corner the child itself but only the action.



## Tree Stories

- Bhanupriya Mohan

Nature Lover, Home Maker, Freelance Writer



*“I lived on a campus in Agra where there was an abundance of nature. It was a delight to observe the children enjoying nature’s bounty. It created a lasting impression on my mind and heart. I share my love for trees, children, people and memories that are a part of me through these experiences.”*

### **THE RHODENDRON**

Kovid ran a little, trudged a little, hopped and skipped, climbing up the hill, the scarlet flowers crushing under his bare feet. The Lal Buransh (local name) was in full bloom, just what Dadi would want for her pickle and murabba (flower preserve). He looked back, down at the steep path he had climbed. “Pushpa, Chotu come this way,” he shouted, “I have found the flowers,” he announced in glee.

They came running. Chotu racing ahead of Pushpa. “How beautiful!” gasped Pushpa, the nine year old cousin from Bombay. It was her first visit to Almora (Uttarakahnd) and she was ecstatic to be spending time with her cousin and his friend. The climb and the crisp cool Himalayan air made her cheeks glow red ...”ha ha”, laughed Chotu , “she looks like the Lal Buransh” .

Kovid’s dad and Pushpa’s father were siblings. She loved the wooden cottage her cousin lived in. It was on a hillside. From the bedroom on the top floor, she had a panoramic view of the hill ranges that surrounded the ridge Almora rested on. People in the hills walked a lot and laughed a lot. They were also full of ancient stories about their region. Especially Dadi, she had wonderful tales to tell about the kind and brave ruler Raja Kalyan Chand. She said that her ancestors made Buransh Sharbat (juice concentrate) and achar (pickle) for the royal palace and the secret recipe has been handed down the generations. It is the same recipe she uses now. “One day I will show you how to make it”. She had promised Pushpa.

“Chotu let's pluck the flowers for Dadi, she will make yummy pickles.” “Oh! We didn't carry a bag or a basket to put them in.” said Kovid . “I can stuff them in my pockets,” said Chotu, putting his hands into his empty pockets and waving them. That made Pushpa and Kovind laugh...”we need lot more than what your pockets can hold Chotu. I have an idea! Pushpa, why don't you spread your duppata under the tree. Chotu and I will climb the tree and drop the flowers on it.” Soon the two of them scampered up the tree and dropped the bell shaped clusters.

It was early evening as they made their way down the hill. It gets dark sooner in the mountains. Dadi was overjoyed at the sight of the pink and scarlet blossoms.

As the sun set over the hill side, the kids sat around Dadi as she narrated the popular legend of the origin of the Lal Buransh. It was attributed to a village girl who is supposed to have turned into the rhododendron tree. Pushpa went to bed dreaming of the wonderful day she had. Up on the hill, the silhouetted Lal Buransh gently waved in the breeze.



\*Photo courtesy – Internet

## Montessori in Vulnerable Communities

*In this series, we bring out the work of organisations and individuals who have taken Montessori education to disadvantaged communities and closely work in supporting them.*

### JAIN MAHILA SAMAJ PRE-SCHOOL

-Meera Ghelani



Primary Montessori Environment at the Jain Mahila Samaj

The Jain Mahila Samaj (JMS) pre-school started 30 years ago as a Montessori school. However, over time it became a Balwadi (an Indian preschool run for economically weaker sections of the society, either by government or NGOs) due to lack of funds and trained teachers. Five years ago, Ashani Hirway, founder of the Da Vinci Montessori school adopted it and created a Montessori environment for the children of the low-income group.

The bright and airy classroom welcomes about 25 to 30 children each year. There are two AMI trained teachers in the primary environment where the children of mixed age group spend most of their time from 8.30 AM to 12.30 PM making free choices and being intermittently presented with new material. Snacks are provided by the school.

The challenges faced for running the school are training of the teachers and affordability of trained teachers and the Montessori materials and making parents aware about the benefits of Montessori methodology. The school also suffers a lot of absenteeism and is in search of strong incentives to make the children attend regularly.

Currently, The Da Vinci school meets most of the expenses of the JMS school. They welcome sponsors and donations. People can contribute by donating books and toys and also sponsoring snacks for certain events. Those interested in supporting can get in touch with Ashani Hirway:

Mobile No: +919820927244

Email ID: ashani@gmail.com

## Elementary Assistants Course



Madhavi Gaddam

We are delighted to announce the first ever Elementary Assistants Training Course in Mumbai by Madhavi Gaddam from January 27 to February 13, 2020 at Ratan Tata Institute (RTI). Madhavi is India's first auxiliary trainer at the Elementary level and has done her AMI training at 3-6 and 6-12 levels. She has a vast experience of working with children at both levels and currently runs her school, Medha Montessori in Hyderabad. After completion of the course, the students will receive a certificate from AMI and will be qualified to assist in an elementary classroom.

For registration and further information please contact 09029639613 (on Saturdays only) or visit the website [www.montessori-mumbai.org](http://www.montessori-mumbai.org).

## Talking Montessori

In this segment, we bring to you links of talks from different settings and of varied people that resonate with Montessori ideas, beliefs and practices and human development.

- Roopa Sundar

### V S Ramachandran – The Neurons that Shaped Civilization



V.S. Ramachandran in this Ted Talk takes us through how a great leap was made in human evolution because of the presence of some unique neurons and how human beings are different from other species.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/vilayanur\\_ramachandran\\_the\\_neurons\\_that\\_shaped\\_civilization](https://www.ted.com/talks/vilayanur_ramachandran_the_neurons_that_shaped_civilization)

“How can a three-pound mass of jelly that you can hold in your palm imagine angels, contemplate the meaning of infinity, and even question its own place in the cosmos? Especially awe inspiring is the fact that any single brain, including yours, is made up of atoms that were forged in the hearts of countless, far-flung stars billions of years ago. These particles drifted for eons and light-years until gravity and change brought them together here, now. These atoms now form a conglomerate- your brain- that can not only ponder the very stars that gave it birth but can also think about its own ability to think and wonder about its own ability to wonder. With the arrival of humans, it has been said, the universe has suddenly become conscious of itself. This, truly, is the greatest mystery of all.”

— V.S. Ramachandran, The Tell-Tale Brain: A Neuroscientist’s Quest for What Makes Us Human

*“There are 100 billion neurons in the adult human brain. And each neuron makes something like 1,000 to 10,000 contacts with other neurons in the brain. And based on this, people have calculated that the number of permutations and combinations of brain activity exceeds the number of elementary particles in the universe.”*

Vilayanur S Ramachandran



## Conversation with Jenny Höglund

-Vidhya Ramalingam



Jenny Höglund

**We are aware that you have been working for more than two decades with Montessori elementary and adolescent children. But everything has a beginning. How and when did your Montessori journey begin?**

*I used to work with adolescents in traditional schools and as I felt I was not giving the right kind of support I left the school and started a job with the Church of Sweden. After which I came to a Parish which ran a Montessori House of Children and during that time, I had no idea about Montessori. Thereafter, in 1981 I was sent on a study tour to study and visit Montessori schools and among this was a tour to Amsterdam where I observed an adolescent programme in a Montessori school. I observed the class for half an hour and then I was thinking, "Where is the teacher?" That made me wonder why and how 25 to 30 adolescents chose to sit and work and seem happy about it without an adult being present in the environment. My personal experience was that, when the teacher left the classroom the noise level rose and when the teacher comes back the class was quite. That was when I decided that I need to study this more.*

**When did you actually start with the Erdkinder program?**

*It was in 1989 that we started the first adolescent programme in Sweden that was connected to Montessori education. We didn't ever refer to it as Montessori Adolescent Programme, because we didn't think we were doing the right thing .....(laughs)..... so we just said that it was an adolescent programme for those who have undergone Montessori education in their early years.*

**Dr. Montessori's preferred method was a farm school as you just told us, but, apart from farming what are the other avenues/ projects that would help the children to experience social and economic independence?**

*This is what we call production and exchange which aims at social and economic independence. I think it depends very much on where you are and your resources and also what the adolescents decide. Here I saw children have done beautiful paintings which they could sell on a regular basis. There was an instance in our school where our children set up a breakfast and coffee shop very close to our school where they found prospects of excellent sale of coffee and sandwiches as there was a college and some adult training programme which was happening close by. All they need is an opportunity to become involved in the processes of production and exchange.*



Jenny Höglund &  
Chaithanya Yalamanchili  
with IMF Volunteers

**Living close to nature is a need and characteristic of the third plane child. What is your view about increased use of gadgets and technology in our lives and is it a matter of concern for parents and educators?**

*Montessori is right when she says there is a special morality that comes with the use of technology. I think that the development of morality has not kept pace with the development of technology. Technology does not necessarily mean the screen. For me children building pink tower and doing cylinder blocks are also technology. But when it comes to screen, we don't teach from a screen as we want the children to experience the reality and then they can use technology. My experience is that when children are together, they all want to play hide and seek in the dark, or to play monopoly or to play football or do other things together. They don't need the technology and they don't ask for it as they have this social interaction. We cannot tell them that they cannot use it, or it is bad. Instead, it is all about offering an alternative.*

## What kinds of training programmes are available for teachers to support the adolescent children?

To support the adults, we have adolescent introductory workshop and we also have Orientation to Adolescent Studies which is a five week orientation programme. We have adolescent refreshers courses and sometimes we are invited to schools as consultants and be a part of their adolescent environment for a couple of days and we open together and reflect. Regarding the diploma course, I am a part of a group called the executive study team and we have been working for the past 3 years towards a proposal for AMI and Great Work, Inc, for a diploma course for the training for 12 - 18.

## Do you have a favourite Montessori quote and why?

I have many quotes. This is really, really a difficult question ... (laughs) .... I shall go with one of the most recent quotes that I spoke about and spent a lot of time on ..... "The child is both a hope and promise for mankind".

## Adolescent Introductory Workshop

-Mridula Chunduri



Participants from all over India & the world who attended the Workshop !

The AMI Adolescent Introductory Workshop was organized by Great Work, Inc, in association with MTRT and Pragnya Montessori School in Hyderabad from November 9 to 12, 2019. The workshop dealt with two phased plan for adolescents: Education, study and work and practical considerations and social living.

The workshop led by **Jenny Höglund** was attended by 120 participants from all over India and from other parts of the world. She stressed on how work for adolescents cannot be anything less than a simulation of real adult life. She was a teeming pot of anecdotes and her stories had the workshop participants in splits sometimes over the antics of her students. At other times the work at the farm school forced the participants to ponder the role played by social organisation to help develop morality, interdependence, self-discipline, work and contribution, adaptability, and love for self, fellows and nature among the young adults.

Both Jenny Hogland and Chaithanya Yalamanchili, of Pragnya Montessori School showcased the two great outcomes of the programme - self-confidence and dignity of living. Chaithanya beautifully showcased his own school's Erdkinder programme with one of his students presenting an account report that left the audience mesmerized.

With videos, photographs and first-person accounts, the duo were able to convince all the participants that they can adapt the farm school model for adolescent education in their respective environments. The workshop left everyone with a reassurance that Maria Montessori's vision and foresight towards education remains unparalleled to this day.

"Jenny's experience gave us an introspect into the realistic understanding of an environment which would have been a jargon of ambiguity otherwise. Our apprehensions about forming an environment for the adolescents has been erased and a hopefulness to now learn more to aid us in setting it up is clear. With a practical understanding of how adolescents take responsibility and also are capable of doing what they do was amazing to see at Pragnya Montessori!"- Mary Florence Bibbin, Floannies Montessori House of Children



Jenny Höglund & Chaithanya Yalamanchili with the Adolescents from Pragnya Montessori School

## IMF Events 2019

Date	City	Event	Topic	Speaker	Venue
16-Jan-20	Mumbai	Thursday Talk	Independence	Anahita Gandhi	KGT Montessori International School
23-Jan-20	Bangalore	Thursday Talk	Weaning: Supporting the Child's Transition	Kavya Chandrashekhar	TBC
23-Jan-20	Chennai	Thursday Talk	A Child's Journey to a Rich Vocabulary	Hemalatha Rangarajan	TBC
25-Jan-20	Chennai	Meeting	IMF Volunteers Meeting	-	Navadisha
14, 15- Feb 20	Hyderabad	Conference	Kriya -Fifth National Montessori Conference	-	Marriott Hyderabad Convention Centre
20-Feb-20	Bangalore	Thursday Talk	Alternatives to Screen Time	Anahita Gandhi	KRSTA
20-Feb-20	Mumbai	Thursday Talk	Building a Home Library	Zarin/Neelima/Suneeta/ Anahita/Pavitra/Geeta	Montessori International

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**2019-2020**

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apply to

[abacusmontessorischool@gmail.com](mailto:abacusmontessorischool@gmail.com)

Phone: 24960904, 24963823

**Registration Open**

**Third AMI ASSISTANTS CERTIFICATE COURSE**  
CHILDREN'S HOUSE (3-6)

**Feb 22 2020 to March 5 2020.**

This course is suitable for parents and those interested in assisting in a Montessori Children's House

Montessori Institute of Bangalore  
1592, Sai Nilaya, 35th Cross, Banashankari, 2nd Stage,  
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Website: [www.montessoribangalore.org](http://www.montessoribangalore.org)

MIB | AMI

## Butterfly Series

We bring to you a butterfly series in the format of 'Who am I?' - A great way to introduce common butterflies that children see often in their natural environment.

- Tarunya Gouthaman

### Who am I?



My scientific name is **Papilio Demoleus** and I belong to the Papilionidae family. I am commonly found in places from Asia to Australia. My species has a great tolerance level and we adapt to diverse habitats such as savannahs, forests, riverbeds and even in urban gardens. My wingspan is 80-100 mm, the background colour is black with a broad irregular yellow band on the wings and many spots. My upper hindwing has a red tornal spot with blue edging around it. We fly fast and although I am tailless, one of my names is Lime Swallowtail. Our favourite plant is Lime and we lay eggs on the young stem, the petiole or the underside of the leaves. The eggs take about 2.5-3 days to hatch. Guess my other name?

### 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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## Donate generously to IMF!

Your donation will help us keep our work of reaching Montessori ideas to children and families alive!

For more information, contact : 8248010258 or email us at [info@montessori-india.org](mailto:info@montessori-india.org)

### Touch Board Team

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### **New opportunity to reach the Montessori community!**

The Montessori community is growing! Parents are more aware of Montessori education than ever before. The Indian Montessori Foundation (IMF) publishes **The Touch Board** (newsletter, 8 issues: July, August, September, October, November, January, February, March) and **Montessori Matters** (Annual Journal). Communication to target the Montessori community can be published as per the following new tariff.

#### **The Touch Board (colour; 6 x 8 cms)**

1 issue	₹ 500
4 issues	₹1500
8 issues	₹2800

#### **Montessori Matters (black and white; [full page] 20 x 12cms)**

1 issue	₹1000
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The advertisements can be sent to [thetouchboard@gmail.com](mailto:thetouchboard@gmail.com) to reach us on or before the 5<sup>th</sup> of the previous month.

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